

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OAKFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wickford, Essex SS12 9PW

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 131806

Headteacher: Mrs Annette McGibbon

Reporting inspector: Mr Michael Raven  
3961

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 230590

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Scott Drive  
Wickford  
Essex

Postcode: SS12 9PW

Telephone number: 01268 734343

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Sheila Becker

Date of previous inspection: N/A

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Michael Raven	Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Mr John Brasier	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does school care for its pupils and students? How well does school work in partnership with parents?
Mr Wallis Hart	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Foundation Stage	
Mrs Hazel Sumner	Team inspector	English History Music	Equal opportunities How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs Amanda Tapsfield	Team inspector	Art Design and technology Geography	

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London WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>[7]</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>[11]</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>[14]</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>[15]</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>[17]</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>[18]</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>[19]</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>[20]</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>[22]</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>[28]</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oakfield Primary School is a new school which opened in January 2000. It caters for 274 boys and girls aged from four to eleven years. There are more boys than girls. Most pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage and only 14 come from minority ethnic groups. Twenty-four per cent of pupils have special educational needs and these cover a wide range of physical, learning and behavioural difficulties. Ten pupils are learning English as an additional language. Only one of these is at an early stage of the acquisition of English. Children enter the Reception classes with attainment which is a little below the county average for their age in basic skills such as language and the understanding of numbers. The school has not previously been inspected.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is doing a very good job. The teaching is very good and this leads to very good learning. The school is very well led and managed. Although standards are generally low in Year 6, this is not the fault of the school. These pupils have only been in the school for a small part of their education and they came from many different schools, often with a poor educational record. They are making very good progress as a result of the very good teaching they receive and they are fast catching up to where they should be at this stage. The school uses its funds wisely to promote educational improvement and it offers good value for money.

#### What the school does well

- The headteacher and other senior staff provide very good leadership and management and they ensure an excellent sense of direction for the school.
- The teaching is very good.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development very well, so that behaviour is very good and relationships are excellent.
- It has established a very effective partnership with parents, who think highly of the school.
- There is an outstanding shared commitment to improvement and the school is very well placed to succeed.
- The school keeps a very close check on how pupils are getting on.

#### What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education at the end of Year 6.
- Standards in information and communication technology at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Opportunities for pupils to investigate things and learn independently.

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

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	

English	n/a	n/a	E	E	well above	A
					average above	B
					average	
mathematics	n/a	n/a	E	E*	average	C
					below average	D
science	n/a	n/a	E*	E*	well below	E
					average	

*Only two pupils aged 11 took the national tests in 2000 and so the grades for that year have been omitted*

Standards in the most recent national tests for 11 year olds were well below average. In science they were among the lowest five per cent nationally. Standards were very low when compared to those found in similar schools. The pupils taking these tests had not been at the school very long. They came from many different schools, often having done badly and so seeking a fresh start at this new school. There was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs – almost half. Many pupils had behavioural difficulties and there were very few who entered the school with above average attainment. These factors account for the very poor standards achieved last year. The inspection shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are still below average in the present Year 6, but not well below. They are also below average in information and communication technology (ICT). This Year 6 is again a small group of pupils with an above average number with special educational needs and a chequered educational background. Although they are achieving well and catching up and standards are better than last year's, they are still not reaching the standards expected of 11 year olds nationally. In particular, few pupils are reaching above average levels of the National Curriculum. The school's targets for the attainment of this group of pupils in the 2002 national tests are realistic, but necessarily below average. The inspection of standards in Year 5 gives clear evidence of a rising trend. These pupils are achieving the standards expected at their age and many are doing better than expectations. Standards in art, geography and religious education are also below average by the end of Year 6. Standards by the end of Year 2 are a lot better than they were in last year's national tests and teachers' assessments for seven years olds, when they were very low. Standards in reading are now above average. They are also above average in mathematics. In writing and in most other subjects they are average, but in ICT they are below average. The generally average and sometimes above average standards found at this stage reflect pupils' good achievement, since they start school with below average basic skills.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils enjoy coming to school and take an enthusiastic part in all that it has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The school has worked hard and has successfully established very good behaviour in lessons, in the playground and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	As a result of the school's very effective work on pupils' personal development, and the very good example set by staff, relationships between pupils and with staff are excellent.
Attendance	Good. It has improved very well this year.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
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Lessons seen overall	Good	Very Good	Very Good
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*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.*

English and mathematics are taught very well and teachers are good at teaching reading and the use of number. The teaching has many strengths. The most important of these are the effective methods used, the very good management of pupils and the use made of time, support staff and resources. Teachers employ a good range of very effective methods, including plenty of good, clear whole-class teaching. They take particular care to help pupils understand why things are as they are, rather than just imparting information. Time is used to the full and lessons start promptly and proceed at a brisk pace. Learning support assistants give very valuable help to teachers and pupils and they play a key role in seeing that the needs of all pupils are met, including those who have special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. There are good arrangements to meet the needs of the most able pupils, for example though their withdrawal from some lessons into special groups. This helps them to achieve well, in line with their abilities. A particular strength of pupils' learning is the interest they show in lessons and their very good levels of concentration.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. A full curriculum is provided, which covers all the required elements of the National Curriculum and religious education. It is enriched well by a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Their needs are carefully analysed and defined. They are given plenty of good quality support to help them learn and a close check is kept on how they are getting on.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language are helped to have full access to the curriculum, alongside their peers. A careful check is kept on their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, but more could be done to promote pupils' awareness and appreciation of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after its pupils well. It is very good at keeping a check on pupils' progress and personal development.

The school has established a very strong partnership with parents. It keeps them well informed about what goes on and how their children are doing.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and other senior staff give the school a very clear sense of purpose and direction.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and of priorities for future development. Governors take good care to keep themselves well informed about what goes on.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is a good programme for checking on the quality of teaching, and this has played an important part in promoting the very good quality teaching observed. The school carefully analyses its performance in national and other tests and compares its results with those of other schools.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The governing body uses its funding wisely to promote educational achievement.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are very good. There are many strengths in the leadership and management provided by the headteacher and other key staff. As well as an outstandingly clear sense of educational direction, these include the very good support provided for new and newly-qualified teachers and the effective pursuit of the school's aims. The school takes good care to secure value for money in obtaining goods and services.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they receive about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection supports all the parents' positive views. It finds that the information they receive about their children's progress is good, which compares favourably with that usually provided, and the amount of homework is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The inspection shows that standards are improving. They are better in English, mathematics and science now than they were when pupils in Years 2 and 6 took national tests and assessments in 2001. Although they are now above average in reading and mathematics in Year 2, they remain below average in Year 6, though are not well below as they were in 2001.
2. Standards are rising because pupils are taught very well and they have very positive attitudes to their work, so that they achieve well. This good achievement is true of pupils of all different abilities, including those who have special educational needs and the small number of pupils learning English as an additional language. The school has identified a small number of pupils as gifted or talented and it takes good care to see that the most able achieve well and reach their full potential, for example by teaching them in separate groups for some mathematics lessons and setting work that challenges them.
3. Because this is a new school, all except the youngest pupils came from a number of other schools. The pupils taking national tests at the end of Year 6 last summer had been at the school for five terms at most. Just under half of these pupils came to the school with special educational needs, a lot with behavioural difficulties, and many were seeking a fresh start. Examination of how they did in national tests when they were seven shows that many had very low attainment at that stage. The school population was also initially unstable, with many pupils leaving and joining part way through the school year. This is why standards were well below average last year, despite the fact that most pupils did meet the targets which the school set for them. The inspection clearly shows that, as the youngest pupils work their way up through the school, standards are getting better. This is because they have been at the school since the start of their schooling and so benefited from the very good quality education provided.
4. Children's good achievement in the Reception classes means that, although they start school with basic skills in literacy and numeracy which are less well developed than those usually found nationally at this age, they are mostly on course to reach expected levels by the time they leave the Reception classes. Many do better than expected in reading. This is because the school is taking part in a very effective experimental programme for the teaching of reading, in co-operation with the local education authority. This programme helps the children develop a very secure understanding of the sounds that letters make, so that they are able to tackle many unfamiliar words in their reading independently, working them out from their sound and letter combinations. The beneficial effects of this programme are also seen in Year 2, where standards in reading are above average. When the school's original Reception class children were tested last summer, all of them had reading levels which at least matched their chronological age and over half of them had reading ages a year or more in advance of their actual age.
5. The Reception classes promote good achievement through the good quality teaching and the very good climate for learning which is created. Children respond with enthusiasm to the wide range of learning opportunities offered. They develop positive attitudes to their work and the many good opportunities to work together successfully promote their personal and social development. For example, they learn to do things independently of adults, such as working together safely and sensibly to set out mats and benches for a physical activity session.

Teachers appropriately emphasise the need to co-operate well together in order to accomplish such tasks successfully. Because the teachers have very good skills in controlling the class, the children get on well together and feel safe and secure. They respond to their work with interest and enthusiasm.

6. The good achievement established in the Reception classes extends throughout the school. Despite this, standards in English, mathematics and science remain below the national average in Year 6. They are also below average in some of the other subjects. This is because this small group of only 22 pupils in Year 6 includes a higher than usual proportion with special educational needs and many of the most able have left the school during the past year as their parents moved away from the area. Inspection evidence shows clearly that these pupils are learning at a fast rate in response to the very good teaching they receive. This means that they are catching up, and about half of them are reaching average levels in English and mathematics but very few are exceeding the average level, whereas about a quarter do so nationally.
7. Standards in English are below average in Year 6. Only a minority of pupils speak in well-structured sentences, fluently and with a good vocabulary. A few – mostly those with special educational needs – are rambling and hesitant. Most pupils' handwriting is well-formed and legible, even when they are making quick notes. The majority of pupils are able to recall that some of the texts they study start with an issue, develop the arguments for and against and end with a summary of the points being made. They understand that the reader should be left to make up his or her own mind on the issue after reviewing the arguments. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading are now above average. Most pupils read confidently and with good expression. They are good at working out unfamiliar words using their knowledge and understanding of the sounds that letters make and how they combine to make words. Many can read words they have never met before, such as *agonise* and *memorise*, using these skills. Most of them can use their understanding of syllables to analyse the beat in poems and read them rhythmically. They make good use of their developing understanding of parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs and adjectives, in analysing text.
8. Standards in mathematics are below average in Year 6. Most pupils are able to round numbers up and down to the nearest whole number, showing, for example, that 3.75 is rounded up to 4. They can collect and analyse data, for example the frequency with which different names occur in school, and represent these data in a graph. This sort of work is more usually done also by younger pupils – typically in Year 4. By the end of Year 2, about half the pupils can successfully sort three-digit numbers into hundreds, tens and units, which is beyond expectations at this age. Almost all can tell the time. Whilst most are confident telling the time to the hour and half hour, many are confused when trying to show a quarter to or past the hour, although the most able can do this confidently. Their attainment in mathematics is above average.
9. There are some good example of pupils investigating mathematical puzzles and problems. For example, in Year 1 pupils can work out the sequence in a given pattern so that they can continue the pattern for themselves. In Years 5 and 6 the most able pupils learn to solve problems by interpreting data in charts, for example showing the distance between different places on a map. Such opportunities to investigate and work things out for themselves are helpful because they deepen pupils' understanding and so raise standards. Overall, there are too few opportunities for pupils to do this sort of work, which could also be of benefit in many other subjects, as well as in mathematics.

10. Standards in science are below average in Year 6. Most pupils are confident about what happens when different substances are combined into a mixture. For example, they know that when salt dissolves it is retrievable. They understand that different substances take different amounts of time to dissolve. Although pupils have some appropriate opportunities to investigate and find things out for themselves, and they make good progress in their understanding when they do this, overall this important aspect of science is under-developed. Pupils' understanding of physical processes, such as electricity, is also less well developed than is usual at this age. By the end of Year 2, most pupils know about the senses and can name the main parts of a plant and say what they do – for example, that the roots anchor the plant in the soil and that the stem holds the plant upright. They can sort materials according to what they are made of. But here, too, there are too few opportunities for pupils to investigate and find things out for themselves and so deepen their understanding.
11. Standards in ICT are below average for two main reasons. Firstly, the staff are still getting to grips with some very good new equipment, such as the interactive teaching screen which was just in its first week of use at the time of the inspection. More importantly, pupils have too few opportunities to apply what they learn in ICT lessons to their learning in other subjects and they do not have enough opportunities to apply ICT independently, research and find things out for themselves. However, things are improving rapidly and the school is well placed to raise standards.
12. The below average standards in religious education at the end of Year 6 come about because teachers put too little stress on developing pupils' understanding of the religions they study, as opposed to their knowledge which just about meets the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards are not helped by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6. The inspection shows that pupils in Year 5 are doing much better, as they are generally.
13. Standards in art and geography are also below average in Year 6. Although the subject co-ordinators have a clear understanding of how both subjects need to be developed, there has been too little monitoring of the quality of teaching, in particular to check that teachers are systematically developing pupils' skills and understanding.

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

14. Attitudes and behaviour are very good and relationships in the school are excellent.
15. Pupils very much enjoy school. They are enthusiastic in lessons. They are welcoming to visitors and enjoy talking to them. Once in class they get down to work very well and show a genuine interest in their work. This was evident, for example, in a history lesson in which Victorian artefacts were being studied with great fascination. These positive attitudes are due to the excellent relationships between teachers, learning support assistants and the pupils, to the enthusiasm of teachers and their very good classroom management skills.
16. Pupils' behaviour is very good overall. It is very good in most classes, although sometimes it has to be carefully managed, and occasionally the pace of lessons declines slightly because of the time devoted to this management. In the playground behaviour is very good and very well supervised. There is immaculate behaviour in assemblies. Around the school and at lunchtime in the dining hall behaviour is also very good. School property is treated well and pupils are appreciative of the splendid environment in which they work. There were fourteen temporary

exclusions in the past school year, but they are now virtually eliminated as the initial behaviour problems have been overcome.

17. Relationships are excellent. This is an extremely happy school, and teachers and classroom assistants know their pupils well and enjoy working with them. Pupils are confident in speaking to members of staff about problems. Pupils help each other and give support. For instance, in a physical education lesson, where pupils were asked to work in pairs to produce their own elegant sequence of movements, the level of collaboration was outstanding and no one took advantage of the opportunity to deviate from the task in hand. Recently appointed teachers speak of the tremendous welcome they receive on joining the school and the readiness of all other staff to spend time with them. The very low level of staff absence reflects the excellent relationships within the school at all levels.
18. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have opportunities to take on positions of responsibility or use their initiative, which they do with alacrity. There are limited opportunities for pupils to work independently in their lessons. The School Council provides good opportunities for pupils to seek the views of their peers and present them to their regular meetings.
19. Attendance is good. Last year it was just below the national average for primary schools, but in the autumn term there was a dramatic improvement from 93.5 to 97.2 per cent, which, even allowing for the fact that the autumn term is generally the best, is a very good performance. Unauthorised absence made a parallel improvement. The school day starts on time and there is good timekeeping throughout the day. The registration system is efficient.

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

20. The quality of teaching is very good, taking the school as a whole. In all, teaching in eight out of every ten lessons observed was found to be good or better, with a third very good or excellent. This is much better than the proportion of good or better teaching usually found nationally when primary schools are inspected – about six out of every ten lessons. Teaching in almost one in every ten lessons was excellent. Again, this compares very favourably with other primary schools. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Although teaching is good overall in the Reception classes, it is better in one class than the other. Most of the good and very good teaching seen at this stage was seen in one class, with teaching in the other class being mainly satisfactory.
21. Reading, writing and number are taught well throughout the school. This promotes good learning and its effects are seen, for example, in the Reception classes. Although many of these children start school with skills which are not as good as those usually found at this age, the good teaching which they receive helps them learn fast, so that most reach the average standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing and mathematical development by the time they go up to Year 1. The effects of the good teaching are also seen in Year 6, where pupils who came to the school with poor standards overall are catching up, so that some are beginning to reach average standards in English and mathematics. Teachers have a good working knowledge of the national strategies for teaching literacy and the use of number, and they make good use of these to promote pupils' skills.
22. The teaching of the other subjects is also good overall throughout the school. Exceptions are in geography, ICT in Years 1 and 2, and physical education and religious education throughout the

school, where teaching is satisfactory. The teaching of ICT is very good in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. History is also taught very well. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in music, because it was not possible to gather enough first-hand evidence.

23. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils very well. Learning support staff play a particularly important role in meeting pupils' needs, particularly those who have special educational needs and including those who have statements of special educational needs. Such pupils are supported very well in lessons by class teachers and support staff, who take care to provide suitable activities so that these pupils enjoy the full range of learning activities along with the rest of the class. Individual education plans set out clear and appropriate targets for pupils with special educational needs to aim for. Teachers and learning support staff make good use of these plans to guide them in their work with these pupils. The school has started to identify pupils with particular gifts and talents and is considering how best to meet their needs. There is already some very good work done to meet the needs of the most able, for example by withdrawing them into special high ability groups for some of their mathematics lessons. This arrangement helps them fulfil their potential and it is having the effect of raising standards overall. The needs of those remaining in class can also be better met when the most able are withdrawn, as this gives teachers and support staff the opportunity to match teaching more closely to their needs. The few pupils learning English as an additional language are also taught and supported very well and helped to make good progress in their learning.
24. Staff are good at meeting the needs of boys and girls equally well, so that no significant differences in their learning or the standards they achieve could be detected during the inspection.
25. Teachers make good use of a range of appropriate teaching methods. In particular, they use plenty of whole class teaching well to demonstrate and explain things clearly, so that pupils understand well and make good progress in their learning. This was seen, for example, in a lower ability group numeracy lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The teacher devoted a good part of the lesson to explaining and demonstrating clearly how to calculate the area of a shape formed from rectangles. As a result, by the end of the lesson most pupils were confident using the formula for finding the area of a shape and all but a few moved on to create their own shapes and work out their area. This meant that most of the Year 6 pupils in the group, despite being of lower ability, were working at the expected level for their age in this aspect of mathematics by the end of the lesson, and so represented good achievement on their part. In a lesson with the higher ability Year 5 and 6 pupils, the teacher put particular emphasis on seeing that pupils understood what they were doing, so that they knew not only what to do to convert distances in miles to kilometres, but *why* we multiply kilometres by 0.62 to convert to miles.
26. All the time available for teaching and learning is used to the full. Lessons start on time and proceed at a stimulating pace. The effect on pupils is that they work hard and their concentration and interest are good.
27. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. This ensures that the conditions for learning are right. Pupils respond to their teachers' good, firm, positive behaviour management by behaving very well, concentrating and getting on with their work sensibly. When they first start school not all of the children are ready to fit in with the group and get on and learn. Some of the oldest beginners exhibit some quite difficult behaviour during their first weeks in school, so that it can take the full attention of the adults present to keep a small number of the children on task. Reception class teachers and support staff work hard and very effectively to promote good

personal, social and emotional development, so that good progress is made and most children have good attitudes and personal and social skills by the time they go up to Year 1.

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

28. The school provides pupils of all ages with a wide range of good quality learning opportunities. The curriculum at all stages meets statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education in the Reception class. These younger children are also benefiting from the updating of their learning opportunities in line with the newly formulated national ‘stepping stones’ towards the relevant early learning goals. Teachers interpret these in stimulating ways which ensure that the children experience a broad curriculum that results in a positive attitude towards learning, meets their developmental needs and provides a secure foundation for future learning in the main school.
29. The time which the school allocates to teaching and learning is above average for primary pupils. It is appropriately divided between the subjects in the National Curriculum. Good quality provision for literacy and numeracy is firmly established. Checks on how well the curriculum is working lead to appropriate refinements such as the amendments which have been made to literacy lessons. In order to ensure that staff have plenty of time to give pupils intensive help with their writing, they now make excellent use of regular, smaller time slots such as periods of registration to hear pupils read. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, they write evaluations of the products they have designed and made in design and technology lessons and read temperature charts in geography, comparing the climate in the United Kingdom and a range of holiday destinations. The provision for pupils to refine their ICT skills through the use of ICT in other subjects is unsatisfactory. This means that they do not achieve as well in ICT as they could, with more regular practice in other lessons.
30. The school ensures equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils. Those with special educational needs receive good quality teaching and support for the development of their literacy and numeracy skills, with work closely based on the targets set in their individual education plans. The small minority of pupils learning English as an additional language receive good quality, specialised teaching and support on a daily basis. They make rapid progress as a result and are soon participating fully in learning across the curriculum. The most able pupils have full access to the curriculum and it is suitably modified so as to provide extra challenge for them, particularly in English and mathematics. Boys and girls have equal opportunities to succeed, usually working in mixed gender groups in all subjects. Learning challenges within lessons are matched to the needs of all pupils, enabling all to make good progress. Pupils with special gifts and talents have been identified and the school is working towards modifying the curriculum to meet their particular needs.
31. Provision for pupils’ personal and social education is good. The initial policy for this area of learning is under revision as the school seeks to include new national initiatives such as education for citizenship. The provision for the children in the Reception classes is already a strength of the school. Pupils in the main school profit from weekly personal and social education sessions. These are supported by learning in science and religious education lessons in particular. The school makes appropriate provision for sex education, with extra provision for the older pupils, and there is appropriate education on the mis-use of drugs.

32. The curriculum is enriched by good arrangements for pupils to visit places of educational interest. Visitors include theatre groups. A residential experience for older pupils is planned for the near future. The provision for activities outside lessons is very good. It includes an extensive range of opportunities to develop sporting, musical and computer skills, for instance. An especially valuable feature is the homework club where pupils can work in supportive conditions, benefiting from having teachers on hand to give them help and advice when necessary. Pupils make very good use of these extra-curricular opportunities.
33. The curriculum is also enhanced by the good quality links which the school has with other educational institutions in the locality. They include local play groups, providers of trained nursery assistants, teacher education institutions and local secondary schools. The school is in the process of developing productive links with the local business community. It already benefits from the presence of two local business representatives on the governing body.
34. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Spiritual development is fostered through assemblies, which always contain a spiritual element, signalled by the lighting of a candle. For instance the Year 6 class assembly that presented a dance version of *Snow White*, which was very well received, led into a relevant prayer led by one of the pupils.
35. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Drama is used effectively in personal and social education lessons and assemblies to explore moral issues, and the promotion of moral values is part and parcel of everyday life in the school. Pupils who depart from the school rules or code of conduct are expected to reflect on their actions and discuss why they were inappropriate.
36. Lessons where pupils sit in a ring and take it in turn to express their views or recount their experiences [circle time] are frequently devoted to moral or social issues and these are very effective.
37. The provision for social development is very good. There are many good things, such as the buddy system for new entrants, the interest taken in supporting charities, the practice of suggesting that pupils have brief discussions with their neighbours during class to consider a problem, and the frequent opportunities for working in pairs or groups. For example, a new pupil who spoke no English was given enormous help by his classmates and there was great competition to be his buddy. A very good feature of the school is the high calibre of lunchtime supervision. It is very helpful that many of the lunchtime supervisors have appropriate qualifications and are well known to the pupils because they also work with them in lessons in the role of learning support assistants. This ensures a high level of social development in the playground. Citizenship is promoted in personal and social education lessons and participation in the school council.
38. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Although pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultures, not enough is done to help them to understand the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nature of British society as a whole. There are a number of multi-cultural artefacts and books in the school and there have been a small number of appropriate activities, but this aspect does not have a sufficiently high profile. Drama is a good feature with a number of performers coming into the school.

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

39. Members of staff know pupils very well and because of this a good quality of care pervades the school. The school is a safe environment with all the expected safety measures in place and safety inspections recorded. Child protection procedures are good. The nominated person, the headteacher, is experienced in this field. She has good contacts and knows the local procedures. All staff have been trained. Pupils with difficult home circumstances are carefully monitored by staff. Welfare facilities are good, and pupils with health problems are clearly identified to those who need to know. There are eleven trained first aiders, which is a good number for a school of this size.
40. Procedures for the promotion of attendance are very good. The school makes telephone calls to all parents on the first day of absence if no notification has been received. Letters are sent home requesting reasons for absence if none have been provided. Rewards are given for 100 per cent attendance but not for improved attendance, which could encourage even better attendance. There is strong resistance by the school to holidays taken in term time and a campaign against this is about to be launched. The impact of poor attendance on a pupil's education is stressed to parents at meetings and parental interviews. The education welfare officer has been unavailable for the last two terms and the school's staff have capably taken on the work she used to do.
41. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are excellent. The emphasis is on praise, rewards, and consistency in applying sanctions. Staff are skilled in classroom management and these skills are frequently monitored and promoted, as are the other aspects of the behaviour policy. Embedded in these procedures are the excellent relationships within the school, because these caring attitudes pervade all that goes on and discourage poor behaviour. There are excellent procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour, through assemblies, circle time and making a point of listening to pupils to hear their concerns and experiences. Pupils are able to communicate discreetly with the headteacher through a post box if they have concerns they do not wish to publicise.
42. There are very good procedures for supporting pupils' personal development. Every term teachers compile a written report on each pupil that includes details of their social progress. Any concerns or adverse trends revealed by these reports are investigated and resolved. Mostly the support comes from teachers' close observation of the progress of their charges and their keen interest in seeing them succeed. Teachers talk sympathetically about their pupils, especially the ones causing them concern.
43. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. The use of assessment information is also very good as are the procedures for supporting pupils' academic progress.
44. Weekly planning sheets are used to record the names of pupils who are having difficulty in lessons or for whom the lesson has been particularly successful. This information is used to modify what is next taught or change the grouping of pupils for work. Optional national tests are taken at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 and these results are analysed and stored on the computer. This prepares a record showing each pupil's progress through the school, predicts the results of future tests and compares the results with the prediction. Thus, pupils failing to meet their potential can be identified, as well as those doing better than expected. These results are used to see that the work set closely matches pupils' particular learning needs. Reading levels and academic progress are recorded termly and used to monitor the progress of individuals. In addition to the computerised records, annual assessments of attainment, mainly in terms of national levels, are recorded for all subjects, including more detail on English, mathematics and science, and progress in English as an additional language [where applicable].

These are also used to guide pupils. The performance of groups of pupils, for example by gender, ethnicity, year group or class is readily available from the computer and is an invaluable planning aid, which is used by the school to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are met. A careful check is kept on how pupils with special educational needs are getting on, so that the teaching and support they receive can be adjusted as necessary.

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

45. The school has established very good links with parents. Parents have favourable views of the school. They appreciate the good teaching, feel that the school is approachable and that their children are expected to work hard. They think the school is well managed, that the behaviour is good and the school has high expectations. The highest area of discontent was from one seventh of the parents answering the questionnaire who thought that they were not well informed about progress. The inspection team agrees with the positive comments and finds that the information about progress is good. This issue frequently occurs nationwide as a concern of a minority of parents who answer the pre-inspection questionnaire.
46. The quality of information provided for parents is good. Information about what is being taught is regularly provided, as are newsletters. The prospectus is well presented although it is short on information about the curriculum. The annual report by the governors is brief and could be more informative about the school's achievements. School reports have very good descriptions about what has been done. There are targets for improvement, usually well expressed, but occasionally lapsing into language which may not be easily understood by parents. Most parents attend the three consultation evenings on progress at which their child's record of achievement is discussed. The third evening is an open evening without detailed appointments. All are welcome. It is a celebration of the school's facilities. Parents are also invited to attend numeracy and literacy demonstrations. They have also been invited to observe numeracy lessons in the school and have found the experience useful. Parents of children with special educational needs are invited to come to a meeting once a term at which their child's individual education plan is helpfully discussed. Many parents are pleased to accept these invitations.
47. The school is very approachable, teachers being available informally at going-home time, and parents being made to feel welcome when they come into school.
48. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good. Parents support class assemblies and sports activity days and help in the classroom, for example in food technology lessons. There is a very active parent teacher association that provides valuable finance for the school and helps to make school fun by arranging events such as discos and Christmas parties. Parents support reading and other homework activities. The school keeps in touch with the views of parents by sending out questionnaires on various aspects of its work and makes an appropriate response to parents suggestions.

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

49. The headteacher provides very good leadership, setting appropriately high standards of professional practice. She manages the school very efficiently. Her strong leadership, coupled with an outstanding sense of purpose and educational direction for the school, mean that this new school has got off to a very promising start, promoting a high quality education for its pupils. The headteacher's very clear understanding of what needs to be done to provide the very best

quality education and promote the highest standards is shared by staff, who show a strong and convincing commitment to improvement. During the inspection, inspectors were often asked by teachers, *What do I have to do to improve my teaching?*

50. The headteacher is very well supported in leading and managing the school by an effective senior management team, made up of the deputy headteacher and the senior teacher. The headteacher effectively delegates appropriate responsibilities to senior staff, for example they play an important part in checking on the quality of teaching and developing good practice. Because the school has, quite correctly, concentrated on getting the climate for learning right and on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, the roles of subject co-ordinators in some subjects, such as religious education and physical education have not yet developed to their full extent. So, although there is a good programme for checking on and developing the quality of teaching in English and mathematics, there is no such careful watch on teaching in some of the other subjects. The headteacher, senior managers and subject co-ordinators carry out regular lesson observations and give teachers feedback on the quality of their teaching and what could be done to improve. This programme makes a clear contribution to the high quality of teaching observed. The headteacher has adopted an appropriate policy of providing much positive feedback and advice at the start of her monitoring programme and is gradually increasing the amount of critical appraisal as teachers gain more experience of being monitored, and their confidence increases.
51. The governing body is doing a good job. Members have a clear commitment to the school and its development and improvement. Although many are new to the role, governors have worked hard to acquire appropriate skills and understanding in a relatively short period of time. All governors have links with subjects of the curriculum and many have visited the school to observe lessons. The chair of governors has developed her skills well, and her achievements have been recognised recently in the award of the Chair's Award by the local education authority. She meets regularly and works closely with the headteacher. In discussion with inspectors, governors showed a clear and thoughtful understanding of the school and some of the issues it faces, such as raising standards in Year 6.
52. The headteacher, senior staff and the governing body take care to keep a careful check on how well pupils are learning and the standards they are achieving. They compare the performance of their pupils in national tests and assessments in Years 2 and 6 with those of other schools nationally and locally, including the standards achieved by pupils in similar schools. All staff and the governing body have a clear understanding of how the school is doing and can discuss clearly and convincingly why standards are as they are – for example, in Year 6, where they are below average.
53. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is managed well. The co-ordinator, who has oversight of both aspects of the school's work, keeps a careful check on how pupils are getting on. She monitors the quality of teaching and support which these pupils receive and works appropriately in conjunction with teachers, support staff and parents to support pupils' learning.
54. Educational priorities are well supported by the school's financial planning. The headteacher and the governors manage the school's budget well and aim to have an appropriate surplus of two per cent by the year end, plus a four per cent provision for moving the computer suite to the new accommodation that is about to be built. Specific grant is appropriately used for the specified purposes and special educational needs funding is topped up by the school. The day-to-day financial control and administration are efficient and the office is a welcoming point of

contact for visitors. Best value is achieved well. Options for expenditure are carefully evaluated. Competitive quotations are sought, for example for construction work, through an intermediary who ensures both good quality and low cost. Comparisons are made where appropriate data are available, and parents, staff and others are consulted where they have an input to make.

55. A manageable number of appropriate priorities for development are clearly identified in the good school development plan and the budget.
56. The school is well staffed, with a good spread of qualifications. Of especial value are the qualifications held or being sought by learning support assistants, one of whom is qualified in teaching English as an additional language. Staff development is appropriately driven primarily by the school development plan, with secondary input from individual's perceived development needs. – There are appropriate procedures for checking on the professional development of teachers and the appraisal of non-teaching staff is about to start for the second year. This is good practice. There are very good arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school. Staff are highly committed and there is excellent collaboration between teachers and learning support assistants, which greatly benefits pupils.
57. Accommodation is very good, as is to be expected in a new school, although the hall will be too small for whole-school assemblies when the extension has been built. The paired classrooms often result in a high noise level for teachers and pupils to contend with, but there usually seems to be little ill-effect on learning.
58. Resources are very good in all areas except for education on cultural diversity.

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

59. In order to improve the education offered still further, and raise standards, the governing body, headteacher and staff should now:
  - (1) Raise standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education in Year 6 and in ICT in Years 2 and 6. (Paragraphs 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 70, 80, 82, 87, 88, 121, 137, 139).
  - (2) Provide more opportunities for pupils to investigate and find things out for themselves and learn more independently, especially, but not only, in mathematics and science. (Paragraphs 9,10, 83, 90).

#### **THE SCHOOL SHOULD ALSO PLAN TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING MINOR WEAKNESSES:**

- Raise standards in art and geography in Year 6 (Paragraphs 13, 93, 110).
- Make more provision for pupils to understand and appreciate the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society. (Paragraph 38).

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

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

Number of lessons observed

58
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

31
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**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	28	47	19	0	0	0

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

**Information about the school's pupils**

**Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		274
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		28

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Special educational needs**

	Nursery	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		38

**English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

**Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

**Attendance**

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.0

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.5

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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
	2001	18	11	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	9	9	8
	Total	23	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (72)	76 (89)	76 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	12
	Girls	9	9	7
	Total	23	23	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (78)	79 (94)	66 (78)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	4	19

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	7	7
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	11	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58	53	53
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	9	8
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	9	12	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47	63	58
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. No comparisons have been given for the school's 2000 results, as only two pupils were involved.*

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0

Black – other	5
Indian	1
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	1
White	200
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	27

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

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	212

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	14	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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	459,903
Total expenditure	431,793
Expenditure per pupil	1,837
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,850
Balance carried forward to next year	60,960

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	274
Number of questionnaires returned	139

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	35	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	50	1	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	60	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	51	10	2	6
The teaching is good.	54	40	1	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	47	12	2	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	42	1	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	35	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	37	50	8	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	47	44	5	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	51	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	41	6	2	15

## **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**

60. The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception classes are good overall in all the areas of learning for children of this age: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. Teaching is stronger in one class than the other but, overall, teaching in about seven lessons in ten was good or better and there is some excellent teaching in one of the classes. No teaching observed was unsatisfactory. The three teachers and their assistants are deployed effectively to meet the needs of four year olds who arrive at different times of the year with differing needs.
61. Overall, attainment on entry is just below that usually found nationally at the age of four. The two classes are divided into three groups to reduce the age range in each class and to provide for those who attend part-time to be in the same class. Strong emphasis is placed upon the development of good attitudes and behaviour. Progress is very good overall and exceptional in the class for those children who have recently become four years old. During the year, the entry of new children, especially those who are older and with more challenging behaviour, is very effectively managed. Very good care is taken of the children. They learn and play in a safe environment. There is a good balance between structured play and freedom for individuals to learn from firsthand experience. Children have high levels of self-esteem for their age. For example, in the midst of energetic activities outside on a cold day, one boy was pleased to explain confidently to an inspector that the lorry he had just made had three axles at the back and one at the front, demonstrated its free running and showed how the configuration of the axles could be changed. Others exchanged greetings as they 'drove' their cars side-by-side in a controlled way across the play area. The play area is good, but access from the two classrooms could be improved. The provision of written notices and labels for children to use is not as good as it could be.
62. Attainment by the end of the Reception year is average overall. In some areas, notably personal and social development, speaking and listening and reading, attainment is relatively high for children's age, whilst in using number to solve problems, attainment is below average. In all the other areas of learning the children are doing as well as most other children of the same age. The children progress well in the Reception year. At the time of the inspection one third of the children in the older Reception class had been in the school for only five weeks. Unlike the younger ones who had also been in school for only a few weeks, they had not fully accepted the routines and were less confident at making the right decisions about what they should do next. However, the adults present managed children very well. There is good co-operation between the teachers and the learning support staff. Parents and teachers exchange useful information before and after school and the procedures for arrival and departure are safe and secure. The parents are impressed by the way in which the school improves children's behaviour, whilst at the same time maintaining a cheerful atmosphere. One commented, *They come down on bad behaviour and it's a really happy school.* During the inspection the children were not allowed to opt out of the planned activities for very long. Those who do attempt to stray are firmly but caringly re-included, whether it be in the hall, in the classroom or en route between the classrooms and the outdoor play area.

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

63. The children's personal and social development is good overall. Children mostly follow the agreed rules. Most of the time they want to please their teachers. They have high levels of self-esteem and are keen to ask questions and to express opinions. Above all, they are well used to sharing and taking turns. These very desirable developments in their behaviour when they have been in school for a while occur because the teachers are sensitive to the needs of the children, set a good example in the way they behave and speak, spot changes in response and take effective action. Relationships between teachers and children are generally good. Firmness when required is used in a measured and controlled way to improve behaviour without losing children's confidence and self-esteem. For example, when children were required in the classroom to jump and turn and stamp, the potential for silly behaviour was clear but they responded immediately when asked to stop. On other occasions, children were willing to discuss with adults the arrangement of the furniture in the giant's castle and the relative positions of the cut-out pictures of the cow and the beanstalk.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

64. Such is the effectiveness of the teaching of reading that all of the children – boys and girls, and those of different abilities - are keen on their books. They understand and talk about what has happened in the story and are able to predict what will happen next. Those who have more skills in reading are independently using the methods they have been taught to correct their own errors as they read. The school's involvement in an experimental reading programme in co-operation with the local education authority is having a very positive effect on standards in reading. The system, which emphasises the understanding of the sounds that letters make, gives the children great confidence to try to work out unfamiliar words for themselves. The programme is so successful that last year all the children achieved a reading level which matched or exceeded that expected for their age by the end of Year 1, and over half had reading ages a year or more in advance of their actual age.
65. Lively and expressive story reading by the teachers captures the interest of the class. Almost all children join in and enjoy stories. Teachers give the children many good opportunities to participate in lessons and show what they can do, for example, as they tell the class the letter sounds they have learned and read words and sentences. The children also enjoy listening to and joining in reading from the Big Book. The learning is particularly good when the review by the teacher at the end of an activity celebrates not only effort but also improvement. The self-esteem of the children is so good that they often initiate conversation others, including adults, and in general use well the skills they have learned in their reading lesson. In their writing, the boys as well as the girls and children of different abilities make satisfactory progress as they start to form letter shapes correctly and put them together to form words. The children would benefit from more use of the computers to help them with their writing.

## **Mathematical development**

66. By the end of the Reception year, children's levels of mathematical development are in line with expectations for their age, overall. The teaching is good. Whilst there are too few opportunities for problem solving in the programme for mathematical development, other aspects of mathematics, particularly learning to use and understand numbers, are taught well. Teachers ensure that the children enjoy their number work and they all achieve well, including those who find learning more difficult. Care is taken to see that learning is fun so that the children develop

good attitudes to mathematics. This was seen, for example, as a teacher used stickers to count the children in and out of the play-house. Good use is made of enjoyable songs and rhymes to encourage the children's familiarity with numbers, and help them count and sequence. The children start to learn to measure. For example, they have measured the height of children in the class and cut tapes to show their height. Most do well enough with counting, but some find the time to wander because they do not know what to do next.

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

67. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is average by the end of the Reception year. They are able to use computers to draw pictures which resemble the bean stalk in *Jack and the Bean Stalk*. They recognize different materials and talk about the reasons why they are used in a range of different types of shoes. They plant seeds and observe and record what happens on germination. Some of the more able boys and girls are able to compose short words on the computer and they make some attempt to use talking books for themselves. Good progress was made in geographical understanding during the inspection, when the children were taken on a journey with a map. The adults took great care to get the children to talk about reasons why journeys have to be made, whether in real life or in the imaginary world of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. They even had the opportunity to begin to orientate a map as the teacher positioned them and the map so that they could see both the map and the way ahead. Additionally, they were required to satisfy the teacher about the route in a review session once the journey had been completed. The children learn about the seasons of the year, which they illustrate in attractive displays.

### **Physical development**

68. The children's physical development is average by the end of the Reception year. They can use scissors and paste carefully when cutting coloured paper shapes. They are able to use hand lenses and make shapes from play dough. They jump, march and walk with good body control and co-ordination, working together well and taking care not to bump into others. During free play activities, the children balance carefully on the stepping stones and allow space for each other. They respond well to the good range of opportunities provided for movement. In physical education lessons, children's progress is satisfactory because the teacher makes sure the children feel safe and secure. They respond with interest and enthusiasm, for example as the teacher gives signals for a change in direction. Teachers make good use of children to demonstrate their movements, while the others watch carefully, with interest. This encourages the others to think about their own movements, so that they try harder and improve their own performance. The children are given very good opportunities to set out the apparatus for physical education lessons and they do this sensibly, safely and with care. Such opportunities are good for the development of their independence, as well as their physical skills and co-ordination.

### **Creative development**

69. The children are given good opportunities to be creative. There are plenty of good opportunities for role play, which contribute to both the development of the children's imagination and also their speaking and listening skills. During the inspection, children dressed as kings and queens were very involved in the role. They spoke and moved appropriately, and some had difficulty in coming out of the role when outside the 'palace', because they were so involved. They really enjoyed being both 'monsters' and 'food' when interacting with 'a large caterpillar'. The whistles provided for outdoor play quickly resulted in large numbers of 'trains' appearing in the

play area. The wall displays show how well the children can use coloured paper to make three-dimensional textures and wall hangings to represent songs such as, *One, two, three, four, five, Once I caught a fish alive*. The children greatly enjoy printing with their bare feet. They can be expressive, not only when using puppets to illustrate the characters in a story, but also when interpreting the story of the *Elves and the Shoemaker* in a dance session with music. The children's learning was well managed and, as a result, they moved well and responded appropriately to changes in tempo and rhythm.

## ENGLISH

70. Standards in English of pupils presently in Year 2 are broadly in line with the national average for pupils of seven years of age. This is a significant improvement on test results in 2001 when standards in reading and writing were well below both those of schools nationally and below the results achieved by schools with a similar intake of pupils. The standards achieved by present eleven year olds are below the national average. Results in 2001 were well below the national average and also well below the standards achieved by similar schools. There has, therefore, been some improvement in the school's performance, especially in Year 2. The poor results in the 2001 national tests and teachers' assessments were largely due to the newness of the school and the fact that many of the pupils taking the tests in 2001 had come to the school seeking a new start, many with special educational needs and a chequered educational history. The current Year 2 pupils are the first to have received the benefit of a relatively continuous education in the school. There is a considerable turnover of pupils in the older age groups and none of the pupils in Year 6 has had more than two years of education in the school.
71. More detailed analysis of the standards achieved in Year 2 indicates that pupils' speaking and listening skills, as measured by teachers' assessments, were well below the national average in 2001. Achievements in reading tests were slightly higher, with four out of every five pupils meeting the levels of skill expected for the age group. Few pupils exceeded expectations for their age. The results of writing tests were less satisfactory, with one in every four pupils failing to achieve the level expected at this age. Most of these pupils are currently in Year 3, with some three years ahead of them in which to catch up. Analysis of the attainment of eleven year old pupils in the national test in English in 2001 shows that nearly half failed to reach the standards expected of their age group. Because of a considerable level of turnover amongst the pupils in the current Year 6, the school has appropriately lowered its target for achievement in the 2002 tests to a percentage similar to the actual achievements in 2001.
72. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are gradually improving and are now similar to those usually found nationally at the ages of seven and eleven. A significant influence on progress has been the weekly speaking and listening activity which teachers plan for their pupils. For instance, Year 5 pupils were observed preparing for a geography debate on proposals for a high street development. Each group of pupils was required to prepare a two minute presentation on their own point of view and be ready to answer questions from the rest of the class. The teacher gave good quality guidance on the importance of gestures, stance and facial expression, in addition to words, when speaking, especially in a debate. Pupils responded with interest, working well together, role-playing speakers and listeners in their small groups. The teacher made good use of praise, motivating speakers and enhancing their confidence. This effective lesson concluded with discussion about the importance of good listening skills and relevant techniques such as questioning, offering ideas, tone of voice and body language. Another good lesson prepared pupils for the oral story telling of myths, reflecting the practice of earlier times. The lesson concluded with a discussion of similarities and differences between written and spoken accounts. These imaginative lessons were helped by the provision of additional

professional training for teachers in response to the identification of weaknesses in this area of pupils' language development.

73. Reading skills have improved to levels which are generally above average. This rapid improvement is the consequence of an important initiative which is intended to improve pupils' reading and spelling skills. With support from Warwick University and the local education authority, the school has introduced an intensive approach to the teaching of letter sounds and the recognition of words. Pupils engage in intense exercises of sound and letter recognition for short periods, at least twice a day. They respond very well indeed, very soon chanting their newly learned words accurately and with the pleasure of achievement. The progress made by the pupils is excellent, with around half the pupils some six months ahead of expectations in reading for their age. They develop immense confidence in their reading ability and most are able to read multi-syllable words which are beyond the normal levels of difficulty for the age-groups concerned. Boys and girls make equally good progress in reading, using this system. Pupils of different levels of ability, including those who have special educational needs, all make excellent progress and achieve the best of which they are capable.
74. The school's reading materials have been organised so that a wide range of schemes is available to all pupils. This means that the reading needs and interests of all pupils are well met, including boys and girls, the most able and those who find learning more difficult. The sample of readers heard during the inspection indicated that pupils' progress in reading is good. They make excellent use of letter sounds when they meet new words and they recognise many words by the time they are seven years of age. However, the younger pupils do not always understand all the words they can read.
75. The majority of Year 2 pupils can generally make sense of what they read, taking cues from illustrations and the context in which the new words are found. They recognise alphabetical order and use indexes, glossaries and contents lists to find information. By Year 3, more able pupils are reading quite challenging books with enjoyment and some expression. Most pupils are sensitive to the cues provided by punctuation. Some are beginning to express preferences for different kinds of reading, including poetry in some cases. Year 4 pupils are able to locate books in the library and some can skim read to pick out main points of interest. Pupils begin to refer to points in the text when expressing opinions. By the time they reach Year 6, the majority of pupils read fluently, with understanding and enjoyment. Shared reading in class is a regular feature of literacy lessons and detailed guided reading records are kept to chart pupils' progress. Helpful home/school reading record diaries are kept by each pupil throughout their time in the school.
76. As they reach seven years of age, pupils' writing skills are broadly average. In reading standards are above average. Year 1 pupils become aware of rhymes and other features in simple poetry and are able to generate ideas for writing short accounts, paying attention to handwriting and basic punctuation skills. A very good Year 2 lesson saw pupils coping with riddles, tongue twisters, alliteration, rhymes and the syllables that provide rhythm in poetry. Their knowledge of basic grammar develops well in response to imaginative and well presented literacy lessons. Teachers provide different levels of challenge for pupils of differing levels of ability. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra support, enabling them to make good progress. Few pupils in the school are learning English as an additional language. Those who are, receive a period of expert support on a daily basis, making good progress as a result.
77. Pupils' writing for different purposes is developing well. For instance, one successful lesson focused on the writing of instructions for making paper aeroplanes and spinners, pupils

evaluating the quality of their instructions with test flights. Results showed that their writing had generally been clear and logical. Slightly older pupils learned to appreciate some of the techniques used by poets to give interest and impact to their work. Year 4 pupils showed considerable levels of appreciation for a Nigerian poem about a hunter, picking out striking adjectives and similes. By Year 6, pupils are beginning to use language for a wide range of purposes, including discussion texts and persuasive writing, though the ability of the majority of pupils to write in well-structured sentences and sequenced paragraphs is currently below average.

78. In spite of some disappointing test results to date, the provision for the teaching of reading and writing has many strengths. Teaching is good overall and is sometimes better, leading to good learning and progress by the pupils. A key element is teachers' good knowledge of how to teach reading and writing well. They provide stimulating activities in well organised literacy lessons to which pupils respond well. However, although there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, insufficiently challenging work is provided for the minority of higher achievers. Too little use is made of ICT for pupils to draft and refine their writing.
79. The co-ordinators' contribution to the development of the subject is excellent. The evidence arising from assessments of pupils' standards and the monitoring of teaching has given rise to good new initiatives which are leading to significant improvements in pupils' achievements. These include the concentration on reading and on speaking and listening skills. Appropriate new developments in the subject include the new initiative in writing to complement that in reading. The school is also committed to further development of pupils' use of reading and writing skills in other subjects, which, at present, is satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards which are above the national average. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are better than they were in the 2001 national tests and teachers' assessments, when they were well below average. Pupils in Year 2 are now achieving standards which are above the national average for their age. In Year 6, standards are still below, but no longer well below, average. The difference between the most recent national test results and the position now is due to two main factors. Firstly, the pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 have had more of their education at Oakfield than those taking tests last year, all of whom had come to the school from other schools, many seeking a fresh start. The other important factor is the very good quality of teaching which pupils receive, which means that they achieve well and make very good progress in their learning.
81. The inspection could detect no significant differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls, although in national tests girls did better than boys both in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are supported well by teachers and support staff, so that they make good progress in their learning. The school provides well for the more able pupils to help them make the most of their potential, through work which is carefully planned to challenge them and make them think, and through withdrawal from some lessons into higher-attaining groups.
82. By the age of seven, most pupils know the addition facts to 10 and can recall these mentally. They can count in tens and solve addition and subtraction problems with numbers up to 10 and beyond. They are able to solve number problems involving money, for example adding sums of money to £1. Most pupils have a reasonably secure understanding of how to tell the time.

Although they can cope with times to the hour and half-past, only the most able are confident telling the time to quarter-past the hour, or minutes past the hour. Pupils use standard units of measurement, for example centimetres, as they measure round their wrist and the length of a finger. By the age of 11, most pupils can round numbers up and down to the nearest whole number, for example rounding 3.75 up to 4 and 0.01 down to 0. They are able to divide sums of money by 10 and 100, and multiply hundreds, tens and units. Some of the pupils' work on data handling is at a level more usually expected of younger pupils, for example those in Year 4. They can collect data on the frequency with which different pupils' names occur in the school and represent these in a bar chart. Work on multiplication tables is particularly weak in Year 6. Despite regular tables practise and tests, these pupils have a lot of catching up to do to reach the expected levels for their age, their knowledge and use of the multiplication tables being well below average for their age.

83. There are some good opportunities for pupils to investigate and find things out for themselves. This was seen, for example, in a Year 1 lesson on continuing and repeating patterns. However, overall, pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to investigate things for themselves and solve problems. As a consequence, they lack confidence in this aspect of mathematics. There are some appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, for example as they measure things in science lessons and use time lines in history.
84. The quality of teaching is good. It is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are taught in two ability groups. A direct consequence of the good teaching is that pupils in Year 6 are fast catching up to where pupils of this age are expected to be, despite starting at the school two years ago from a low base. In the best lessons, teaching is stimulating, so that pupils pay close attention and work hard. Teachers' good grasp of the subject and careful preparation mean that the work is very clearly explained at the outset of lessons, so that pupils know what they are to do and understand why. This was seen, for example, in a Year 5 and 6 lower ability group lesson on area, where the teacher's careful and clear explanation at the start of the lesson made sure that pupils had a good grasp of what they were to do and what they should learn. In the best lessons, teachers balance their lessons well between plenty of good clear whole-class teaching, appropriate group and individual activities and a period at the end to discuss and sum up what has been done and learned. The good structure to lessons and good quality planning reflect the fact that teachers are very familiar and secure with national guidance on teaching numeracy. A weakness of some of the teaching is that too little time and attention is sometimes given for pupils to talk at the end of the lesson about what they have done and so reinforce their learning.
85. The use of ICT to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding is satisfactory. It was seen, for example, in a Year 3 lesson on creating number sequences, where pupils took it in turns to use the computer to put numbers in order.
86. The subject is well led and managed by the deputy headteacher. She keeps a close eye on the subject, through a good programme of lesson observations, checking pupils' work and scrutinising teachers' planning for lessons. She has a clear understanding of standards in the subject, why standards are low in Year 6 this year and why they were even lower last year. She knows what needs to be done to raise standards. The action she has taken, for example in checking on and developing the quality of teaching, is bearing fruit.

## SCIENCE

87. Standards attained in national tests and assessments last year were very low compared with all other schools and with similar schools. The low standards last year were due to characteristics of the groups of pupils involved, many of whom came to the school part way through their education and with learning and behavioural difficulties. Last year, boys achieved lower marks than girls in the national tests and all did less well in experimental and investigative science than in other aspects.
88. The inspection shows that standards are higher than they were last year. By the end of Year 2, they are average. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge and understanding, for example, of components in simple electrical circuits. They are thoughtful when doing experiments, for example about the best conditions for growing seeds. They carefully follow the teacher's instructions, for instance, as they measure the distance travelled by a toy car over different surfaces. However, they do not sufficiently use numbers in their investigations, nor do they say whether or not what happened in the investigation matched their predictions. Standards by the end of Year 6, although below average, are now very close to what is expected at this age nationally. The pupils present their work well and have a good understanding of the specialist words used in the study of plants and animals.. They make sensible predictions about what they expect will happen when they do an experiment. When investigating, they usually change things one at a time to see the effects of each change. They follow the teacher's plan, record what happens and draw bar charts to show the different times taken for substances to dissolve. However, when planning their investigations, they are not very good at identifying how data are to be collected nor the steps to be taken to obtain good evidence. Having done an investigation, they do not suggest how it might have been improved nor do they compare their results with those obtained by others.
89. Pupils achieve well. They all make good progress, including those who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Their achievement is helped by the fact that they enjoy science and older pupils are even more enthusiastic than the younger ones. This is because the teachers are themselves enthusiastic. Boys and girls, irrespective of differences in their backgrounds and experiences, achieve well because relationships between teachers, between teachers and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are all good. Too little use is made of ICT which could, for example, be used to collect and analyse data.
90. The teaching is good and it has some very good features, especially in Year 6. Pupils work cheerfully for most of the lesson because the teachers actively involve them right from the start with good question and answer sessions to effectively point them in the right direction and to make them feel a part of what is going on. The pupils get good opportunities to talk things through before they have to answer in front of the class. As a result, when their turn comes, they are able to find the right words and what they have to say is listened to by their classmates. Pupils respond particularly well to challenges that enable them to test their own understanding and to show what they can do, for example to light a lamp even when it is not in its holder or else to make it light with one wire only. The teachers mark pupils' work carefully and celebrate success so that pupils know the teachers care and that their progress is important to them. However, the targets that are written on the board are not always sharp enough to allow pupils to assess how well they have done at the end of the lesson. Pupils are not sufficiently required to write their plans for investigations independently of the teacher. The teachers miss opportunities to set up investigations based on the pupils own ideas, for example to see if there are connections between the type of bag used to cover a plant and how long it will survive, or how to gauge the brightness of a lamp. Too few opportunities are provided to enable the pupils to collect enough data. The comments written by teachers too rarely indicate what steps the pupils need to take to improve their work.

91. Science is well led and managed by the headteacher, who keeps a close check on the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. In particular, great care is taken to check on pupils' attainment and progress. The information gathered is used well to help teachers plan their teaching. The improvement made in science since last year is impressive. Particularly commendable is the high level of enthusiasm for science which has been engendered, especially in Year 6.

## **ART**

92. It was only possible to observe two art lessons during the inspection. Judgements are based on these lessons, analysis of pupils' work in displays around the school and in their sketchbooks and on discussions with teachers, the subject co-ordinator and with pupils.
93. Pupils in Year 2 attain average standards and make good progress in acquiring the necessary skills. They use a range of appropriate materials and techniques correctly and draw carefully, both from what they observe and from their imagination. Pupils in Year 6 currently attain standards which are below average but they have made good progress over their time since coming to this school. Although they can draw and paint, their technical skills are not sufficiently well developed. Their knowledge of famous artists is limited and they find it difficult to describe their own responses to other people's art work.
94. There is no significant difference in standards reached and progress made between boys and girls and between pupils of different backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language attain standards similar to their classmates and make good progress because of the good teaching and support they receive. Good use is made of opportunities within art lessons to develop their speaking and listening skills, as well as those for art.
95. By the end of Year 2, pupils can mix paint to make new colours successfully. They experiment with a range of techniques and use a variety of media such as coloured pencil, pastels and paint. They consider the work of other artists and then produce their own work in a similar style, for example pupils in Year 1 have painted interesting self-portraits in the style of van Gogh, as well as creating their own versions of his *Sunflowers* painting. They have worked with collage, exploring different ways of working with and joining materials, such as stitching, plaiting and tying, as well as sticking. Three-dimensional work with clay has been used very effectively to demonstrate to pupils that art can sometimes be collaborative, as pupils have worked in pairs to design and make tiles that represent some aspect of school life.
96. Older pupils are able to use a range of media and techniques, such as pencil sketching, paint, pastels and watercolours. Pupils' sketchbooks contain some interesting studies of movement and some of these reached average standards. However, for the oldest pupils in the school the standard of drawing is below average. Teachers are very aware of this and give pupils a lot of teaching to extend their skills quickly, for example some staff make constructive comments in pupils' sketchbooks, giving them suggestions for how to improve their work further. Three-dimensional work is developed well through such activities as making masks and models of chair designs with moulding plaster and with papier-mâché. Pupils have good experience of working with clay, experimenting with techniques and tools to create texture.
97. From the lessons observed, teaching overall is good. Very good questioning encourages pupils to observe more closely and promotes the development of pupils' own ideas. They are

encouraged to consider details within shape and colour and this develops to good effect pupils' awareness of the composition of a picture, such as when they studied closely a part of a picture and used these guided observations to complete it. Pupils are encouraged to examine elements of texture, as well as colour and shape, before commencing their own work. Teachers are careful to promote the use of appropriate vocabulary, such as *line*, *relief*, *hatching*, and *slip*. Some good use is made of ICT to support learning in art, for instance in investigating uses of pattern and shape during their study of the work of Mondrian, and in an Internet search during a focus on designers. However, this could be developed further once pupils are sufficiently confident with the computer equipment to work independently.

98. Teachers ensure that pupils have satisfactory experience each year of most elements of art - painting, drawing, printmaking, textile work and sculpture and that pupils build progressively upon skills and knowledge learned in previous years. Pupils' sketchbooks show a clear development in the levels of skills used. Although some use is made of the work of Western artists to promote pupils' understanding of art, there is insufficient use of the work of artists from other cultures. Art makes a positive contribution to the environment of the school and effectively celebrates pupils' efforts and achievements.
99. Procedures for checking on pupils' progress and the standards achieved are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is working to adopt those suggested in the nationally recommended scheme of work, to include a focus on research and art appreciation, as well as on the development of making skills.
100. The co-ordinator has considerable enthusiasm for the subject and is effective in supporting colleagues who lack confidence in this area. She monitors standards in art through looking at displays and at pupils' work and has worked alongside colleagues to support them well. She has a clear vision for how she wishes to develop the provision.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Pupils at both seven and eleven reach average standards and make good progress in acquiring the necessary skills. Pupils are provided with a broad range of design and technology projects and they talk with enthusiasm about their models and how they made them. Shared projects develop team-working skills well. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are taught and supported well and make similar progress to their classmates. Good use is made of opportunities within design and technology lessons to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills.
102. The standards throughout the school are the result of good teaching which promotes and encourages pupils to design and reflect upon the success of their designs. Teachers question pupils carefully to give them the necessary knowledge and skills to make their own decisions about designs and draw their own conclusions about their success. Pupils' designs show clearly the methods and materials they plan to use. Design and technology projects include a good balance of investigative, designing and making tasks. However, the decision not to use a design notebook makes it more difficult for pupils to make notes of modifications or to evaluate their original designs.

103. The younger pupils in the school have good manipulative skills, as seen in the accurate cutting and stitching used when they were making hand puppets. They considered the functions of the different parts of moving vehicles and carefully evaluated vehicles used for different purposes. Teachers also plan good tasks which highlight aspects of design that pupils may use in later projects. For example, pupils were given a task which necessitated the design of a winding or winch mechanism. Subsequent discussion demonstrated clearly that pupils could see a good range of uses in real life of such a mechanism, such as in vehicle recovery or using a crane to hoist up a glider.
104. When working on food technology projects, teachers are careful to emphasise food hygiene and safe use of kitchen utensils, as well as the functions of different foodstuffs, such as fruit and vegetables and different breads. Pupils also make good use of construction kits. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils were designing a model with moving rides as part of their study of fairgrounds.
105. Older pupils use an increasing range of tools, materials and components. Good teaching and reinforcing of safe practices ensures that pupils can be trusted to work independently. As a result, pupils take pride in working carefully and show very good awareness of safety issues. They know how to construct a frame within a design and know the difference between square and mitred corners. They know how to make joins strong, and measure accurately to achieve this. Pupils in Year 4 are currently investigating the use of levers and linkages when designing and making pop-up storybooks. The class teacher is promoting the concept of designing as a team very effectively as part of this project. Teachers are very effective in prompting pupils to recall earlier learning when tackling new projects.
106. The oldest pupils have worked with cams to make toys with moving parts, whilst others have undertaken an extended project evaluating footwear. This project involved reviewing and disassembling commercially produced products, as well as considering variations in need, before designing and making their own slippers. Their evaluations are good and show the detail with which they considered each element of their design, for example, "I would make improvements on how strong the sewing was. I would use a stronger thread so they definitely don't come apart."
107. Pupils make good use of mathematical skills to support work in design and technology. For example, they are very careful to measure accurately as they draw their designs. The use of ICT to support learning in design and technology is less well developed, principally because pupils' computer skills are not sufficiently well developed for pupils to work independently.
108. The school has a very good selection of tools and a good stock of consumable materials to promote the development of pupils' manipulative skills well. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for how she wishes to develop the provision. She monitors teachers' planning and has worked alongside colleagues to support them well.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. It was only possible to observe two geography lessons during the inspection. Judgements are based on these lessons, analysis of pupils' work in displays around the school and in their books and on discussions with teachers, the subject co-ordinator and with pupils.

110. Pupils at seven years of age reach average standards and make good progress. They have geographical skills and knowledge at the appropriate level and are beginning to make good use of them when investigating geographical questions. Pupils at eleven years of age currently reach below average standards but have made good progress over time. They are studying geographical topics at the appropriate level but they do not have the necessary geographical skills to propose or investigate geographical questions. The school has identified this weakness and has adapted the curriculum swiftly to address this need. As a result, teachers carefully balance the teaching of subject knowledge and the development of geographical skills; pupils are beginning to use appropriate geographical terminology and develop sound use of geographical skills.
111. There is no significant difference in standards attained and progress made between boys and girls and between pupils of different backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language attain standards similar to their classmates and make good progress because of the good teaching and support they receive.
112. Teachers plan projects that build carefully upon skills and knowledge learned in previous years. For example, in Years 1 and 2, as their 'local study', pupils considered their own environment, comparing different types of housing and identifying the routes they use to travel between home and school. Older pupils progress to considering land use including local projects for pedestrianising the town centre. This project included a traffic survey during a field trip to the town, as well as pupils' own ideas of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed scheme.
113. Similarly, in their studies of physical geography teachers ensure that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding systematically throughout the school. For example, holidays and climate conditions is a theme that runs through the school. Younger pupils think about a range of holiday destinations and the sorts of items they would need to take with them. Older pupils study what holiday brochures are trying to make them think, whilst the oldest pupils read and interpret weather charts, searching on the Internet to find out about the weather in different parts of the world. Mapwork is taught gradually throughout the school, with younger pupils considering picture maps initially, moving on to study map symbols and then grid references.
114. The teaching of geography is satisfactory, with many good aspects. Teachers plan imaginative projects that excite pupils about geography and, as a result, pupils are enthusiastic when talking about what they have learned. Teachers use good questioning to extend pupils' understanding, and to develop their ability to draw conclusions. The school uses the nationally recommended scheme of work well, selecting a balance of projects that extend pupils' thinking and ensure that assignments build successively upon the skills acquired in previous years.
115. Both literacy and numeracy skills are used well to support work in geography. For example, when researching for their plans for a foreign holiday, pupils wrote about the clothes and equipment they would require for varying climate and activities. Older pupils study weather charts and graphs as they consider conditions in different parts of the world.
116. The co-ordinator has considerable enthusiasm for the subject and is effective in supporting colleagues who lack confidence in this area. She monitors the school's provision through visiting classrooms and looking at teachers' planning. She also teaches geography to classes other than her own, making good use of her specialist knowledge.

## **HISTORY**

117. Standards of attainment in history are broadly average for seven and eleven year old pupils. By the time they are seven, pupils have begun to understand that ways of life in Britain have changed since Victorian times and that various types of evidence provide clues about how this has affected the lives of ordinary people. By the time they are eleven years of age, pupils have become aware that this process of enquiry can reveal how life in Britain was lived several centuries ago and that it can also throw light on ancient civilisations. All pupils develop a sense of 'then' and 'now', gradually building up a sound sense of chronology. These skills and insights arise as a result of teachers' very good understanding of the nature of history and the good quality of the school's history curriculum.
118. Pupils' progress is good, including those who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. This reflects the very good quality of history teaching in the school. For example, the teachers of the younger pupils use the very motivating analogy of historical enquiry being similar to the work of detectives. Pupils learn that it involves asking questions, making very good observations and the drawing of conclusions from the evidence. They respond well to this active approach. During Year 1 pupils learn to use everyday terms about the passage of time and to put Victorian and more recent domestic artefacts into a correct chronological sequence. During the inspection, they were particularly intrigued by objects such as carpet beaters and washboards, incidentally developing an appreciation of the changes that have taken place in the roles of women over the last century. Year 2 pupils showed very good observational skills as they scrutinised pictorial evidence of Florence Nightingale at work. As a result of the teacher's very good questioning skills, they were able to conclude that the pictorial evidence available was the work of painters, rather than of photographers. Some pupils understood that this kind of evidence carries something of the points of view of its providers.
119. The learning and progress of older pupils is also good, with teaching carrying similar strengths to that seen for younger pupils. The pupils respond well. They concentrate, work well together in lessons and usually produce good quality records of their work. These are often in the form of annotated illustrations, but some apply their writing skills to produce short accounts of some aspects of their learning. However, overall attainment at this stage, though average, is not as high as might be expected, given the quality of the teaching. This is because of the relatively recent entry of many pupils into this new school. They have not yet had time to build up a completely secure basic knowledge and understanding of the nature of history to the level expected of the age group. However, they acquire a good knowledge of ways of life in Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt. Pupils also begin to understand the factors that influence the lives of people in more recent periods of time, sometimes using computerised sources to enhance their knowledge. For instance, Year 5 pupils progressed well in their use of photographic evidence and previous learning on the evacuation of children, rationing and the conscription of men, to build up a picture of the effects of World War 2 on the lives of women. In this lesson, pupils were provided with a good opportunity to practise their speaking and listening skills as each group presented its findings to the class.
120. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. This has a positive effect on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement. There are well judged plans for further enhancement of the pupils' skills as young historians, through the provision of an increased emphasis on the development of pupils' skills of historical enquiry. This has already begun, with visits from experts such as archaeologists, and visits to museums and sites of historical interest. Provision for history has benefited from its recent review as part of the school development plan.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. Standards achieved by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 are below average overall because some aspects, such as sensing and controlling and problem solving, are not well enough covered. New ICT systems and equipment had only just become fully operational at the time of the inspection. Consequently, during the inspection, teachers were using equipment and systems only recently installed and the pupils' work on computers in lessons had been disrupted, so that they had lost a degree of confidence. There is average and sometimes better work on display in some aspects of computing, for example in Years 1 and 2, where pupils complete number sequences and bar charts and there is evidence to show that they could save and retrieve information. In Years 3 to 6 pupils had carefully presented written instructions, displayed data about the dimensions of the teacher's rib cage and designed and printed the front covers for Christmas cards. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 had produced attractively presented documents and posters about the life in the sea and about their school. In the computer club, pupils were seen enthusiastically preparing to produce a booklet to commemorate the school's second birthday. Year 6 pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their use of computers.
122. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to produce charts and pictures. They watch the screen carefully and they know how to begin to search for the information they need by clicking in the right place or by typing in a key word. However, so many pupils need help when controlling the mouse that all the adults working with them are fully-stretched and some pupils have to wait to obtain the help they need. By the end of Year 6, pupils can, with limited assistance, use the computer to calculate and predict not only what the cost of the food for a party is likely to be, for example, but also how changes in prices and numbers of guests would affect total costs. They were seen making very good progress in mastering methods to shorten the time needed for the task. They understand also how to select and sort data about, for example, pupils of the same age or the same preferences for food. There was no evidence, however, of their ability to use computers in their own independent investigations, because too few opportunities are given for this type of work.
123. Teachers are rising to the challenge of using to the full the newly available systems and equipment for the teaching and learning of ICT. For example, all teachers in the lessons observed during the inspection made effective use of the recently purchased interactive teaching board to demonstrate techniques very clearly to pupils and ensure that they knew what to do. The very effective co-operation between the teachers and the support staff has a positive effect on pupils' achievement. This is especially true of the support for pupils with special educational needs.
124. The quality of the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, so that pupils make satisfactory progress. Their work is planned very carefully to meet their needs. Pupils are well motivated because they can clearly see what the teacher does because the large white board looks exactly like the screens on the computers they use. This is a good and recently improved aspect of the provision. Even in the space of a few days, the teachers were seen to be evaluating and improving their methods. As a result, pupils increasingly had the computer to themselves or were organized into working pairs, or else were given appropriate and relevant tasks to do away from the computers.
125. The quality of the teaching in Years 3, 4 and 5 is very good. As a result, pupils make very good progress and they achieve very well. The effects of the disruptions to the provision have been less because they have more confidence and experience. The introductions to lessons, as with the younger classes, motivate and build confidence. However, their motivation is sustained for

longer because the pupils not only have a clear idea of how to proceed, but also some idea of the way their work will be assessed or reviewed at the end of the lesson. They have more confidence and more experience with computers and more readily co-operate with a partner.

126. The clearly demonstrated willingness of the teachers to accept change and to learn and to share new skills is a clear strength and reflects well the ethos of the whole school. The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable new co-ordinator, who has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards.

## MUSIC

127. No overall judgement of the standards achieved in this subject can be made, because too few lessons were observed. However, judgements can be made about the standards achieved in some year groups, in some parts of the music curriculum.
128. Pupils' performances in assemblies indicate that the quality of pupils' singing is satisfactory. Though a minority of pupils have an uncertain sense of pitch, pupils generally soon pick up melodies. They are responsive to rhythm and to the dynamic changes indicated by piano accompaniment. All pupils clearly recognise chorus sections in hymns and sing them with confidence and enthusiasm. A dance-based performance in a whole school assembly, presented by Year 6, showed that these pupils have a sensitivity to music and can reflect its rhythms and mood in their movements. A Year 5 music lesson showed that pupils are capable of good achievement in response to high quality teaching. The challenge was to learn and sing a round in four parts, subsequently adding in accompaniments using electronic keyboards and a small selection of percussion instruments. After a relatively weak start, the teacher made her high expectations clear. Very good management of pupils' learning, revision of the basic requirements of good quality singing and a high level of concentration from the pupils led to rapid progress. Pupils were quick to pick up the instrumental skills required and all were able to hold their parts in the ensemble performance by the end of the lesson. Boys and girls were equally enthusiastic and involved. The excellent organisation of resources and time in this lesson ensured that the incidental learning of relevant technical terms such as *note values*, *chord*, *ostinato*, *two-part harmony*, *pulse* and *drone* could be securely reinforced.
129. Good progress is also being made in the musical skills of younger pupils. For instance, in a well planned lesson in Year 2, pupils showed good recognition of a wide range of percussion and simple wind instruments. The target was to understand the use of sound to convey the atmosphere in a *Dark, Dark Wood* story. Pupils were able to name the instruments they wanted to play. Most had a clear awareness of the quality of sound each produced and showed skill in matching and playing the instruments suited to the needs of the story, for example using a triangle to produce a trembling sound to convey fear.
130. Discussion with Year 6 pupils revealed the gaps in their attainment in music, however. Their musical vocabulary is very limited. Pupils show little knowledge of orchestral instruments and composers. They have almost no knowledge of classical music and little awareness of the wide variety of musical styles developed in non-Western cultures, indicating that these aspects of the curriculum have been under-represented in their learning opportunities to date. The school is well aware that these older pupils have had limited teaching of music in the past and it is well placed to make the required improvements.
131. The subject benefits from expert and enthusiastic leadership, which includes a vision of an increasingly high profile of music in the school community. Currently, the school provides good

extra- curricular opportunities, including a choir, recorder group and a music club which focuses on keyboard playing for pupils who wish to enhance their expertise in aspects of the subject. These activities include opportunities for pupils to extend their familiarity with musical notation.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

132. Standards in physical education are average in Years 2 and 6. There is no difference in overall standards between boys and girls. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good attitudes and the ability to co-operate and work well with a partner as they undertake dance and gymnastics activities. For example, in Year 1 boys and girls work sensibly together and make a reasonable job of producing a sequence of movements to music involving mirroring their partner's movements.
133. The teaching is satisfactory overall. A strength is that teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate their movement sequences to the class, so encouraging the others to think about what they do and try to improve their own performance. In gymnastics, Year 1 pupils enjoy linking together a series of different jumping movements, but the time allocation to gymnastics is too long for these pupils so that, although they start out enthusiastic and attentive, towards the end of the 50 minute period their concentration is beginning to fail and a few small episodes of unsatisfactory behaviour sometimes ensue. In Year 2 pupils develop a more polished sequence of movements, with a clear start, middle and end. They warm-up safely and enthusiastically, playing a familiar game which gets them all moving in preparation for their gymnastics work. As in the rest of the school, including the Reception classes, pupils are given good opportunities to set out and clear away the apparatus and they do this sensibly, responsibly and safely. Pupils build, perform and improve their gymnastic sequences with reasonable skill and body control, showing physical development and prowess which is similar to that usually found at this age. Teachers pay good attention to pupils' safety, giving pupils sound advice, for example about the danger of weight-bearing on the head.
134. Only dance was seen in Year 6, although the full physical education programme of the National Curriculum is provided, including outdoor and adventurous activities and swimming. In the dance lesson seen, standards were average for this age group. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have swimming lessons with specialist instructors, and by the end of Year 6 all but one or two pupils are able to swim the expected distance of 25 metres. In the dance lesson seen, pupils were very well-behaved, attentive and enthusiastic, enjoying themselves greatly as they practised a dance which they had prepared to perform to the whole school and parents in assembly. They interpreted a wide range of music representing different moods as they enacted through movement the story of *Snow White*.
135. The school offers some good opportunities for physical activity outside lessons, such as the gymnastics club, where pupils aged from seven to 11 work hard and with great enthusiasm to achieve national gymnastics awards. There are appropriate plans to arrange competitive sport with other schools, but this has not yet been possible because of the small numbers of pupils of an appropriate age. There are helpful links with the sports development officer from the local education authority, who offers training for staff.
136. The subject co-ordinator brings both expertise and enthusiasm to the subject. She checks teachers' planning to see that it is consistent with national guidance and that there is a smooth progression to pupils' learning as they move up through the school. She now needs to develop a programme for systematic checking on the quality of teaching.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. By Year 2 pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is just about in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In Year 6, although pupils have a reasonable knowledge of the aspects of religion which they study, their understanding is weak, so that they do not meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, which emphasises the need for understanding, in addition to knowledge at this stage.
138. Most pupils in Year 2 know how they would like to be treated by other people and understand how they should treat others. They have some understanding of how care and concern for other people and for animals is shown in Christianity and some other religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism. They learn about some of the people who have tried to follow the example of Jesus in their lives, such as Florence Nightingale, and about some of the stories from other religions which illustrate how we should treat each other. In Year 2, pupils understand that there are places which are special to people, such as our homes. They learn about Christian places of worship, their appearance and use, and start to gain an understanding of some of the symbols of Christianity, such as the Cross. They know that the bread and wine used at the Christian Mass symbolise the body and blood of Jesus. Pupils learn about some of the clothing that a priest wears, such as the stole, chasuble and alb, but they are left confused about this by some teaching, which reflects some inadequate subject knowledge and understanding on the part of teachers.
139. Pupils in Year 6 know some of the important facts about a number of world religions. They know that various religions have their own festivals of light, such as Hanukkah and Diwali. They know that Easter and Christmas are Christian festivals. They know that Jesus died on the Cross and that Christians believe that He rose again from the dead, but they are vague about what happened when, and unclear about the difference between Good Friday and Easter. What is lacking at this stage is understanding, as opposed to knowledge. Year 6 pupils spoken to were not able to explain and give reasons for some of the beliefs and practices of the religions they study. Standards in Year 5 are better than those in Year 6, as pupils do develop their understanding, for example as they learn about the story of Zaccheaus and consider *why* Jesus ate with him and what it means.
140. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching, as lessons seen in Years 2, 4 and 6 for only 20 or 25 minutes each – a timetabling arrangement which the school would do well to reconsider. The teaching seen in Year 4 was good. Good use of prepared resources, especially a Seder plate, to help pupils understand about the festival of Pesach and some of the rituals associated with it, such as Seder night and the Seder meal. A significant strength of the teaching was the good opportunity which it gave pupils to research and find things out for themselves, using a good range of appropriate reference books and also a CD Rom.
141. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Although the co-ordinator has not yet carried out any monitoring of the quality of teaching, she checks teachers' planning to see that it conforms to the locally agreed syllabus. She also keeps an eye on the subject through looking at pupils' work and is aware of the need to deepen pupils' understanding of religion, particularly in Year 6, so as to raise standards, and to improve teachers' subject knowledge in Year 2.