

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **COPYTHORNE CE INFANT SCHOOL**

Copythorne, Southampton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116282

Headteacher: Mrs Beryl King

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey  
3764

Dates of inspection: 13 - 16 November 2000

Inspection number: 224981

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant school  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 7 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Romsey Road  
Copythorne  
Southampton  
Hampshire  
Postcode: SO40 2PB  
Telephone number: 023 8081 3340

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Mike Hiscock

Date of previous inspection: 9 March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Stephanie Lacey 3764	Registered inspector	Foundation stage, English, information and communication technology, art, geography, history and equal opportunities.	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Derek Bowers 9528	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils?
Fred Riches 23235	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, design and technology, music, physical education, religious education and special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Copythorne Church of England Infant School is very small with 63 boys and girls on roll. The numbers have dropped over the past few years. This is because the catchment area is rural with no new housing. Children travel to the school from nearby villages, with one or two coming from Totton. The vast majority have their cultural roots in the British Isles. When they start school children's skills, knowledge and understanding are broadly average. At the moment 27 per cent of the children are on the school's register of special educational need, which is above average. None of these children has a statement of special educational need. Three per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

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

Copythorne is a friendly school where pupils of all abilities make sound progress. Standards are average this year, but these vary from year to year because of the small numbers and the make-up of particular year groups. The teaching is satisfactory with good features, the school is organised efficiently and the headteacher provides clear and purposeful leadership. The school is expensive to run, but nonetheless provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils are positive about learning, work hard and behave well.
- Music is a strength of the school: very good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well.
- The new headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school.
- The newly appointed teachers are committed and hardworking. They make a strong contribution to the united staff team.
- The school cares well for pupils. Staff assess their needs carefully and provide appropriate support.
- Governors make a positive contribution to the work of the school.
- The building and grounds provide a very good learning environment.

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

- Planning and organisation of work in the reception class (the new foundation stage).
- Opportunities for writing for a range of purposes.
- The breadth and range of books in classroom collections.

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

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

The school has made good progress since its last inspection two and a half years ago in March 1998, when it was found to have serious weaknesses in some areas of its work. These had a detrimental impact on the progress and standards in Year 2. The previous headteacher, staff and governors resolutely tackled the areas for improvement and the school now makes satisfactory provision for pupils' learning. It no longer has any serious weaknesses. This improvement is particularly impressive because the school has gone through a time of great change. All except one of the teachers has moved on, most of the governors are new and a new headteacher was appointed this September. The school has also moved forward in other ways: the quality of teaching has improved, curriculum planning is more detailed and there has been an imaginative development of the school grounds. There is still work to be undertaken in relation to raising standards further, but there is a clear agenda for improvement and the new headteacher, staff and governors are very committed to moving the school forward.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

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

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

*Similar schools are those with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.*

**This table does not do justice to the achievements of pupils and gives a distorted view of the school's performance.** It shows that standards apparently fluctuate from year to year. This is quite usual in small schools, where the performance of one or two children can have a tremendous impact on statistical data. At Copythorne in 2000, for example, there were 26 pupils in the year group with each child representing four per cent. There was only a seven per cent national difference between grades 'B' and 'D'. **In a year group with a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the school actually did well,** whereas the results make it look weak. The 'E' grades in comparison with similar schools also fail to take special needs factors into consideration.

The key to a school's success is whether pupils are making progress. The inspection found that children make satisfactory progress in the reception class and are working at the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make at least satisfactory progress and standards are currently average overall in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff have worked hard to raise standards in writing and mathematics particularly. The improvement in mathematics last year has been sustained and in Year 2 more pupils are attaining higher levels in writing, although this remains an area for development, because pupils do not write for a wide enough range of purposes. Pupils use their phonic skills well to tackle reading, but are not familiar with the work of well-known writers. Pupils reach average standards in other subjects and do particularly well in music. Standards in art have improved considerably since the last inspection and pupils' work is now satisfactory. Improvements in design and technology and physical education also mean that pupils' attainment is average in these areas.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are positive about school and most try hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and behave well in classrooms and playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Children settle quickly into school. They are confident and friendly. They develop good relationships with each other and the staff.
Attendance	Good. Children enjoy coming to school. Most are punctual, even though many travel from other villages.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory with good features

*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 has improved considerably since the last inspection. Over 50 per cent of lessons seen were good or better. Teaching is now satisfactory overall with good and very good features, especially in Years 1 and 2. In the lessons seen, 26 per cent was very good, 27 per cent was good and the remaining 47 per cent was satisfactory. Direct comparisons between the quality of teaching when the school was last inspected and now are spurious because the teaching staff has changed completely. Although one of the original staff is still employed at Copythorne, she was ill at the time of the inspection and her class was taken by a supply teacher. However there had been a good deal of work undertaken to improve teaching skills following the previous inspection and when the school was visited a year later by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, good improvement had been made.

Staff have worked hard to introduce the literacy and numeracy strategies and plan carefully for lessons. In the literacy hour there is a good concentration on the teaching of phonic skills and this helps pupils tackle reading confidently. The good teaching in this area of English helps pupils achieve well. The teaching of writing and the development of pupils' appreciation of literature are satisfactory. Overall, the teaching of numeracy is also satisfactory and ensures that pupils make steady progress. Teachers plan carefully for pupils of all abilities and there is now more challenge for gifted and talented pupils, although this is still an area for development in relation to numeracy. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress because of the support they receive in class. The specialist teaching of art and music is strong.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Foundation stage planning is sound but needs updating. The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 is broad, with clear planning for all subjects. Sometimes pupils spend too long listening to their teachers and not long enough actively involved in learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Staff liaise closely over pupils' individual targets. Occasionally group activities need a clearer focus to ensure that pupils understand the task,
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Arrangements for moral and social education are particularly successful, encouraging responsibility and collaboration. Staff are very good role models. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Teachers offer good opportunities for personal development during class discussions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a strong area. Teachers know pupils well and all staff show care for them. Assessment arrangements are good and ensure that all pupils' progress is appropriately tracked. Child protection procedures and arrangements for pupils' welfare are in place.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED



Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The new headteacher is a strong leader with a very good understanding of how young children learn. She believes in a consultative approach and has already involved staff, governors and parents in decisions about change. New staff are developing their subject co-ordinator roles well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a range of talents and experience, which they are using well to help the school move forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has good monitoring arrangements and so the headteacher, staff and governors are clear about the things that the school does well and those needing improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of its annual budget and the human and other resources available. It applies the principles of best value effectively in planning decisions.

The accommodation and grounds provide a very good environment for learning. The school is generously staffed and this means that class sizes are small. Resources are generally adequate, but the range of books in classrooms needs extending.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school staff are approachable.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become more mature.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The amount of homework given, with concerns about reading particularly.</li> <li>• Arrangements before the start of school at 9.15am.</li> </ul>

Thirteen parents attended the meeting held before the inspection and 31 questionnaires seeking parents' and carers' views were returned. This represents about half of the parents in the school. Some of the parents felt that they could not respond to all of the questions sensibly because their children had only just started school. About a quarter of parents did not feel that they could comment on the way in which the school was led and managed because the headteacher was so new to the post. The inspection team agrees fully with parents' positive views. In response to the minority who are concerned about activities outside lessons, the inspection found that the school does offer a good lunchtime French club. Recorder tuition for Year 2 pupils also takes place partly in play times. There is a good range of play opportunities for pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes as well as an opportunity to share books with parents and carers before school. Many children travel some way to school and so after-school activities are difficult to plan. The new headteacher has a consultative approach and intends to discuss this issue further with parents. Governors have led a recent consultation on mathematics homework. Following staff changes the school is set to implement updated, clear arrangements for home learning. Arrangements for the start of the school day changed at the beginning of term, with children invited to share books with parents, carers and friends before school starts. During the inspection this appeared to be successful, ensuring a calm start to the day.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

##### *Introduction - attainment on entry*

1 When children start school, in the September after their fourth birthday, baseline assessment shows that their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide-ranging, but broadly average for Hampshire schools. The proportion of children who are doing better than average and the proportion that are behind their peers varies from year to year.

##### *Pupils' attainment in statutory tests - a confusing picture*

2 Standards judged against the national picture fluctuate from year to year. This is quite usual in small schools, where the performance of one or two children can have a tremendous impact on statistical data. In 2000 at Copythorne, for example, each child represented four per cent. Comparative data indicated that the school was below average in reading, writing and mathematics and well below average in relation to similar schools. However the fine margins and relatively small numbers distorted the results. The vast majority of pupils continued to reach expected levels in all three areas. Whilst the statistical information provides useful information, it does not represent a fair view of attainment in the school.

##### *Pupils' attainment in statutory tests - conclusions to be drawn*

3 In spite of the difficulties involved in looking at statistical information of this kind when small numbers of pupils are involved; there are some useful conclusions to be drawn from pupils' performance in national tests in 2000. One is that the percentage of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics increased and this reflects the school's work to improve the challenge for higher attainers. Conversely, no pupils did better than expected in writing. This is partly because there was a high number of pupils with special educational needs in the area of language and communication in that particular year group, but also because writing remains an area requiring further improvement. Teachers' assessments, for example, show that the present Year 1 did not make sufficient progress in writing last year. Reading standards in 2000 were only a little below average. The school's own tracking of pupils' progress indicates that last year's Year 2 did not make enough progress in reading in their reception year. This, together with the number of pupils with difficulties in the area of English, affected overall standards.

4 Over the last few years, standards at Copythorne have been broadly average in reading and writing and not so good in mathematics. This year the gap between mathematics and English narrowed. In the past there has been some difference in the relative performance of boys and girls, with boys doing better than the national picture and girls not doing so well. Over the last two years this difference has also narrowed.

##### *Inspection findings - the foundation stage*

5 The inspection found that this year although children came into school with wide ranging skills, knowledge and understanding, the profile for the group is broadly average. They have settled in school life well, in spite of a change of teacher and learning support assistant. They are making satisfactory progress in the areas of language, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical and creative development. They are making

good progress in their personal and social development. Most are on line to meet the goals for the foundation stage by the end of their reception year, with some reaching them before.

#### *Years 1 and 2: English, mathematics and science*

6 The inspection found that pupils are making sound progress in reading, writing and mathematics and that standards are broadly average. This is a great improvement from the last inspection, which found that some pupils made unsatisfactory progress, especially in Year 2.

7 In reading, pupils use phonic skills well and use a range of other strategies to help them tackle difficult words. They enjoy reading, but the limited range of books in classroom collections means that they are not familiar with many well known authors. There has been some improvement in writing standards since the last inspection. Many older pupils use a joined writing style, which is well formed and attractive, although this particular style involves loops, which makes it difficult for pupils at earlier stages. Spelling has improved and pupils now learn spellings in a systematic way. There is still room to develop the range of writing pupils undertake. At the moment pupils do develop writing skills in other subjects, but there are relatively few opportunities for older pupils to write at length. The last inspection found that higher attaining pupils did not do as well in writing as they did in other subjects. Statutory tests show that there was improvement in 1999, but not in 2000. This year higher attaining pupils are doing well.

8 In mathematics, the quality of pupils' learning in Year 1 is satisfactory overall. They are developing appropriate numerical skills. For example, they add and subtract confidently to ten and they are developing quick mental recall of these addition and subtraction patterns. Several have an initial understanding of the place value of digits when writing tens and units. However, higher attainers are not being fully challenged. Year 2 pupils of all abilities are making satisfactory progress. They have a sound understanding of the concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Higher attainers are challenged well. They have experienced looking at larger numbers and show understanding of place value using thousands, for example.

9 In science standards are average in Years 1 and 2. There is a clear emphasis on investigative work and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily. In comparison with above average standards at the last inspection, standards are lower, but the uneven pattern of assessment results over the past few years does not show any discernible trend.

#### *Year 1 and 2: other subjects*

10 Pupils achieve average standards in art, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. They do particularly well in music. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about pupils' attainment in geography. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection which found that standards were low in art and below average in design and technology and physical education, with pupils making unsatisfactory progress in these subjects and in religious education and geography.

#### *Gifted and talented pupils*

11 The school has worked hard to improve the challenge for gifted and talented pupils, which

was identified as an area for improvement at the time of the last inspection. These pupils now generally work on more challenging tasks than their peers, especially in literacy. There is more room for improvement in the challenge for some higher attaining pupils in mathematics in Year 1. Overall these pupils make sound progress.

#### *Pupils with special educational needs*

12 Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress towards targets on their individual education plans as a result of support in lessons and well-targeted short individual support sessions in literacy.

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

#### *Introduction*

13 Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have good attitudes to their work and behave well throughout the day. Behaviour has improved significantly in response to recently introduced measures to settle the pupils at the beginning of the day and to improve organisation and supervision at playtimes and lunchtimes.

#### *Attitudes*

14 Pupils settle quickly in lessons and listen attentively during the introductory discussions. They generally wait patiently to answer questions or give information and show an interest in the ideas of others. They concentrate well on their individual tasks and work at a steady pace. Most are enthusiastic about school and are keen to participate in school life.

#### *Behaviour*

15 Pupils behave well at playtimes and in lessons. There is good awareness of the rules, which the pupils have helped to establish. They like the reward systems that have been introduced and these are beginning to have a positive impact on achievement and behaviour. Minor sanctions are used appropriately and there is no evidence of any persistent disruptiveness or unsatisfactory behaviour. No pupils have been excluded from the school. There is no evidence of bullying in the school.

#### *Values and personal development*

16 Children settle quickly into school in the reception class. They are confident and happy and clearly know the difference between right and wrong. Relationships with staff and other pupils are good and these help to create a pleasant, productive environment. Pupils are sensitive to the views of others. Pupils readily help each other and willingly take on a number of duties in the classroom.

17 Lunchtimes and playtimes are very pleasant occasions. The pupils make good use of the wide variety of playground games and markings and interact well with each other and with the staff.

#### *Attendance*

18 Attendance and punctuality are good, with children keen to come to school and to arrive early. Attendance has been at or above the national average in recent years. The rate of

unauthorised absences two years ago was above the national average but last year dropped again to a level well below the average.

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

### *Introduction*

19 Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good and very good features. In the lessons seen, 26 percent was very good, 27 per cent was good and the remaining 47 per cent was satisfactory. This indicates a much more positive picture than the last inspection when there was a high proportion (20 per cent) of unsatisfactory teaching. Direct comparisons between the quality of teaching two and a half years ago, when the school was last inspected, and now are a little spurious because the teaching staff has changed completely. Although one of the original staff is still employed at Copythorne, she was on sick leave at the time of the inspection and her class was taken by a supply teacher. However there had been a good deal of work undertaken to improve teaching skills following the previous inspection and when the school was visited a year later by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, good improvement had been made. Teachers were helping pupils to develop enquiry skills, make decisions and work on more challenging tasks, which had been identified as areas requiring improvement. All except one of the teaching staff have been appointed in the last year. The two new class teachers are working in Years 1 and 2. New specialist music and art teachers work in all classes.

### *The foundation stage*

20 The quality of teaching in the foundation stage is satisfactory and ensures that children make a sound start to their formal education. Strengths within this area include the good relationships that have been established between staff and children. These have formed a firm basis for children's smooth introduction to school life. Consequently all children, both full and part-time are confident in their new surroundings. They relate well to the staff and each other and tackle tasks enthusiastically. Good organisation of adult support is another strong feature of work in this area. Activities are planned so that small groups of children work with the teacher's or learning support assistant's help. This enables staff to engage closely with individual children and help them forward in their learning. Staff have worked hard to provide more opportunities for children to make decisions for themselves. In some sessions, for example, a 'planning board' is used and children are required to choose a task from a range of activities. This is a good start, but there is not sufficient emphasis on reviewing the work undertaken or tracking where children have been. Generally planning shows insufficient links between different areas of learning.

21 There are some areas for development. One is the planning for each day. Inspectors looked carefully at the planning since the beginning of term and found that it listed the activities to be undertaken, but did not place sufficient emphasis on what was to be taught in each session, or how this was to be reviewed. Another area needing improvement is the organisation of the room. The area is spacious, with a small sink to one side and there has been some move towards setting up areas for children to work on different activities. The writing corner is a very good example of this, with its well-organised supplies of paper and writing materials. There are other designated areas, such as the book corner and hospital. However, much of the room is untidy and cluttered and does not provide the stimulating environment that would be possible in this particular classroom.

### *Year 1 and 2*

22 The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, with some good and some very

good features. This ensures that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Common strengths in the teaching include a meticulous attention to planning and preparation. In both classes teachers plan very carefully, noting clear learning goals for each lesson. Resources are also very well prepared. In both history lessons seen, for example, teachers had spent some time collecting facsimiles of contemporary paintings, drawings and text for pupils to use in their investigations. As a result pupils made great strides forward in their understanding of the importance of a good evidence base in historical enquiry. Another very strong feature of the teaching in this area is teachers' reflective and self-analytical approach. Teachers are constantly striving to improve and, in order to do so, reflect on what went well in lessons and what needs to be improved. This very positive approach has been supported well by the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher.

23 There are a few areas for development. Sometimes teachers spend too long each day talking to the pupils in whole class sessions and this means that there is less time for pupils to spend in active learning. This is partly because teachers have taken the model set by the numeracy and literacy hours, of a lengthy class introduction followed by a short activity session, and applied it to other subjects. This is not always appropriate for pupils of this age, even though they are generally attentive in these whole class sessions. Teachers have formed good relationships with pupils and these underpin their good behaviour. However, older pupils especially tend to fuss during the transition between listening to the teacher and moving into group activities. Sometimes, because they have not listened to instructions, they are not sure what they have to do. Marking of pupils' work is another area needing review. At the moment there is some inconsistency between the two classes and pupils are not always given sufficiently clear pointers about what they need to do to improve.

#### *Literacy and numeracy*

24 Teachers have worked hard to implement the literacy and numeracy strategies and plan lessons very carefully with due regard to the national frameworks. Literacy sessions are well taught and this ensures that pupils meet the learning targets set for lessons. Planning is detailed, with work carefully prepared for both the whole class sessions and group work. Learning support assistants and parents are deployed well to provide focused support for groups, especially those with special educational needs. Particular strengths in these lessons include the respect for pupils' responses and the encouragement given to them to think for themselves, especially in Year 1. Resources are carefully prepared. The 'spell binder' books are good examples of this, enabling pupils to practise the 'look, cover, write and check routine. There is a good emphasis on teaching phonic skills and pupils clearly understand how to tackle difficult words in reading as a consequence of this teaching. Some areas of English have a lower profile. Reading for pleasure, for example, has not been so well addressed. Pupils enjoy reading, but are not familiar with the bank of authors and books loved by many children of their age. Teachers have organised book corners in their rooms, but there are few displays to draw pupils to particular books or writers. The school has resolutely addressed the key issue from the last inspection to improve standards of writing and teachers have planned thoroughly in relation to helping pupils develop handwriting and spelling skills. However, at the moment there is an emphasis on the development of skills to the detriment of writing for a real purpose. Teachers are beginning to use home learning well to help pupils move forward. 'Spell binder' books are sent home regularly and a new reading diary is being introduced to provide a link between school and home.

25 The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall with some good features. These include clear lesson planning, a brisk pace during the introductory mental mathematics session, the organisation, accessibility and use of resources, the deployment of learning support assistants and the conclusions to lessons. These all help pupils to develop their numeracy skills. Areas for development are related to making the purpose of

lessons clear to pupils, the challenge for some higher attainers, teachers' questioning and using learning support assistants to help with assessment.

#### *Other subjects*

26 Lessons were seen in science, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, physical education and history. Generally the quality of teaching in these areas was satisfactory, with some good and very good teaching, particularly in Year 1. Teaching has improved in information and communication technology and is now satisfactory overall. Only one short session was seen in ICT and this was good, reflecting the subject knowledge of the teacher.

#### *Specialist teaching*

27 The school's decision to employ specialist teachers for music and art has been very beneficial and has had a positive impact on how well pupils learn. Overall the teaching of music is very good and ensures that pupils do well. The teaching of art is good, with very good features. Lessons in both subjects are very well planned, in association with the class teachers. Materials and equipment are very well prepared and the use of good quality resources helps pupils to take pride in their work. A good focus on the teaching of skills is helping pupils to move forward.

#### *Special educational needs*

28 Teachers plan tasks appropriately for pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that their needs are identified and that both teacher and attached assistant know the targets on each pupil's education plan. Teachers and assistants liaise closely in planning and reviewing learning targets for individual support sessions. Pupils focus and learn successfully during these sessions. Briefing for the assistants' support and assessment roles during class and group sessions is not always so tightly organised.

#### *Gifted and talented pupils*

29 Teachers plan more challenging work for gifted and talented pupils than they did at the time of the last inspection, especially in literacy sessions, where pupils are grouped according to prior attainment. This helps these pupils to move forward. Sometimes the work set is not quite at the right level. In one history session, for example, the task for this group was very challenging. In another literacy session the pupils were finding sounds in a dictionary on the computer and found this relatively easy.

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

#### *Introduction*

30 The school's curriculum meets requirements for pupils at the foundation stage and Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. Teachers plan the religious education curriculum with reference to both the local authority's agreed syllabus and the diocesan syllabus. All statutory requirements are met. The curriculum is appropriately broad and staff have agreed

suitable time allocations for each subject. Since the last inspection in 1998 the school has developed the literacy strategy and introduced the numeracy strategy successfully. It has introduced new or revised schemes of work in all other subjects. This has resulted in improved and common planning systems in all subjects at Key Stage 1. However, the current timetable does not always provide a well-planned mixture of sedentary and active pursuits. In some lessons pupils spend too long listening to their teachers and not enough time on recording or practical activities.

### *The foundation stage*

31 Planning for the curriculum in the reception year is based on the six areas of learning. The school is aware of the need to adapt its planning and assessment systems in line with the introduction of the new national foundation stage, introduced in September 2000. There are good links with local nurseries and playgroups. Staff visit the children in their pre-school settings and invite them and their parents to visit their new school and meet their teacher before starting school. This helps to make children's start a smooth one. Provision for outdoor activities is a little underdeveloped and there is currently no separate outdoor area for these children. They do, however, make use of the school's well-developed grounds.

### *Years 1 and 2*

32 The curriculum at Key Stage 1 is relevant to pupils' interests and needs. Teachers work hard to plan interesting activities. For example, during the inspection a class visited the church as part of their studies in art. The school also make good use of its very well developed grounds and the local environment for studies in geography, history and science. The school places good emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics and this results in pupils attaining appropriate levels for their ability by the end of the key stage. The successful introduction of national strategies for literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 1 have contributed to this. Tracking over the past two years shows the vast majority of pupils reaching their predicted levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. The English curriculum follows the recommended approach of the literacy strategy, but the limited range of reading material does not provide an interesting selection for all pupils. The opportunities for writing, as shown by displays and in pupils' exercise books, are not as imaginative and stimulating as they could be. There are several planned opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects such as geography, history, religious education and science, but few are planned for the development of numeracy skills across the curriculum. Curriculum planning currently focuses appropriately on the skills, knowledge and understanding to be developed in individual subjects. Teachers place less emphasis on discovering ways of linking studies between subjects in order to make them more relevant and interesting to pupils.

### *Provision for pupils with special educational needs*

33 The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average. Provision for these pupils is satisfactory overall, with good arrangements for teachers and assistants to work together to plan suitable targets for pupils' individual education plans, in accordance with the current national code of practice.

### *Provision for gifted and talented pupils*

34 The last inspection found that provision for gifted and talented pupils was unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to address this. There have been improvements in lesson



planning, for example, with activities for these pupils highlighted. Sometimes these are still not challenging enough. There is still work to be undertaken in this area. The school plans to write a policy to underpin the work with these pupils.

#### *Activities outside lessons*

35 There is a flourishing weekly lunchtime French Club and all Year 2 pupils benefit from the arrangements for recorder lessons, which are partly in playtime and partly in curriculum time. Otherwise, opportunities for pupils to take part in organised additional activities outside school hours are limited. Pupils do benefit from the very good outdoor play provision at break and lunchtimes, however. The headteacher is aware that a minority of parents are unhappy with the current provision for additional activities and intends to follow up the concern expressed. The school has offered a variety of educational visits during the past year, which have stimulated pupils' interest in their learning. The school's photograph collection, for example, shows pupils visiting Scammell's Farm at daffodil time, becoming Victorians for a day at Manor Farm and visiting a local country park.

#### *Equal opportunity issues*

36 The curriculum offers equality of opportunity for all pupils in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are rarely withdrawn for extra support. When they are, it is only for a brief and appropriate session. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and the school seeks to set them appropriately challenging targets. There is not a policy to underpin the work with these pupils. Boys and girls receive equal attention in discussion and have similar access to all activities.

#### *Links with other schools*

37 There are satisfactory links with other schools. These include good links with the local playgroup, ensuring a smooth transition for children when they start school.

#### *Provision for pupils' personal development*

38 The school has maintained the good quality of its provision for pupils' personal development since the last inspection. Teaching in circle times, for example, has a strong impact on pupils' personal and social development. The school has put suitable arrangements in place for sex education and safety education, including learning about the use and abuse of drugs, through a well-implemented local education authority scheme, designed in liaison with the police.

#### *Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development*

39 The school's arrangements for pupils' spiritual and cultural development are sound. Provision for moral and social development is good. The effect of this is evident in the working atmosphere in classes, where pupils work very well together when required during lessons and where rotas involve all pupils in turn in playing their part to help with daily routines.

#### *Spiritual development*

40 The overall provision for pupils' spiritual development is sound, with some good features. It is enhanced by positive links with the local church. The best examples of the school's

promotion of pupils' spiritual development are to be seen in music lessons and assemblies and in the art and religious education displays. Teachers offer pupils good opportunities in these situations to reflect and find ways of expressing their feelings. A display on candlelight included pupils' responses to the experience of sitting in a darkened, candle-lit room. Another, showing pupils' paintings alongside a print of Monet's Water Lily Pond, included words such as 'calm' and 'peaceful', to show the atmosphere pupils perceived in the artist's scene. The assembly theme for the week developed pupils' understanding of the concept of a promise. Staff made good use of an illustrative story and wedding and baptism artefacts to help pupils appreciate the importance of promises.

### *Moral development*

41 The school promotes good moral development through the practical implementation of its clear behaviour policy. Class teachers display prominently the agreed class rules, which they have negotiated with pupils at the start of the school year. They use smiley face cards to reinforce positive behaviour and glum face cards to show displeasure. They help pupils see the benefits of a community working well together by rewarding the positive team effort through collecting marble rewards in a class jar. All staff offer pupils positive role models in the way they show respect, consideration and courtesy when talking to pupils, fostering good relationships. As a result of these various strategies, all pupils develop a clear understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable and acquire a good understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others.

### *Social development*

42 The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and small groups. The school's good programme for personal and social education, developed in consultation with the local police authority, makes a worthwhile contribution to pupils' understanding of their own and others' feelings and attitudes. The school develops pupils' sense of responsibility very successfully. Each class teacher sets up rotas for pupils to manage day-to-day routine tasks in the classroom and around the school. They have established good organisational patterns and pupils respond well, showing initiative in the way they support each other in their tasks. Events organised throughout the school year, in liaison with the Parents, Teachers and Friends' Association, also offer pupils a stimulating range of opportunities for social development through participation in preparations and performances. An Easter parade, the celebration of national school grounds day, with a sponsored walk around the grounds, and the annual school sports are representative of the way the school has encouraged children to participate as part of their community.

### *Cultural development*

43 Arrangements for pupils' cultural development are satisfactory. The school ensures that pupils acquire an understanding of their local cultural roots through village and church studies. Through religious education lessons, the school ensures that pupils acquire knowledge of different faiths and cultural celebrations. However, in classrooms and shared areas of the school there is only limited evidence of the use of books, displays and artefacts to broaden pupils' appreciation of the richness and diversity of society. Art, music and religious education lessons provided the only evidence of curriculum planning to develop pupils' understanding of the cultural dimensions of life. The music teacher provided an effective opportunity for pupils to listen and respond to music depicting a Russian ox cart scene, for example, and staff take weekly turns to select the music for assemblies, explaining their choices. Also during the past year, the school arranged for musicians from

the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra to visit and give their 'Hot Hippo' presentation.

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

### *Introduction*

44 The school's provision for the pupils' health, safety and welfare is good and has improved since the last inspection. Although many of the staff are relatively new to the school they know the pupils and their needs well. They are very caring and are available for discussions with parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

### *General policies and procedures*

45 The school has responded well to some earlier unsatisfactory aspects of behaviour by reviewing its policies and introducing clearer structures at the beginning of the day and at playtimes and lunchtimes. The pupils help to establish rules of conduct and willingly accept the recently introduced rewards and sanctions. All of these measures, together with a shared understanding and consistency of practice, have produced a pleasant, productive environment for work and play.

46 Although the attendance levels in the school are good the staff record and monitor these actively using manual and computer records. All absences and holiday requests are checked carefully and parents are contacted promptly when necessary.

47 The school's policies and procedures on health and safety and child protection are fully in place and are based on the county guidelines. The clear guidelines are available to all staff in their handbooks but it has not yet been possible for the recently appointed teachers to discuss these together in detail. The brochure and prospectus make clear to parents the stress placed on the importance of providing a safe, caring environment for all children. Staff are vigilant throughout the day and the favourable pupil:staff ratio helps to ensure effective support and guidance on personal development. Illness and accidents are managed effectively by the trained first-aiders. Two governors have taken over the responsibility for monitoring health and safety and undertake inspections of the whole school. Electrical and safety equipment and fire appliances are checked regularly under service contracts.

### *Assessment procedures*

48 The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. They have improved considerably since the last inspection, when they were identified as needing improvement. Staff show good understanding of the purposes and uses of assessment. Each class teacher has a well-organised record folder, using an agreed school framework. This ensures a common approach.

49 The school receives useful comparative information from the local education authority following the administration of its baseline assessment scheme. Teachers use the information to plot pupils' progress towards targets in reading and mathematics in terms of National Curriculum levels to be achieved by the end of Year 2. The newly appointed headteacher has used a computer package to make these statistics more accessible and manageable.

50 The school has made good use of teacher assessments since the last inspection to track each pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Staff have also put procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress in all other National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The most effective are in music and science, where the design of

the assessment sheets offers space for brief comment alongside the three markings which denote initial coverage, partial understanding and full understanding. An analysis of the tracking sheets in science shows some unusual patterns in pupils' progress, however. Also teachers' use of assessment information, both to predict improvement over a year and to add pupils names to the register of special educational need, is varied. Teachers currently set a range of cautious and challenging targets. Because of staffing changes over the past year, the school has not yet had time to review the use of its tracking and prediction procedures to ensure a common, accurate and appropriately challenging approach. The school has analysed results of National Curriculum tests closely, in order to identify and address any common weaknesses or gaps in teaching and learning. Staff identified a gap in pupils' knowledge of money, for example, and have corrected this in their planning.

51 The school's practice has been to identify pupils with special educational needs at the beginning of Year 1. At this stage there is a thorough county-wide audit system. As a result of this well-administered system, the school provides pupils with appropriate levels of support, so that they make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. However, the school makes little use of earlier assessment information to pinpoint needs and appropriate support for pupils in the reception year. Favourable staffing levels help surmount this gap, but it is difficult to ensure well-targeted support without clear identification, especially in the context of staff changes and absence.

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

### *Introduction*

52 The school has maintained sound working relationships with parents since the last inspection and there are clear signs of improvement in the partnership between home and school.

### *Parents' views*

53 Parents' views of the school, as expressed through questionnaire responses and at the pre-inspection meeting, are largely positive. The school has adopted a positive, consultative style in its development of the home-school partnership. This has given parents a voice during the adoption of the home-school agreement and in the re-thinking of the homework policy. The newly appointed headteacher issues informative and well-presented newsletters and has made some innovative and successful changes to the start of the school day, involving parents successfully in this venture.

54 About a half of parents responded to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection seeking their views on the school's provision. Almost all are comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns and are pleased that their children like school. A high proportion is confident that the teaching is good, that the school expects children to work hard and that staff are helping children become more mature. They feel behaviour is good. Most parents are confident that the school is well led and managed. A few parents are less happy about the range of activities outside lessons, the information about their children's progress, the amount of home learning given and the way the school works with parents.

### *Inspection findings*

55 The inspection fully supports parents' positive views. The minority concerns are also justified to a degree. There are limited opportunities for pupils to take part in out of school activities, but this is common to many infant schools. Many pupils travel by car from some distance and this makes the provision of after-school activities more difficult. The school

runs a flourishing lunchtime French club and offers recorder tuition for all Year 2 pupils, partly during lesson time and partly at playtime. Supervisors also watch over a range of activities in the well-developed school grounds at lunchtimes. Governors and headteacher intend to address the findings of the questionnaire through further consultation to see what improvements can be made. The school provides clear information to parents about how their children are doing. Teachers select from common phrases when writing annual pupil reports, but they adapt these appropriately to provide a clear picture of each pupil's progress in each subject and suggest targets for improvement. There are currently only two formal opportunities to discuss pupils' progress during the year, one half way through the year and one at the end. These are well attended, but the timing and number of these sessions do not promote sufficiently regular progress and target setting reviews. Headteacher and staff are always available to discuss particular issues, but the good informal arrangements do not replace the need for well-organised formal parent consultations on pupils' progress. The school is currently responding to a consultation on mathematics homework arrangements, initiated during the previous school year. This will successfully address the lack of clarity in home learning arrangements overall, as perceived by a minority of parents and acknowledged by the school.

### *The learning partnership*

56 The school is working very hard to establish a still more positive partnership with parents. Features of its work in this area that have been particularly successful include the governing body's consultations on the home-school agreement last year and more recently the headteacher's introduction of changes to the start of the school day. This met with some opposition initially, expressed by one or two parents at the pre-inspection meeting. In practice, the changes have resulted in a very smooth and efficient start to the school day. By encouraging parents to come into the school and read with their children as they arrive, the school has created a welcoming atmosphere for pupils and parents alike and found a positive way of involving parents in supporting a vital part of their child's education. The shared reading time leads smoothly into registration and a prompt start to each school day. Staff also involve parents successfully in supporting their children with reading at home by sending books home to share with them.

### *Information for parents*

57 The school prospectus is well presented in the main, but the curriculum section does not give a clear summary of the subjects taught or the school's approach. The annual report from the governors does give an informative picture of the school's work over the previous year. Copies of relevant information are available to parents and the parents' notice board is used well for this purpose. The school involves parents of pupils with special educational needs by inviting them to termly review meetings, at which teachers inform parents of new targets. Parents' participation in helping their children reach these targets is varied. The school's systems do not currently include a specified role for parents. The review document requires only a parents' signature. It does not specify, for example 'what the school can do' and 'what the parent can do' to establish a partnership approach to meeting targets.

### *The Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association*

58 The Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association offers positive support by organising social activities for parents and children to raise funds for the school. The well-attended barbecue night in the summer term, with entertainment by pupils, is a good example of this. Parents have also supported their children and the school's efforts in the current term, supporting

Romanian orphans by sending in shoeboxes filled with gifts.

#### *Improvements this term*

59 The new headteacher has made particular efforts to make school more welcoming to parents. She always makes herself available to parents at the beginning of the day and there is always someone in the office to answer parental queries. The headteacher and office staff appreciate how important it is to have a welcoming and friendly person in the office to deal with enquiries.

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

#### *Introduction - a time of change*

60 The leadership of the school has changed since the last inspection two and a half years ago and a new headteacher was appointed this September. She is providing a very clear educational direction for the school. She is a very experienced infant teacher with considerable inter-personal skills. She has a very good understanding of how young children learn and has a wealth of experience in helping colleagues develop their teaching skills.

61 The school has altered considerably since the last inspection. All the pupils in the school at that time have now have moved on to junior schools. All the teaching staff have moved away, except for one, and she was on sick leave at the time of the current inspection. An almost completely new governing body has also been appointed, except for the vicar, who is ex-officio.

#### *The findings of the last inspection and the improvements made since*

62 The last inspection found that there were serious weaknesses in parts of the school's provision. These resulted in unsatisfactory progress for many pupils, especially in Year 2, and low standards in art, physical education and design and technology. The headteacher, staff and governors resolutely tackled the key issues identified for action. These included school development planning, improving progress in English, improving the quality of the teaching, improving the provision for the more able pupils, raising standards in information and communication technology and improving assessment. A monitoring visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors eighteen months later found that the school had made good progress in some of the areas and satisfactory progress in others.

63 It is evident from the school's own records and documentation that the school continued to improve last year. In addition to the areas identified for improvement a great deal of work was also undertaken on curriculum planning and the school grounds were developed very well. The inspection found that the school no longer has any serious weaknesses. There is still work to be undertaken in relation to raising standards further, and English remains an area for development, but there is a clear agenda for improvement and all staff and governors are very committed to moving the school forward.

#### *Improvements made this term*

64 There are three reasons for the improvements made so far this term. Firstly, the headteacher has been able to monitor and evaluate the school's work and achievements with a fresh eye and put appropriate measures in place to enrich the provision for the pupils. A good example of this is the start to the school day. The headteacher found that many pupils arrived early for school and that there was a good deal of movement between playground and

classrooms, which tended to create an unsettled start to the day. She also had concerns about the pupils' safety at this time, because there was no playground supervision. She introduced a quiet reading session for fifteen minutes before school, inviting parents and carers to share books with their children. This has proved successful, after some initial concerns from a few parents.

65 A second reason for improvement this term has been the consultative approach adopted by the new headteacher. This has helped staff, governors and parents feel that their opinions are valued and has reinforced the friendly and co-operative ethos already established at Copythorne.

66 The third reason for the move forward is the hard work of the new staff and governors. New subject co-ordinators, for example, have taken on their roles with enthusiasm and made a good start in reviewing resources, monitoring standards and developing planning. Governors have taken on new roles conscientiously and most are involved well in monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

#### *The governing body*

67 The governors have the best interests of the school at heart. They work hard to fulfil their responsibilities to provide a sense of direction for the work of the school, to act as a critical friend and to hold the school to account for the standards and quality of education provided. Several have particular talents, which they use well to support the school's work. The chair, for example, is very experienced in working with governors and is involved professionally in governor training. The local vicar offers counsel and support and helps to provide a strong link between the church, local community and the school. The vice-chair has a particularly clear view of the day to day work of the school from her regular visits into classrooms.

#### *The school staff*

68 The school is generously staffed with appropriately qualified teachers. Consequently the classes are small and the school is arranged in three classes with single year groups. Two additional staff work part-time to teach art and music to all pupils. At the current time this is a good use of the school's resources. Most of these staff have been appointed within the last year and the good team spirit is witness to the effective induction procedures. Performance management is in the early stages. There are a sufficient number of experienced learning support assistants to provide appropriate help for individuals and small groups in all classes, most usually in the literacy and numeracy hours. The administrative officer and clerical assistant are efficient and well organised. The cooks and lunch-time supervisors are helpful and encouraging and the caretaker and cleaner maintain the school well.

#### *The management of special educational needs*

69 The school provides equal opportunities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The newly appointed headteacher has taken on the role of special educational needs co-ordinator. Current management systems are satisfactory, with the local authority's audit system ensuring sound financial and staffing support for pupils. Monitoring and review systems are in place. These ensure full participation by all staff working with the pupils on the register of special educational need, but do not involve parents sufficiently in a working partnership with the school. The headteacher has made this aspect of her role a personal priority during the current year. The governor with responsibility for this aspect of the school's work liaises with the headteacher and reports appropriately at

governors' meetings.

#### *School improvement planning*

70 The previous headteacher worked with governors to draft a programme of improvement for the current year. It is clear and sufficiently detailed. It sets a useful agenda for the new headteacher in her first year. The plan addresses most of the areas that need to be tackled in the next twelve months, with the exception of work on foundation stage planning; a national priority this year. In the light of staff and governor changes, the lack of long term planning beyond this academic year is understandable.

#### *Financial planning*

71 The good standards of financial planning and control have been maintained well since the previous inspection. Budget setting is linked closely to educational priorities but there is limited planning beyond the current year. The staff and governors make good use of the available funds to provide good levels of staffing, accommodation and educational resources, while maintaining a satisfactory reserve for future developments. Governors and staff monitor the expenditure regularly and record any decisions fully. However there are some long term issues that need to be considered. A significant one is the falling pupil roll and the need to attract more pupils to the school in order to maintain three classes.

72 The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily with the staff and governors beginning to make use of benchmarking information provided by the local authority. During the current financial year there has been wider consultation and involvement of staff and governors in financial decision making. The school ensures competitiveness and value for money in its purchase of service contracts, particularly for buildings and grounds maintenance. Taking into account the high unit costs and average standards on entry to the school and comparing these with the satisfactory standards of teaching, the average standards of attainment and the good standards of behaviour and personal development of the pupils, the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

#### *Day to day administration*

73 The administration of the school is very good and provides effective support for staff, pupils, parents and governors. Efficient use is made of local computing facilities and links with local authority systems to provide management information. The accounts for the main budget and the school fund are in good order. The most recent auditors' report confirmed the good quality of financial management and control. Staff, resources and premises are used efficiently. Income from the standards fund and for special educational needs is accounted for fully.

#### *Accommodation and resources*

74 The school's accommodation is very good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The original building houses the reception class, hall, small group room, offices and staffroom. It has been extended in a very attractive way to include two classrooms and a library. There is presently an empty flat above the office area that would provide useful accommodation and an opportunity to reorganise the ground floor, if the school was able to rent it from the church trustees. Within the context of very good accommodation there are some minor areas for improvement. The present entrance for visitors, for example, is along a very narrow corridor. This could be improved if the main entrance was moved to the front of the school and the headteacher's and administrative office switched. This would enable office staff to have a clearer view of visitors approaching the building. Storage areas also



need reviewing. At the moment no class has a designated storage area. This is partly the reason for the cluttered organisation of resources in the reception class particularly.

75 The grounds provide a very good learning environment. The playground is marked with a range of games. There is a small football pitch and an adventure playground. A willow tunnel has been planted in the last few years and the school has its own wild life area with a pond.

76 Resources are generally adequate and in some areas, such as information and control technology, they are good. The school has a generous number of books and has built up its 'Big Book' collection in recent years. However, there is a limited range of books in classroom collections.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77 In order to build on the strengths of the school and the good improvement made since the last inspection the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

1. Improve provision for the youngest children by:
  - establishing a programme of work based on the new foundation stage curriculum;
  - organising the classroom so that pupils can work more independently;*(Reference paragraphs: 20,21,28,31,79, 82, 84 and 85)*
  
2. Increase the opportunities to write for a range of purposes by:
  - providing genuine purposes and real audiences for pupils' writing;
  - identifying the range of writing opportunities in history, geography, science and religious education;
  - linking work in the literacy hour to work in other subjects;*(Reference paragraphs: 7,24,32,89 and 90)*
  
3. Improve the breadth and range of books in classroom collections in order to encourage pupils to read more widely.  
*(Reference paragraphs: 7,24,32,76 and 88)*

The following minor points for improvement should be considered by the headteacher, staff and governors for inclusion in the action plan:

- The large amount of time pupils spend listening to the teacher; *(Reference paragraphs: 23, 30 and 81)*
- Consistent challenge for higher attaining pupils in mathematics; *(Reference paragraphs: 8,11,25 and 95)*
- The storage of equipment & resources; *(Reference paragraphs: 21 and 74)*
- Marking of pupils' work; *(Reference paragraphs: 23 and 90)*
- The need for a policy to underpin the work with gifted and talented pupils; *(Reference paragraph: 36)*
- Teaching about non-European cultures. *(Reference paragraph: 43)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	26%	27%	47%	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y R – Y 2
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
<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y R – Y 2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	17
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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
	2000	12	14	26

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	22	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (100)	88 (92)	88 (84)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	12	12	10
	Total	22	23	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (96)	88 (88)	85 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	63
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 – Y 2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Average class size	19

#### **Education support staff: Y R – Y 2**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	227,215
Total expenditure	220,158
Expenditure per pupil	2,976
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,526
Balance carried forward to next year	17,583

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	62
Number of questionnaires returned	31

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	45	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	52	6	0	13
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	52	0	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	48	10	6	20
The teaching is good.	32	52	0	0	16
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	61	13	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	39	0	0	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	48	3	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	26	55	10	3	6
The school is well led and managed.	19	55	3	0	23
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	52	3	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	42	13	6	20

## **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**

#### *Introduction*

78 The satisfactory provision for children in the foundation stage has been maintained since the last inspection. An experienced teacher normally takes this class, but she was away during the inspection and a supply teacher took her place. The school is aware that work needs to be undertaken on curriculum planning in the light of the new guidance for work in the foundation stage.

79 When children begin school, their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide ranging in all areas of learning. The balance between those doing better than average and those who are a little behind their peers varies from year to year. By the time they reach the end of the reception year, most children reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. Last year school records show that children made slower progress in developing their writing skills than they did in other areas. During the inspection the overall satisfactory quality of the teaching helped children to move forward in their learning. The class teacher's own planning and the progress made by children so far this term indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in the area of personal, social and emotional development. Generally, the current planning is too fragmented and insufficient account is taken of the links between different areas of learning.

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

80 Children make good progress in this area. Children have settled well into school this term and are confident and happy in their new surroundings. Most children had some experience of pre-school education before they started at Copythorne, but for one or two it is their first step away from the security of home. Staff have formed good relationships with children and this has helped them to feel secure. A measure of the good work in this area is the ease with which children adapted to a different teacher and learning support assistant within a few weeks of starting school. Children respond well to the staff's requests and instructions and are well behaved in the classroom and playground. They know the difference between right and wrong. They work well together, when asked to do so. They take turns on the computer, for example, and play together sensibly in the 'hospital'. Children are taught to be independent. At lunchtimes, for example, they select their food from the serving trolley and carry it carefully to their places. In the classroom, they are given opportunities to work independently and 'plan' their work by selecting tasks from the activity board. Staff encourage them to tidy up at the end of sessions and most manage this well.

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

81 Children make satisfactory progress overall in this area. Children are given opportunities to communicate with each other and their teacher in class discussions. Sometimes the teacher spends too long talking to the children at these times and so they have less opportunity to develop their communication skills in the activity part of the session. Most children are very confident and enjoy negotiating with their friends. In one session in the hospital, for example, the 'doctor', 'nurse' and 'patient' warmly welcomed a 'monster' into their play and made him part of their story. During the inspection some opportunities were lost to extend pupils' language because the teacher did not monitor the groups sufficiently. Good

attention is paid to the introduction of phonic skills and this is made enjoyable for the children by the use of games, such as lucky dip, where children pick words out of a bag and decide whether it is the sound of the day or not. Staff encourage children to enjoy books and stories. Interesting books are chosen for the literacy hour, for example, and parents and carers are welcomed into the classroom before school, to share books with their children. There is scope for developing the book area to make it a more welcoming place to sit and enjoy reading. Children are beginning to write and understand that print conveys meaning. The writing corner is a very good stimulus for work in this area and children enjoy writing notes to their friends and posting them in the right pocket. Good use is made of registration time in the morning for children to practice writing their names on white boards. Most are now able to do this. At Copythorne children are taught a joined handwriting style from the beginning. This is entirely appropriate, but the style chosen involves a good many loops, which children find difficult.

### **Mathematical development**

82 In the session seen, children were making satisfactory progress in developing their understanding of shape. The teacher led a discussion on the properties of three-dimensional shapes, showing children cubes, spheres and cylinders. She introduced mathematical language such as 'faces' and 'square'. Most children grasped an understanding of the properties of solid shapes, and higher attaining children did well. They undertook a range of practical activities; some worked with the learning support assistant to measure their height in bricks, for example. While this approach ensured sound progress within a limited sphere, opportunities to develop children's understanding during the course of the day are lost. There is no clearly defined mathematical area, for example, where pupils can solve practical problems, use calculations and recognise and recreate patterns. There is too little emphasis on talking about and using numbers, in the form of number rhymes and songs, for example.

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

83 Children are developing an understanding of the world about them. They have looked at leaves, for example, and stuck these onto paper as part of their work on seasonal change. They have thought about the change in their own lives and brought in photographs to show how they have changed since they were babies. They have looked at clothes from other countries to see how they are different from their own. Children also make satisfactory progress in developing their skills on the computers. Most control the mouse well and select appropriate pictorial options by moving the cursor. They work well together on these tasks and persevere for extended periods.

### **Physical development**

84 Children use the space in the reception room well. They are aware of the constraints on their movement within the building and save their running and jumping for the outside area. Children have sessions in the school hall to develop their movement skills, but none were seen during the inspection. One outside play session was seen in which children used wheeled toys. All used these confidently and safely. Opportunities for learning in this session were limited however and although children enjoyed themselves acting as 'policemen' to the traffic, they made no advances in their physical development. Generally insufficient use is made of the rich outside learning environment to move children forward in their learning in this and other areas of the curriculum. Staff provide children with a range of opportunities to develop their fine motor control, such as play using construction toys, drawing and writing activities and work involving the use of scissors. These are available most days when children select activities from the planning board.



## **Creative development**

85 Children are provided with good and regular opportunities to engage in imaginative play in the home corner, which is currently a hospital. Work in art and music development is more structured and these two areas are led by specialist teachers. This works well in music. In the session seen, for example, children enthusiastically explored a variety of instruments and their sounds and achieved well. Class art sessions are slightly more difficult to organise in a reception class and the teacher managed well. Children worked in groups to print repeating patterns on cut out pictures of their bodies and most managed this well, printing very carefully. Some enjoyed experimenting with the printing equipment. In this particular session many children did not have enough time to undertake the activity, but the teacher was bound by the time constraints of this type of organisational pattern. Generally children need more regular opportunities to work with paint than a weekly session provides.

## **ENGLISH**

86 Standards in English have fluctuated slightly since the last inspection, with pupils doing better in 1999 than in the other two years. This is largely related to the balance of higher and lower attaining pupils in each year group. In 2000, for example, standards were slightly below average because of the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' attainment was low in comparison to their peers in similar schools. The last inspection found that although standards were broadly average, progress in writing in Year 2 was unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to tackle the need for improvement in writing and there has been some move forward in the teaching of this aspect. The inspection found that standards are again broadly average this year in all areas of English, with higher attaining pupils doing well in writing in Year 2. Progress is satisfactory in both year groups.

87 Throughout the school children speak confidently to each other and their teachers. They are given opportunities to develop their skills in the introductory part of lessons, when teachers often engage pupils in questioning and discussion. Most pupils speak clearly, sometimes in extended sentences. Occasionally pupils have the opportunity to report back to the whole class. A good example of this was at the end of a Year 1 art lesson, when the pupils took turns to explain their drawings to the rest of the class. In some sessions pupils are expected to work together on tasks and they negotiate sensibly at these times. This was evident in a session when Year 2 pupils worked in pairs on the computers to find 'ou' and 'ow' sounds in the dictionary. At the moment there is no planning guidance for the development of speaking and listening skills and teachers do not often highlight these skills in their daily planning. Drama is not planned on a regular basis.

88 There is a good emphasis on the teaching of reading and several new initiatives this term are helping parents to be more involved in supporting their children in their learning. A reading session has been introduced before school, for example. Parents and carers are invited to spend a few minutes before school starts reading with their children. There is no pressure on them to do so and children also happily share books with each other. A new reading diary is also being sent home, with sensible guidance for parents about the best way forward. Within the literacy hour there is a good emphasis on the teaching of phonic skills and children in both Years 1 and 2 know how to tackle difficult or new words. All pupils use a range of strategies, which include looking at the initial letter of the word, breaking the word into sections and working out the word from the meaning of the whole sentence. Teachers use the group reading session within the literacy hour to assess pupils' progress and move them forward further. The school has one core reading scheme and although it is good, it does not offer the challenge that a range of books would provide. In both classrooms the scheme books are stored under the art tables and are not easily accessible. There are book areas, but these house a limited range of attractive picture books and short novels. There

are no displays, for example, of the work of famous writers, or of books on a particular theme to grab pupils' interest. Consequently, although most pupils are positive about reading they have not developed an enthusiasm for particular writers or books. They are not yet 'hooked' on reading.

89 The school has worked hard to improve progress and standards in writing. There is some move forward this year and in Year 2, for example, higher attaining pupils often write in a lively way. An interesting display of a piece of writing from every pupil in the school entitled 'All about me' greets the visitor in the entrance hall. It clearly shows that pupils now make satisfactory progress through the school. A new handwriting policy and scheme of work underpin the teaching of handwriting. In common with local schools, Copythorne has adopted a joined style from the reception class onwards. Younger pupils often find it hard to cope with the joins of looped letters and a good style is not established until pupils reach Year 2. In this year group the handwriting of a few of the higher attaining pupils is of a very high standard. Results were disappointing in spelling in 2000 national tests and the school has tackled this well this term. 'Spell binder' books have been made for the pupils and this helps them to develop good habits in learning words by the 'look, cover, write, check' approach. Pupils practice and develop their writing skills in literacy hours and in science, history, geography and religious education sessions. However many of the tasks are similar and pupils are not extending the range of their writing. There is little evidence, for example, of pupils making books (either of stories, poems or instructions) or writing letters.

90 Overall the teaching of English is satisfactory and this is reflected in the sound progress that pupils make. Staff have worked hard to implement the literacy hour and in the two lessons seen, the teaching was good and very good and pupils achieved well. This was because teachers planned sessions very carefully, with clear learning goals for each part of the lesson. Resources were also well prepared and this meant that the lessons moved at a good pace. Teachers placed an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' phonic skills. They were clear in their explanations and held the pupils' interest well in the whole class part of the lesson. Activities were sufficiently challenging for all groups and this helped all to make good progress. Consequently, pupils are developing an understanding of how language works and beginning to apply this to their own writing. All pupils have their own literacy targets pasted into the front of their writing books and this helps them to understand what they need to do to improve. Generally, teachers do not give sufficient emphasis to helping pupils to appreciate the enjoyment of reading and excitement of writing, which would lift the quality of their English teaching overall. Marking is an area for development. There is some inconsistency between the two classes and not always sufficient guidance given to pupils about what they need to do to improve.

91 Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. In one session seen, the learning support assistant sat alongside a child in the whole class introduction in order to offer help where it was needed. Often support assistants work with these pupils in the activity part of the session and this helps them to move forward. This helps them to make at least satisfactory progress towards the targets on their individual education plans, which are often related to difficulties in reading and writing.

92 The new headteacher has taken on the co-ordination of work in this area and is giving a very strong lead. She has a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has set a clear agenda for improvement. She is monitoring teaching and standards by visiting classrooms and teachers have found the subsequent discussions about the work very useful.

## **MATHEMATICS**

93 Results of national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were below the national average. However, the margins are very fine and the small numbers involved means that these statistics are not significant. Standards at Copythorne are not far below average and pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily. The school came within two per cent of reaching its targets set for pupils to reach level 2 and level 3 in summer 2000. Boys have achieved better than girls overall over the past few years, but with smallish numbers in each year group, the finding is not necessarily significant. The school is aware of the pattern and is analysing progress by gender through its well organised tracking procedures.

94 Standards were average at the time of the last inspection in 1998. They have hovered between average and well below average over the past four years. Results in 2000 show an improvement on those in 1999 in terms of the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 2, but fewer pupils reached the higher level 3. The 1999 results show that the school had already begun to address the key issue from the last inspection about challenging more able pupils, with over a third of pupils reaching level 3. Variations year on year are to a large extent dependent on the proportion of pupils who show particular talent as compared with the proportion with special educational needs. Overall, the school has maintained standards in mathematics since the last inspection. Evidence from the current inspection shows that the attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is broadly average.

95 There is still room for higher attainers to be challenged further in Year 1, but they are now being clearly identified and teachers are setting extension activities for them. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They could do better, if they and their parents were more aware of the areas they needed to improve, but the school is in the process of addressing this. The headteacher has issued a newsletter about target setting to all parents and the school is organising mathematics homework, following a governing body consultation with parents last term.

96 Pupils' knowledge and skills are wide-ranging, but broadly average at the end of the foundation stage. The quality of their learning in Year 1 is satisfactory overall, as evidenced both in the lesson seen and pupils' work over the past half term. Pupils add and subtract confidently to ten and understand that it is easier to begin with the larger number when adding. They are developing quick mental recall of these addition and subtraction patterns. Their books show that they have experience of ordering numbers to fifty and several have an initial understanding of the place value of digits when writing tens and units. Pupils also recognise and name two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. They estimate and measure length, using both standard and non-standard units. Targets attached to the front of pupils' books show recognition of their different levels of attainment, but conversations with pupils show that higher attainers are not being fully challenged. Teaching correctly ensures thorough coverage of the numeracy strategy for Year 1 and planning includes extension activities from the Year 2 syllabus. In practice, pupils of average and below average ability are receiving a thorough grounding, but a few higher attainers are currently working well within themselves.

97 Year 2 pupils of all abilities are making satisfactory progress. In the lesson seen, the teacher provided good opportunities for learning and pupils made good progress in acquiring mental strategies to find the difference between two numbers. Pupils' exercise books show that they have sound understanding of the concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pupils order numbers up to one hundred, counting in twos, threes and fives and spotting patterns beginning at a given number. They solve problems involving the use of money to buy different items and describe the properties of common shapes. Higher attainers have experienced looking at larger numbers and show understanding of place value using thousands. A pupil knew, for example, that  $10 + 4000$  was written as 4010. They also understand how to find half or a quarter of a given number. Individual learning targets

attached to the front of their books are appropriately challenging for all abilities. For example, higher attainers are challenged to develop rapid recall when doubling numbers and to use this when adding, taking away, multiplying and dividing.

98 Teachers are implementing the national numeracy strategy conscientiously and teaching is ensuring pupils make satisfactory progress. There are examples of pupils using and applying their knowledge of mathematics in science lessons.

99 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' lesson planning is a strength. Lessons are well structured and teachers set a brisk pace during the introductory mental mathematics session. They identify learning goals for each lesson in their planning and organise appropriate activities for groups of different abilities, but do not always clarify the main learning points with pupils at the outset or refer to them at the end. As a result, pupils learn by completing the activities, but do not fully appreciate the concept or skill they have consolidated or acquired. Teachers are not currently making pupils aware enough of what it is they are learning, so that they can assess their own progress. Another strength of teaching is in the organisation, accessibility and use of resources. Teachers in both classes make very good use of number fans and number cards to promote learning in the mental mathematics sessions. Teachers also deploy assistants well to support groups, but the brief does not currently involve a clearly targeted assessment role. Teachers use time at the end of the lesson well to consolidate and reinforce pupils' learning. Teachers' questioning resulted in one or two very positive learning situations, where pupils thought hard in order to explain the mathematical strategies they were using to reach an answer. This important element of the numeracy strategy was evident, but not a strong feature in lessons.

100 The school has clearly worked hard to address findings of the previous inspection, in order to improve assessment procedures in mathematics and challenge more able pupils. With an almost total change of teaching staff since 1998, the school is aware of the need to consolidate the good work begun. The subject co-ordinator and headteacher will be working closely together to ensure that assessments are accurate and that more able pupils are fully challenged. The newly appointed headteacher has already begun a programme of monitoring teaching and learning and this has proved a supportive and effective approach.

## **SCIENCE**

101 Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in summer 2000 show that standards were below average and well below those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving above the standard expected for seven-year-olds was broadly average, however, suggesting that more able pupils were recognised and appropriately challenged. The strongest area was the study of life and living things, but a very low proportion of pupils attained satisfactorily in experimental and investigative science, compared with the national figure. These teacher assessments show a decline in standards from 1999, when the school's results were well above average. The inspection was unable to discover the causes of this decline, as no current staff were involved in the previous year's assessments. Inspection findings show average standards in the current year. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are putting a clear emphasis on investigative work and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily. In comparison with above average standards at the last inspection, standards are lower, but the uneven pattern of assessment results over the past few years does not show any discernible trend.

102 Pupils in Year 1 are studying the human body, growth and senses. They have learnt how to label parts of the body and know what are healthy and unhealthy foods. They have compared human and animal homes. During the inspection they were setting up an investigation to discover how sound travels. Pupils in Year 2 have been studying the

properties of materials and have developed their understanding through an investigational approach. They have conducted an experiment on different materials to compare absorbency and another to discover which material stretches most. During the inspection they used toy vehicles and ramps, along with different surface materials, to discover more in their work on pushes, pulls and forces in general. Pupils in both classes show enthusiasm and concentrate well to listen to their teachers' instructions. They work well together when required. They know where resources are kept and share these well, using them sensibly and safely. Only a few of the higher attainers in Year 2 were able to undertake the challenging tasks set in a structured and logical manner. Most pupils used the equipment well and noted their findings on tables they prepared for results. Few understood the concept of a fair test well enough to set up only one variable in their test, however. The activity offered good opportunity for pupils to phrase questions and predict what might happen, but was too open-ended to allow pupils to test their predictions accurately.

103 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In both lessons observed, the teachers deployed staff and used resources well. In one lesson, the purpose for the session was clear. In the other, the teacher tackled too many concepts for the pupils' levels of experience. They needed more understanding before combining the skills required. In this lesson, the teacher deployed an assistant and volunteer parent well in order to involve small groups in closely supervised active pursuits and to ensure completion of tasks. Teachers' knowledge of science is sound, and their record folders show evidence of well-organised assessment system, which has been uniformly adopted by the school. Assessments from the previous two years show some anomalies in the tracking system, however. For instance, in one year a pupil appears to have made good gains, but in the following year almost stands still, while another makes little gain in the first year and catches up in the second. The procedures for assessment are good, but require close monitoring to ensure that they are used well. Teachers give pupils opportunity to apply their numeracy skills when conducting experiments. Year 1 pupils counted steps, for example in their investigation into how far sound travels, and Year 2 pupils measured the distance their vehicle travelled. Pupils' books also show appropriate use of literacy skills in science, although standards of presentation are too varied.

104 The scheme of work chosen by the school offers a balance of opportunities to learn about life and living things, forces and materials and their properties and different expectations for the quality and quantity of recorded work. The school makes good use of its grounds to promote pupils' interest in science and the newly appointed co-ordinator is eager to develop relevant and interesting activities involving environmental study and thereby linking science, where appropriate, with other subjects.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

105 The school has recently invested in staff and resources in order to improve standards. At the time of the last inspection pupils' work was well below average and art had a low profile. This is no longer the case. Pupils' work is now celebrated in displays around the school and standards have risen, with pupils achieving levels appropriate for their age.

106 A part-time teacher has been appointed to lead the teaching of art throughout the school. At the moment she is leading class lessons. This is providing good opportunities for class teachers to observe a more experienced colleague. Work is planned after discussion with the class teachers so that the programme for the term complements work in other subjects. There is still scope for stronger links with other areas of the curriculum, perhaps related to the half termly topics.

107 In the lesson and part lesson seen, the teaching was good with very good features and

this helped pupils achieve well. The lessons were very well planned, with good attention paid to the development of skills. In Year 2, for example, pupils practised their observational drawing skills. The tasks were interesting and gripped pupils' imagination. In Year 1, for example, pupils listened to Holst's '*Jupiter*' from the '*Planets Suite*', before recording their emotional response on large sheets of paper. In Year 2 pupils paid a visit to the church in order to draw small details of the building. The tools and materials provided are now of a high quality and this also helps pupils to do well. In the Year 1 lesson, each child used two large pieces of black sugar paper, for example and in Year 2 each pupil now has a good quality sketch book to record work. Pupils are given good opportunities to talk about their work. In the Year 1 lesson, for example, all pupils spoke to their friends about their response to the music and explained what their drawings and marks represented. All responses were valued and ranged from descriptions of the story the music told to feeling of sadness or happiness.

108 Pupils' work is now displayed in classrooms and public areas. This too is an improvement from the last inspection, when little of the work was celebrated in this way. There is a large display in the hall, for example, of self-portrait drawings of all pupils. This shows clearly the development of pupils' drawing skills as they move through the school. Displays in the library include both observational work and some paintings based on the work of Monet. These show good colour mixing techniques and careful brushwork.

109 The new co-ordinator has worked very hard since her appointment this September to develop planning for the subject. Much of the work is based on a national scheme, and this will help to ensure that pupils develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a systematic way. The co-ordinator has also audited equipment, materials and resources and is using her allocated budget to supplement the existing provision. She is developing a portfolio of work, which will be helpful to all staff. This subject is still a developing area, with evidence of good progress this term.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110 Only one lesson was timetabled during the inspection. Evidence from displays of work and discussions with pupils supplements the evidence for judgements. Overall, standards are satisfactory in relation to pupils' ages. They are better than those reported in the last inspection. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and samples of work showing satisfactory achievement for pupils of all abilities. Higher attaining pupils explain their work well and those with special educational needs succeed because of the well planned programme of activities and teachers' clear explanations of tasks.

111 Year 1 pupils have designed and made a fruit salad during their first topic of the year. Photographs and samples work from the previous Year 1 show finished moving vehicles, together with appropriately labelled designs for these. In the lesson seen, pupils in Year 2 developed satisfactory cutting, folding and joining skills as they created castles with drawbridges in their investigation of winding mechanisms. The teacher discussed pupils' achievements individually as four groups tackled different aspects of this unit of work. One group used construction equipment to create an object containing a winding mechanism. Another provided a finish to their working models of drawbridges, painting the walls, bridge and battlements. A third group, assisted by the teacher, was just starting to cut the battlements and use doweling, string and masking tape to create the drawbridge. The fourth group completed an evaluation of their almost-finished models. The teacher had planned each of the tasks appropriately and had prepared resources well. As a result, pupils in every group focused on the task in hand and many achieved well in the forty minutes available. A few pupils in the construction group became engrossed in making pictures, forgetting the fact that they were designing and the group preparing evaluative comment did not receive

sufficient guidance in order to complete this task effectively. However, the overall achievements of the class were sound, with several pupils completing well made working drawbridges and three pairs of pupils collaborating well to make winding mechanisms with construction equipment. The drawbridges followed a common pattern, using much the same materials and fixing systems, but the winding mechanisms showed some original thought in their design. The teacher left insufficient time for sharing achievements and the end of the session was rushed, as expectations for tidying away efficiently and promptly were not fully clarified.

112 With a large change of staff, the school has sensibly adopted a new national scheme of work, which provides a good framework for teaching and assessing pupils' progress in the subject. Time is allocated appropriately to ensure sufficient coverage. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, but is less than a term in post and does not have a full overview of standards or pupils' progress.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

113 At the time of the last inspection, standards were average, although pupils' progress in Year 2 was unsatisfactory. Geography was not a focus for work during this inspection and there was insufficient evidence of pupils' work in books or on display to make a judgement about standards.

114 The new co-ordinator is developing a whole school planning document, based on a national scheme. This has some links with other curriculum areas. There is even more scope for extending these, by using a geographical text in the literacy hour, for example. Within the planning there is a good emphasis on local studies. The school is fortunate in its setting and provides rich opportunities for geographical work, both within the school grounds and in the surrounding area.

115 In both Years 1 and 2 pupils have looked at maps of the local area this term and identified features that they know. In Year 1, a display of photographs linked to their position on the map helps pupils to understand the relationship between reality and the paper representation. In Year 2, pupils recalled their own maps showing a 'bird's eye view' of the playground. They are interested in finding out about places and related their studies on Judaism to Israel. This term pupils are collecting shoe boxes filled with gifts to send to Romania and are aware that it is another country where standards of living are very different from our own. Pupils record their work in their topic books, alongside work in history and science. This helps pupils to appreciate the relationship between these areas. This term there is not as much recorded work related to geography as there is in other subjects.

116 Resources are at least adequate and include a range of maps, CD Roms and a growing 'Big Book' collection.

## **HISTORY**

117 Pupils achieve the levels expected for their age, with younger pupils developing their research skills particularly well. It is difficult to make direct comparisons with the previous inspection because no lessons were seen at that time, but planning has certainly improved considerably.

118 In both the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were finding out about famous people. In Year 1 they were studying the life of Grace Darling and in Year 2 pupils were investigating Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder plot. There were common threads that ran through both lessons. The planning and preparation in both cases were good. Both teachers

had selected interesting characters, whose lives gripped the pupils' imaginations and this helped them to become fully involved in the learning activities. There was a good balance planned between work on developing pupils' knowledge of past events and helping pupils to understand how to find out about the past. Resources were very well prepared and, in both classes, teachers used facsimiles of original documents, which helped to bring the lesson alive for the pupils.

119 In Year 1, the teacher's very good questioning techniques and her clear explanation of how historians use sources to discover the past helped the pupils to work as historians. They, considered a number of questions, for example, and discussed which sources would be useful in their enquiry. Some groups worked independently on this task, with minimal input from the teacher and showed that they had understood the link between original materials and subsequent suppositions about what happened. They decided that Grace Darling was famous, for example, because she had had her portrait painted, even though she was not a rich woman. In Year 2, the teacher rounded the lesson off well by a 'hot-seating' exercise, in which she took on the role of Guy Fawkes and invited pupils to ask her questions. In this way she was able to evaluate how much the pupils had understood.

120 Overall teaching is sound with some good and very good features. Strengths include the good emphasis on developing historical skills, especially historical enquiry, and the use of a range of interesting resources. Areas for development include extending the time for pupils to be actively involved, rather than listening to the teacher.

121 The planning for the year shows that an interesting programme of topics is covered. Some of these link with work in other subjects and provide good opportunities for a cross-curricular approach. At the moment pupils' work in history is sometimes linked to the development of skills in other subject areas. In one session seen for example, pupils used a CD Rom to find out more information about Guy Fawkes. However there is scope for even more links between subjects, especially in the areas of literacy, geography and art.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

122 Work in information and communication technology was highlighted for improvement by the last inspection because although pupils achieved average standards, they did not make satisfactory progress in Year 2. The situation has improved. Standards remain average, but most pupils now make satisfactory progress.

123 In Years 1 and 2, one whole class session was seen. Pupils also worked on computers, in small groups, during literacy and history sessions. It was evident from the work seen that pupils are enthusiastic about working with computers and this enthusiasm helped them to persevere even when the task set was quite difficult. In both Years 1 and 2 pupils are confident in their control of the mouse and keyboard and this enables them to use computers as a tool in a learning activity, without worrying about what to press next. In one literacy session, for example, Year 1 pupils made a list of words by changing the first syllable. They then used the computers to type the lists, achieving this quickly, without any help from the teacher. Pupils in Year 2 used a CD Rom to find out information about Guy Fawkes. Again the pupils concerned managed this well, moving easily from page to page to find the appropriate section. In discussion with older pupils it was evident that they use the computer for word processing and print off their work unaided. A few are clear about how to alter features, such as the font and print size and save work. At the moment pupils do not have a separate folder or file for their printed work.

124 In the session seen, the teacher led a discussion on control. This focused on things that were controlled in pupils' own homes. Skilful questioning helped pupils to consider this



issue carefully and pupils were eager to make suggestions. Pupils' ideas were valued. There was some interesting discussion on whether a door was controlled, for example. The concept of remote control was also considered. This session was a very good basis for subsequent work on the 'roamer', a programmed moving robot.

125 The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was good. The teacher had a clear understanding of the subject, clear learning goals for the session and used questioning extremely well to move pupils' understanding forward. Alongside class sessions, teachers plan work for small groups within other lessons. There is more scope here for using computers in numeracy and science. Parents and learning support assistants are used well to support pupils in some sessions.

126 The subject co-ordinator has been very recently appointed and is enthusiastic about her new role. She has a clear agenda for further improvements this year. The school is very well resourced. Staff are now ready to use the Internet within their work and extra resources, such as the newly acquired digital camera, will enhance the breadth of work possible. Planning is sound and the school is aware that modelling is not sufficiently emphasised. The co-ordinator is beginning to put together a portfolio of assessed work, but has yet to monitor work in classrooms.

## **MUSIC**

127 Two music lessons and a class recorder lesson were observed during the inspection. Pupils singing in assembly, teachers' planning and resources add to the evidence base for judgements in this subject. Standards are good in Year 1 and satisfactory in Year 2. Specialist music teaching is of very good quality. Pupils throughout the key stage are learning very successfully in a series of lessons with the newly appointed teacher. This marks an improvement from the last inspection when standards, progress and teaching were satisfactory.

128 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 participate enthusiastically in very-well-organised lessons in the hall. They sit in a circle, listening and watching closely as the teacher leads them in well-prepared routines, giving very clear instructions. Pupils respond to the teacher's high expectations. They echo to each line of the 'Hello' song and a few pupils offer individual solo lines for the others to echo. Year 1 pupils show very good awareness of dynamics as they echo first loudly and then softly, hearing and appreciating the contrasting effects. Each year group listens carefully to a piece of music and responds to the musical effects created.

129 Year 1 pupils showed perceptive appreciation of a Russian composition depicting a heavy ox cart trundling towards them and past into the distance. They followed the teacher's lead as she showed the crescendo of sound by lifting her hands slowly from the floor as the volume rose and lowering them to show the diminuendo. The teacher's clear planning, excellent subject knowledge and very good use of resources ensured that each element of the lesson proceeded at a brisk pace. All pupils used percussion instruments to follow the crescendo and diminuendo signs and to start and stop precisely together as the teacher drew a stick across the musical notation cards. Year 2 pupils also listened carefully to a piece of music called 'The Castle', appreciating its eeriness as they listened for layers in the music. They successfully identified low notes beneath the main tune and responded to them with rhythmic arm movements. In each lesson, the teacher used practical organisational ploys to involve pupils in using instruments without fuss. Three types of percussion instruments were stored on three levels of a trolley to ease collection. The teacher had prepared arrow cards to direct pupils to pick up or put down instruments ready to play. These strategies show close attention to detail, which avoids fuss and overcomes the need for discipline. Pupils understand the rules and expectations and respond by giving alert

concentration. In the Year 2 lesson, pupils used the instruments successfully to perform in three groups, providing layers of metal, wood and skinned percussion, with one group providing the continuous background, while the others began and finished as the teacher's notation chart depicted. Two pupils also took turns at conducting, bringing in sections of their percussion orchestra with pointing gesture and bringing them off with a clear signal.

130 All Year 2 pupils learn to play the recorder. In the lesson observed, they showed knowledge of simple notation on the treble clef and played repeating rhythms using the notes 'B' and 'A'. The teacher ensured that they held their instruments correctly and used their left hand appropriately for the fingering. She provided a lively series of supportive backing CD tracks, against which the recorder players performed, keeping strict time. The class teachers and assistants give good support to individuals during these lessons and use the opportunity to make assessment notes where appropriate. Pupils sing regularly in assembly and enjoy participating. They sing tunefully and make a pleasant sound. The subject is a strength of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

131 During the inspection, only one lesson was timetabled. Teaching and learning in this Year 1 lesson were very good. Standards are above average for pupils' ages. This shows clear improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below average and pupils made unsatisfactory progress in the subject. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 and with the co-ordinator show enthusiasm for the subject.

132 In the lesson observed, pupils showed good skills as a result of the teacher's clear instructions, based on careful planning. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with a particular gift in the subject, achieved well. This was because the teacher challenged everyone to listen carefully and to respond immediately to instructions. At the end of each brief activity, the teacher congratulated individuals or made useful comments to help pupils refine their work. Pupils showed good co-ordination and agility during an energetic warm-up as they hopped, skipped, bounced and jogged, forwards, backwards, sideways and 'the other way'. They clearly enjoyed putting effort into their activities and showed good balance and demonstrating awareness of space and others as they moved. Pupils practised curling and stretching movements to a 'Freeze' instruction, both on the floor and on the apparatus. They climb and jump safely on benches and low-level gymnastic tables.

133 The teacher had high expectations and assessed pupils' performance throughout the lesson. This made a considerable contribution to the very good learning. Pupils worked successfully as individuals, a few demonstrating effectively to help others improve. Pupils collaborated very well in groups of four to put apparatus in place and join benches to gym tables. Under the teachers' watchful supervision, they checked that each piece was fixed safely.

134 The school has a well-balanced programme of physical education, which includes dance, games and gymnastics. The co-ordinator is new to the school this term, but already has a good overview of planning for the subject. The local education authority adviser has offered good support, including a demonstration lesson and detailed planning guidance. This has boosted staff confidence. The hall is quite small, but teachers ensure that pupils adapt well to the available space. The last inspection reported facilities and resources as unsatisfactory. The school has remedied this situation and they are now adequate.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

135 Two lessons were observed during the inspection. Samples of work from a cross-section of pupils, discussions with teachers, planning and other documentation support the judgements. Standards seen meet the levels expected by the local Agreed syllabus in both Years 1 and 2. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school both in their knowledge about Christianity and Judaism and in their ability to reflect and make sense of their own experiences.

136 Teachers' lesson planning is thorough. As a result, teachers' explanations and their discussions with pupils focus successfully on the topics to be studied. In a Year 2 lesson on the Jewish festival of Chanukah, the teacher planned a number of activities to reinforce pupils' understanding of the festival. Pupils made Star of David cards and decorated a Chanukah Menorah, enjoying pronouncing the words. The teacher successfully challenged higher attainers in the class by involving them in learning the symbols and rules of the Jewish game of Dreidle. In the Year 1 lesson seen, the teacher introduced a series of lessons on Christianity by talking through pupils' understanding of the word 'Advent'. Pupils show an interest in the festivals studied and their exercise books show an equally strong involvement in reflective thought about special places and people. During the inspection, pupils visited the local church as part of an art lesson. The school cultivates the links between art, music and religious education successfully in lessons and assemblies. Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

137 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning for the religious education curriculum is securely based on the local education authority's Agreed Syllabus 'Vision and Insight' and the Diocesan Syllabus 'Inspire'. Teaching strengths lie in teacher's imaginative planning of activities and use of resources to stimulate interest. Samples of work show Year 2 pupils creating a special shelter in their study of Sukkoth and copying Hebrew script patterns as they develop understanding of the Torah and scrolls. The display on candlelight shows older pupils reflecting thoughtfully as a result of the teacher's thoughtful creation of a peaceful atmosphere. Through her good use of probing questions the teacher has successfully drawn expressive responses from the pupils. Other work samples from Year 1 show pupils expressing their understanding of the word 'special' in the context of places and families. Teachers' relationships with pupils are another strength. Pupils readily offer contributions in discussion because they know their teachers will accept their comments. Teachers are very effective role models in this context, promoting pupils' respect for the views and opinions of others. One area for development is in the organisation and management of pupils. In one lesson, sedentary activities follow another sedentary lesson, with pupils' responses consequently lethargic. In the other, the teacher focused very well on the group needing explanation and support and set the other groups off on creative activities, but did not clarify a time limit to the task or a sufficiently organised and calm approach to ensure completion.