

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ASHCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Weston-super-Mare

LEA area: North Somerset

Unique reference number: 109096

Headteacher: Mr Peter Turner

Reporting inspector: David Westall  
2414

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 January 2003

Inspection number: 246870

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Earlham Grove Weston-super-Mare North Somerset
Postcode:	BS23 3JW
Telephone number:	01934 620141
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Dennis
Dates of previous inspection:	24/01/00 and 21/03/01

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
2420	Brian McCutcheon	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English History Special educational needs	Attitudes, values and personal development
3349	Jacqueline Ikin	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage	
21034	Stuart Smith	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	
27055	Creighton Muirhead	Team inspector	Design and technology Religious education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

There are 336 pupils on roll, aged from four to 11 years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average, as is the percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Six pupils have statements of special educational need, and one pupil is at an early stage of English language acquisition. On entry to the school, children's standards are generally below average.

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

This is a sound school which has improved significantly in the last few years. It benefits from particularly effective leadership and management, already has a range of good features and is well placed to improve further. The quality of teaching enables pupils to make mainly satisfactory progress in the younger classes and generally good progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' standards in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science are broadly average in Year 6, despite their starting points being below average on entry to the school. The school caters well for pupils' personal development, and is a caring community where pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. There are some weaknesses, including in pupils' achievements in writing in Year 2 and in design and technology and art and design in Year 6. However, the school's strengths and sound achievements outweigh these weaknesses and it provides sound value for money.

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

- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, and has a clear sense of direction.
- In Years 3 to 6, the teaching is mainly good and results in pupils making good progress in a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- Standards are above average in history in Year 6.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development and good provision for their social development.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.
- Parents find the headteacher and staff easy to talk to, and generally hold the school in high regard.

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

- Pupils should be achieving higher standards in writing in Year 2.
- Standards are too low in art and design in Years 2 and 6, and in design and technology in Year 6.
- Children in the reception classes make unsatisfactory progress in their creative development; and do not have access to their own secure outside play area.
- The attendance rate is below the national average.

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

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

The school was last inspected in 2001, following an inspection in 2000 which found it was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, largely due to weaknesses in leadership and in teaching. The 2001 inspection found that, under the leadership of the new headteacher, the school had made good progress in rectifying nearly all of the deficiencies identified in the earlier report, and was no longer failing. The 2001 inspection gave three areas

for improvement, and the school has made satisfactory progress, overall, in addressing these issues. However, there is still work to be done: pupils in Years 1 and 2 should make better progress and, while writing standards are sound in Year 6, they need to improve in Year 2. Good progress has been made in improving standards in information and communication technology (ICT), which were below average in 2001 and are now in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6. In addition, the school has finalised its policy for special educational needs and is ensuring its sound implementation.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	B	C	B
mathematics	A	C	D	C
science	A	B	D	C

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

The table shows the results of the Year 6 statutory tests in English were in line with the national average but above the results of similar schools. Inspection findings show that current standards in Year 6 are also broadly average. These findings reflect the good achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6, since standards in writing still need considerable improvement at the end of Year 2. Most Year 6 pupils read capably and can talk with understanding about what they read. For the most part, they can produce well organised writing with interesting and relevant content, and are able to match its form and style to different audiences.

The table shows the school's results in mathematics and science were below the national average in the statutory tests in 2002 but were in line with the results of similar schools. Inspection findings are more favourable than these results, and show that current standards in both subjects are broadly average.

Standards in Year 6 are also in line with national expectations in most other subjects. However, standards are above average in history, and below average in art and design and in design and technology.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and are keen to learn and to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good, throughout the school day.



Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with adults and with each other. They work together amicably on shared tasks and respect each other's opinions.
Attendance	Attendance for the last academic year was below the national average, and needs to improve.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen during the inspection, and was good in four out of every ten lessons.

The most effective teaching is in Years 3 to 6, where well over half of all lessons were good and sometimes very good. As a result, these pupils make good progress in their learning in English, mathematics, ICT, history and physical education.

In the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2, the teaching is satisfactory overall and generally enables pupils to make sound progress. However, there is scope for improvement, particularly in the teaching of writing skills in Years 1 and 2, and in the promotion of children's creative development in the reception classes.

Across the school, teaching is characterised by positive relationships between teachers and pupils and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. The management of behaviour is good, teachers' explanations are clear and they plan their lessons carefully. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations for pupils' potential achievement, use skilful questions to probe pupils' understanding and make very effective use of the time available. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum is generally secure but some would benefit from increasing their understanding in art and design and design and technology.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is sound, overall, and meets statutory requirements. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used particularly well in Years 3 to 6, where pupils also benefit from rich learning opportunities in history. The quality of provision for children's creative development in the reception classes and for art and design and design and technology, for older pupils, is an area for improvement in the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes sound provision for these pupils.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development and good provision is made for their social development. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has very good leadership skills and excellent management skills. His achievements have been impressive since his appointment in 2000, and he is providing the school with a clear sense of direction. His interpersonal skills are strong and his management of change has won him the confidence and respect of the school community. The headteacher's commitment, energy and clear thinking are key strengths in the school. The deputy headteacher fulfils her role well, and provides a very good role model for her colleagues through her effective teaching and positive attitudes to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from a committed governing body which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The chair of governors is well informed and individual governors have developed their knowledge about particular elements of the school's work, including about the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher uses a good range of strategies to monitor the school's performance, including through the rigorous analysis of test results, through working alongside subject co-ordinators to examine examples of pupils' work, through scrutinising teachers' planning and through lesson observations. Most co-ordinators have a sound awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and provide useful feedback to governors. The school improvement plan has well defined success criteria which help the school to judge its achievements accurately.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is analysed carefully and financial planning is appropriately linked to initiatives in the school improvement plan. The principles of best value are applied well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>They believe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the school is well led and managed;</li><li>• their children are happy at school;</li><li>• the staff are easy to talk to;</li><li>• the staff expect children to work hard and do their best;</li><li>• that teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li></ul>	<p>They would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• more extra-curricular clubs;</li><li>• more appropriate amounts of homework for their children.</li></ul>

Inspection findings generally support parents' positive views of the school but find that the teaching and progress of children in reception and Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory rather than good. The school provides a sound range of extra-curricular clubs and pupils' homework is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. On entry to reception, children's overall standards are generally below those expected for children of similar ages. In the reception classes, they make good progress in their social and emotional development but require more opportunities to improve their decision-making skills. Their achievements in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical development are satisfactory in relation to their starting points on entry to reception. However, their progress in creative development is unsatisfactory, and this element of their learning requires more focused attention in the reception classes. Despite their mainly satisfactory progress in reception, pupils' standards are below average, overall, when they start Year 1, including in language and literacy, in mathematics, and in their scientific understanding of the world.
2. In English, current standards in Year 2 broadly reflect the results of the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in 2002. They show that standards are a little below average in reading but are lower, overall, in writing with a significant minority demonstrating standards which are well below average. In relation to their starting points at the beginning of Year 1, these results are broadly adequate, but there is scope for pupils to achieve more highly, particularly in writing. Their writing standards are affected by weaknesses in style, structure, punctuation, grammar, spelling and presentation. In addition, very few pupils in Year 2 have a wide enough general vocabulary to give their writing real impact and precision, and very few have learned to construct complex sentences. In Years 3 to 6, there is a marked acceleration in pupils' progress in English, due to more effective teaching. This was reflected in the 2002 SATs results for Year 6 pupils, when the school's performance in English was well above the results achieved by schools with comparable results in Year 2. Current standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations, as a result. Most Year 6 pupils read capably and expressively and can talk with understanding about what they read. For the most part, they can produce well organised writing with interesting and relevant content, and are able to match form and style to different audiences. Although weaknesses in spelling, in vocabulary, grammar and in the inappropriate use of non-Standard English continue to detract from the overall quality of the writing of a significant minority of pupils, their standards of handwriting and presentation are generally good. Overall, pupils' progress in English in Years 3 to 6 is a strength in the school, reflecting the mainly good, and sometimes very good, quality of teaching in the subject in these years.
3. In mathematics, the majority of Year 2 pupils are achieving the standard expected but relatively few exceed this level and, overall, standards are below average as a result. These findings broadly reflect the Year 2 mathematics results in the SATs in 2002. Overall, current standards in Year 2 reflect broadly satisfactory achievement, given pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1. They steadily acquire key numeracy skills and demonstrate a growing understanding of shape, space and measures. In Years 3 to 6, in common with the situation in English, pupils' progress increases and is good. As a result, overall standards are in line with national expectations in Year 6, and represents good achievement given pupils' starting points at the beginning of Year 3. For example, in a lesson observed in a mixed Year 5 and 6 class, pupils made good progress when using a protractor to measure and draw acute and obtuse angles, while a group of lower attaining Year 6 pupils improved their knowledge about

fractions significantly, due to very good teaching from the headteacher. Most Year 6 pupils have a secure knowledge of factors, multiples and prime numbers, have a sound understanding of measure, shape and space, and handle data competently.

4. In science, inspection findings reflect the results of the statutory teacher assessments in 2002, and show that, while a satisfactory proportion of the current Year 2 demonstrate average standards, relatively few do better. Consequently, overall standards are below average in Year 2. In the main, however, pupils' standards in Year 2 represent sound achievement, given their starting points at the beginning of Year 1. Nevertheless, the more advanced learners could sometimes reach higher standards if they were given more challenging work. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress improves and is mainly sound but otherwise good. As a result, overall standards are broadly in line with national expectations in Year 6. For example, Year 6 pupils can identify the main parts of a flower, including organs such as the stamen and stigma; have a sound understanding of the need for healthy eating and exercise; can explain why shadows change during the course of the day; and know it is daylight in the part of the Earth facing the Sun.
5. In ICT standards are broadly average in Years 2 and 6 but are on course to rise in Years 3 to 6 where the teaching is good. In geography and history, there was insufficient evidence available to judge pupils' standards in Year 2. However, standards in Year 6 are average in geography but above average in history. These achievements are satisfactory in geography and good in history. In music, overall standards are average in Years 2 and 6, but singing is a strength across the school and is above average. In physical education, overall standards are also average, and represent sound achievement. However, some pupils achieve well in gymnastics in Years 2 and 6, and in swimming in Year 6.
6. There are particular weaknesses in pupils' achievements in art and design and design and technology, and the school recognises there is work to be done to improve standards in these subjects. In art and design, standards are below average in Years 2 and 6 and pupils demonstrate limited skills, including in drawing and painting, across the school. In design and technology, standards are average in Year 2 but are below average in Year 6 where pupils' making skills are considerably underdeveloped.
7. Pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils for whom English is an additional language make sound progress overall in their learning, but do particularly well in lessons where they benefit from additional adult support, and also in short sessions where they are withdrawn from class to work with learning support assistants. The most able pupils in the school make broadly satisfactory progress, overall, but they mark time in some lessons in Years 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics and science, when their work is too easy. During the inspection, there was no evidence of significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls, although the school's SATs results in recent years show that girls outperform boys.
8. In the main, standards are broadly similar to when the school was inspected in 2000 and 2001. Standards have risen from average in history in 2000 to above average in the current inspection. Neither of the previous inspections made judgements about standards in art and design, where they are now too low, and current findings show that standards have fallen in design and technology from their average level in 2000. In common with the situation in 2001, pupils generally make better progress in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2.

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

9. The vast majority of pupils come very willingly to school and are happy to be there. Indeed, some pupils who moved to the school only recently commented to inspectors very favourably about the friendliness they had encountered. When asked their views, pupils generally comment on the subjects and extra-curricular activities they enjoy. All seem to have favourite subjects, and most also identify one or two subjects they don't particularly like. What was impressive during the inspection, therefore, was the positive and willing way in which pupils engaged with learning, whatever the subject. It is evident, from comments made to various inspectors, that pupils feel valued by staff and that they feel secure within the school environment. These caring attitudes are reflected in their own commitment to learning and in their own relationships with others. They respect the staff who work with them, and they try hard to meet teachers' expectations of them in regard to behaviour and learning.
10. In almost every lesson, pupils listen well, and show good powers of concentration so that teachers very rarely need to say things more than once. Very occasionally, if a teacher shows signs of uncertainty in the delivery of a lesson, a few pupils might temporarily let their own concentration slip, but such instances are the exception rather than the rule. Almost always, pupils persevere with their work, whether directly supervised or not. They try hard to draw on their own resources and to apply what they already know or can do to 'new' learning, and they quietly and unobtrusively offer help to one another when they can. Sometimes, particularly in Years 1 and 2, some pupils lack the skills and knowledge themselves to complete tasks independently, and it is at times like this that a few show some signs of restlessness; as a result, the pace of work sometimes slows. In most lessons, pupils work together constructively, share resources fairly and listen to others' ideas with interest. Regardless of ability, background, ethnicity or special educational needs, pupils work well together in the classroom and mix well socially in the playground.
11. Pupils' behaviour is good and they act responsibly. They are polite and helpful in their dealings with their peers, with all adults who work with them, and also with visitors. They show respect for their own and others' property, and they are keen to help, for example by undertaking routine classroom duties or by helping in the dining hall. Older pupils enjoy caring for younger pupils during wet playtimes, organise outdoor games when it is fine, and monitor pupils' movement in and out of school during breaks and lunch-time to make sure safety rules are upheld. At the time of the OFSTED inspection in 2000, concern was expressed about the behaviour of a small minority of pupils in a particular class. A follow-up inspection in 2001 reported more favourably on behaviour: pupils with behavioural difficulties managed their behaviour well. The findings of the current inspection strongly confirm the latter view: behaviour is good, and there has been a marked reduction in the number of exclusions during the year prior to this inspection.
12. Relationships are supportive, warm and friendly. During assemblies, a strong sense of unity prevails, and it is clear that pupils identify with the 'family' that is their school: it is evident in the greetings they extend to one another and to staff, and it is reflected in the quality and enthusiasm of their singing. A rendering of a hymn celebrating the uniqueness of the local area within the bounds of four rivers is sung with genuine feeling and brings to life a strong spirit of place that is almost tangible. At the same time, pupils demonstrate equal sincerity in the way they greet much less spiritual events, and their loyalty to their school 'houses' is clear to see as they wait for house points to be declared and the winning house named. During a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson, pupils in Year 3 are quick to appreciate the finer,

abstract qualities that make a 'true friend'. They quickly reject the idea that a rich friend is a good friend, suggesting, instead, that trust, caring qualities and shared interests are far more important; with a touching maturity, one pupil also points out that genuine friendship grows over time. A School Council, introduced fairly recently, provides opportunities for pupils to contribute to developments within school and to air concerns. Pupils involved as members take their roles very seriously and responsibly, while their classmates, of all ages, value the fact that they are consulted and take pride in helping to bring about sensible changes. Opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative in relation to their learning generally need to be increased in the school, although there are very good examples of thoughtful, independent research undertaken in history by pupils in Years 3 to 6.

13. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and are valued members of the school community. They are given the warmth and security they need to succeed, not only by staff, but also by their peers.
14. Attendance in the academic Year 2001-2002 was below the national average and this is unsatisfactory. Although the vast majority of pupils arrive in good time, some regularly arrive late in the mornings and consequently miss the start of lessons. The school is working with parents to improve the situation and the school's practice of contacting parents if their child is not present has significantly reduced the levels of unauthorised absence to levels below most other schools. Registers are correctly completed and sessions start on time.

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

15. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen during the inspection, and was good or better in four out of every ten lessons. The most effective teaching is in Years 3 to 6, where well over half of all lessons were good and sometimes better. In the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2, the teaching is satisfactory overall. In these classes, good teaching is less common, and some of the satisfactory lessons include elements which could be improved.
16. When the school was last inspected, in 2001, there had been a marked improvement in the teaching, in comparison with the situation in 2000 when an inspection found it was unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The school has maintained this improvement, and the quality of teaching is broadly similar to when the school was last inspected.
17. In the reception classes, the teachers create a caring atmosphere where children quickly feel secure. They successfully foster children's social and cultural development, helping them to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Good behaviour and positive attitudes are promoted well, so that children are keen to do their best and to follow their teachers' instructions. However, there is an over-emphasis on tasks which are too prescribed and directed, and teachers need to encourage children to take more responsibility for their own learning and to develop decision making skills. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are soundly promoted. For example, there was particularly effective encouragement for children to listen to the sounds at the beginning and end of words in one lesson which was seen: the teacher read the story of Goldilocks, deliberately making phonetic mistakes as she went, such as pronouncing 'Goldilocks' as 'Goldisocks'. The children spotted the mistakes immediately and enjoyed correcting her amid roars of laughter. A relative weakness, however, is often the lack of involvement of adults, including teachers, alongside the children as they play and carry out practical tasks. Opportunities are missed to help children to develop their ideas through talk. The

teaching enables children to make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Despite the difficulty of having no secure outside play area for the reception children, teachers ensure they make sound progress in their physical development, including by making effective use of the school hall. Overall, teachers give insufficient emphasis to children's creative development, and this is a key weakness in the reception classes. There is often a lack of appropriate resources to promote children's creative development, insufficiently precise planning for this important element of their learning, and too little involvement of adults playing alongside children to help them develop their ideas.

18. In English, the teaching was satisfactory, overall, in the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2. However, there were elements which needed improvement and which contribute, over time, to pupils sometimes underachieving, particularly in writing. For example, the teaching in Years 1 and 2 would have a greater impact on pupils' achievements if: expectations for pupils' potential standards were higher; some lessons moved at a faster pace; teachers were more rigorous in correcting pupils' mistakes and misunderstandings in lessons; more emphasis was given to the development of pupils' vocabulary; and if teachers chose better texts to show pupils examples of effective writing. In Years 3 to 6, English teaching is good and is occasionally very good. Teachers are alert for any signs of misunderstanding or underperformance, and they make effective use of the time available in lessons. They ensure that pupils learn to evaluate their own, and others' performance, and that pupils are routinely involved in improving on their first efforts, either through discussion or through redrafting their work. They give constructive feedback to pupils, both verbally and in writing, so that each pupil knows how to improve their performance. Rigorous and detailed feedback such as this are less evident in Years 1 and 2 where praise is sometimes too freely given and pupils could sometimes be helped to do better. When the school was last inspected, in 2001, this was also a weakness in Years 1 and 2.
19. In mathematics, the teaching is broadly satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and is mainly good in the older classes. As a result, pupils generally make sound progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. In science, the teaching is satisfactory, overall, across the school but is usually more effective in Years 3 to 6. In both mathematics and science, teachers' expectations are higher in the older classes where questions are often used well to probe pupils' understanding. In Years 1 and 2, there are elements of weakness in the satisfactory lessons and these include, in common with the situation in English, the need for more focused questioning and for a faster pace to some lessons. In addition, in mathematics and science, the most advanced learners sometimes need more challenging work in Years 1 and 2.
20. Insufficient lessons were observed in geography and history to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching. However, pupils' completed work shows the teaching enables them to make good progress in history in Years 3 to 6. Across the school, music and religious education teaching are satisfactory, and the teaching of physical education is mainly good. In ICT, the teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but is good in the older classes. Consequently, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are well placed to raise their standards further.
21. In art and design, the lessons seen were satisfactory, overall. However, an analysis of pupils' completed work shows the teaching does not enable pupils to make sufficient progress, over time, and standards are too low as a result. In design and technology, no lesson was taught during the inspection. Pupils' completed work shows it enables pupils to make sound progress in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory progress, overall,



in the older classes. In both art and design and design and technology, teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge and expertise.

22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is mainly sound, and sometimes good. Support for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good during literacy and numeracy lessons in Years 3 to 6 where most of the lessons are taught effectively and well chosen activities enable these pupils to work at appropriate levels. Where pupils also benefit from additional adult support during group work, for example from the teacher or from well-informed learning support assistants, they often make good progress. Learning support assistants are generally skilled at helping pupils to play a full part in lessons and at ensuring that it is the pupils themselves who do the learning: they know when to help, but also when to hold back and let pupils work things out for themselves. In Years 1 and 2, most teaching is sound, and pupils with special educational needs, like their peers, are helped to make sound progress, building on their prior attainment. When pupils are withdrawn from classes to work on special programmes associated with targets in their individual education plans or to focus on a particular aspect of literacy or numeracy at an appropriate level, work is tailored closely to their needs, and most pupils, irrespective of their year group, make good progress. At the time of the OFSTED inspection in 2000, the conduct of a few pupils with behavioural difficulties caused concern in a particular class. Now, with very rare exceptions, teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, and pupils themselves have been taught, successfully, to manage their own behaviour. Where necessary, special provision is made in the form of pastoral programmes. Pupils with very specific needs, for example with hearing impairment and speech difficulties receive sound support. Teachers and all other staff who work with them are aware of their needs and make every effort to ensure that they have opportunities to participate fully in lessons. Where possible, outside specialists carry out diagnostic assessments to determine the exact nature of a pupil's needs, contribute to support programmes, and advise staff in regard to appropriate teaching and learning strategies beneficial to specific pupils. The school's special educational needs co-ordinator helps and advises her colleagues by suggesting appropriate resources and ideas when this is relevant and helpful, and she is often consulted when teachers draw up pupils' individual education plans. These plans address various identified needs and targets may be related to literacy, numeracy, social and emotional development or pastoral support. Most targets define appropriate, short-term and achievable goals, and these are reviewed on a regular basis in the light of a child's progress.
23. The school has a few pupils for whom English is an additional language. One child, in the early stages of learning English, currently attends school part time in the reception class and is making sound progress as a result of consistently sound teaching. Older pupils whose command of English is more secure are given additional adult support when this is possible and deemed necessary. Teachers and support staff are alert to the need to make sure that these pupils are fully included in all activities. They try to ensure that explanations, paraphrase and the repetition of language are used according to need. In the past, the school was fortunate in being able to access specialist advice on English as an additional language through the local education authority.
24. All adults in the school promote the valuing of each child, both at work and at playtimes. Teachers are beginning to implement strategies to encourage boys to improve their attainment in English through the use of projects that might enthuse them such as the Bristol Rovers literacy scheme.

25. Across the school, teaching is characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils, and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. The management of behaviour is good, resources are carefully prepared, teachers explain tasks clearly and generally organise their lessons efficiently. The learning intentions of lessons are clearly defined, and the teaching usually captures pupils' interest effectively. As a consequence, pupils respond well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning by listening attentively to their teachers and persevering with their tasks.

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

26. Overall, the curriculum for children in the reception classes provides a satisfactory foundation for their next stage of learning. It is particularly effective in promoting their social and emotional development but needs improvement to cater appropriately for their creative development.
27. The last report judged the curriculum offered to pupils in Years 1 to 6 to be broad and balanced with sound medium-term planning across the school, and this remains the case. The curriculum for these pupils is satisfactory, overall, and there are particular strengths in Years 3 to 6 in literacy, numeracy and history. Statutory requirements are met. The school's policies for individual subjects are being fully reviewed as part of a detailed and ongoing two-year programme; and schemes of work have been improved since the 2000 OFSTED inspection when there was uneven coverage of some subjects across the school. Whole-school curriculum plans are being developed, mainly based on helpful guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and, in most subjects, staff are now able to plan within a sound framework for progression which was not fully established in 2000. Subjects such as physical education, art and design, music and drama benefit from high profile school events at different times of the year. However, there are weaknesses in the school's provision for the development of pupils' key skills in art and design and design and technology, and standards are too low in Year 6 as a result. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall, and good class teaching in Years 3 and 4 works well in the interests of special needs pupils. The provision for the more able pupils is satisfactory overall, although they sometimes need more challenging work in Years 1 and 2.
28. Good provision is made for pupils' PHSE. Pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs and the importance of healthy eating, and appropriate emphasis is given to sex education. A minority of parents think that the curriculum could be enriched by more extra-curricular activities. However, the current provision of football, drama, orchestra, chess, rounders, hockey and French is broadly similar to most schools of a similar size. The school also has plans to provide extra-curricular opportunities for recorder playing and a choir in the near future. An annual residential visit for pupils in Year 6 makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning; and all pupils benefit from visits to places of interest linked to their studies.
29. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. When necessary, funds are found to meet the cost of visits and residential trips for those who would otherwise not be able to afford them. Planning across year groups ensures that all pupils have similar curricular opportunities. Parents of children who are identified as gifted or talented are appropriately informed about additional opportunities for them to meet with others at specially planned workshops organised by the local education authority.

30. The local area is used appropriately to support the curriculum. For example, as part of the year of reading, every class has visited the public library. Pupils have followed mathematical trails in the local supermarket and use the town and seaside for studies of local history and geography. There are sound links with two nearby churches and the school benefits from donations of equipment and resources from some local businesses. There are a variety of opportunities, throughout the year, for pupils to think about others by raising funds for charities. For example, they bring harvest goods for those people who receive “meals on wheels”. The school is keen to be part of the local community and contributes to the residents’ newsletters; it also encourages organisations to make use of the facilities after school and in the holidays.
31. The school is beginning to develop better links with the pre-school on site by sharing information on children’s abilities. The Education Action Zone funds a wide variety of musical and sporting events in which pupils may opt to participate, and this gives them the chance to mix with other primary school pupils. This funding has also helped to provide a technician to maintain the computer equipment and an artist in residence. There are sound links between primary phase schools in the area, and co-ordinators from different schools meet to discuss their subjects.

### **Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

32. The provision for pupils’ spiritual education is satisfactory. School assemblies are organised effectively and pupils show respect at times of reflection. Pupils sing well and join in with enthusiasm, listen to stories with interest, and are keen to make a contribution when appropriate. Assemblies are further enhanced by the use of outside speakers to lead the worship. There is less obvious spiritual provision around school or in lessons, and teachers do not yet plan for spiritual opportunities within the curriculum. However, in a science lesson, pupils were able to compare and contrast man-made articles with the wonder of natural objects. The religious education curriculum makes a positive contribution to pupils’ spiritual development.
33. There is very good provision for moral development. All pupils are guided by the school’s charter and classroom rules that are displayed prominently in classes and shared areas in the school. This code is promoted consistently throughout all aspects of school life. Teachers and classroom assistants remind pupils of its points and expectations during lessons. Good behaviour and effort are rewarded through the house point system in Years 3 to 6, and individual class teachers use a variety of positive rewards. Teachers use a range of sanctions, appropriate to age, when necessary; and the headteacher is actively involved in all cases where there is concern over a child’s behaviour. There is a good PSHE policy and scheme of work which is timetabled for all classes. This programme reinforces the school’s aims and enables pupils to look more closely at their own actions and the consequences of those actions. Pupils are therefore encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The results of the very good provision for pupils’ moral development are evident in the very good relationships across the school and in pupils’ positive behaviour and attitudes.
34. The provision for social development is good. The positive working atmosphere of mutual respect in classes promotes collaboration and pupils’ understanding of the needs of others. The school works effectively as a community and pupils learn the part that they need to play. They co-operate well with their peers and with adults. There are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for roles within the school: for example manning the office at lunchtime or preparing the hall for assembly. However,

there is scope for pupils to be given more opportunities to develop decision making skills in lessons, especially in the younger classes. The School Council is a very good example of pupils taking a full part in the decision making processes at the school. Two pupils from each class in Years 1 to 6 attend meetings, and the reception classes are represented by Year 6 pupils who have been to talk to them. All decisions or proposals are taken back to the classes, where they are discussed or reviewed in the class council which has a regular timetabled slot. The democratic process can clearly be seen to operate and pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils have started to take responsibility for writing and distributing minutes and an agenda, and this is a good development.

35. The provision for cultural development is just satisfactory. Although there are opportunities in the curriculum for cultural values to be developed, these are not planned for and teachers are inconsistent in their approach. Whole-school events such as Book Week, which involved most of the school dressing up as a character from a book, the annual talent contest, an art exhibition and dance led by an artist in residence provide cultural experiences. The school promotes and celebrates individual gifts and talents, and there are some opportunities for pupils to experience the theatre. Extra-curricular clubs provide sound support for pupils' cultural development, and educational visits make a useful contribution. There are relatively few resources for multicultural education, including books and artefacts, and this needs to be addressed.

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

36. Ashcombe is a caring community where the best interests of the pupils underpins all aspects of school life. Parents have confidence in the school and information about children is readily shared. This ensures that staff know the pupils' particular social or pastoral needs and can provide well focused and sensitive support. Support staff and lunchtime supervisors are also well briefed and provide a continuity of care throughout the school day. Pupils know that any worries or concerns they raise will be listened to carefully and this helps them build on their self-esteem. Good use is made of outside experts, when available, to support particular educational, behavioural and medical needs. Child protection issues are well handled with good briefings for all staff on how to record any concerns. Pupils have regular reminders about the importance of personal safety through assemblies and their personal and social education.
37. The school is particularly effective in the promotion of good behaviour and positive attitudes to school. All adults in the school are aware of the school's policy, which is based on raising pupils' self-esteem, and it is consistently applied. There are high expectations that pupils will follow the school's few simple rules and are appropriately praised for their good response. The opportunity for pupils to choose activities at the end of the week in 'golden time' also emphasises the importance of pupils taking personal responsibility for their behaviour. The School Council enables pupils to express their views about how the school could be improved and this engenders a feeling of ownership and pride in pupils about the school community. There is very little bullying in the school, and any incidents are quickly reported and dealt with effectively. Helpful behaviour plans are used effectively to support the few pupils who sometimes find it harder to meet the high levels of good behaviour expected. The school strongly promotes the unacceptability of any racist behaviour or name-calling and takes appropriate steps to record incidents. Pupils are expected to reflect on their behaviour and to write apologies for the offence they have caused.

38. The school receives extra funding to monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils, and this is beginning to have an impact on levels of attendance and unauthorised absence. The use of first day follow up calls to check on children who have not come to school not only draws attention to the importance of regular attendance but also helps the school maintain its awareness of children at risk. Parents who are not sending their children to school regularly, or whose children consistently arrive late, are reminded from time-to-time of their obligations. However, now that the system has been computerised there is scope to do this more frequently. Certificates for good attendance are awarded and, where necessary, specific comments linking lack of progress to poor attendance are made in pupils' annual reports.
39. The health and safety of pupils and staff has a high profile in the school. The policy includes useful guidelines about safe practice in different lessons and a very good range of risk assessments has been completed. Regular site inspections are carried out and pupils are also asked about any hazards they have noticed. The action deemed necessary is well documented and regularly monitored to ensure appropriate action is taken. There are sound procedures in place to cover the storage and administration of medicines and many adults have appropriate training in first aid. Sound records are kept of minor bumps and scrapes and parents are always informed of such incidents if these involve head injuries. Pupils and their parents are well disciplined in using the designated crossing in the car park to reach their classrooms, and pupils are reminded about the importance of using the services of the crossing patrol person when coming to school. The buildings and grounds are well maintained, clean and tidy, with the site being appropriately fenced.
40. In response to the inspection in 2000, an effective action plan was drawn up to improve assessment procedures, and the last inspection, in 2001, found the school had made good progress in this area. This progress has continued and is reflected in the following evidence:
- most co-ordinators review pupils' progress through the scrutiny of pupils' books;
  - teachers identify the learning objectives of their lessons and are aware of these as lessons proceed;
  - there are regular end of unit assessments in English and mathematics;
  - the questioning skills of teachers in Years 3 to 6 are used particularly well to probe pupils' understanding and to identify their needs;
  - there are useful opportunities for pupil self assessment in lessons, especially in Years 3 to 6; and
  - the headteacher undertakes regular monitoring and evaluation of teachers' planning to promote pupils' learning.
41. The school now has a good range of procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This is supported by a detailed programme of assessments which are carried out throughout the year. Pupils complete non-statutory tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 each year. However, although these are analysed thoroughly, there is scope to make more use of the information to make adjustments and improvements in teachers' future planning. An informative individual pupil-tracking card is securely in place but the resultant database is not yet extensive enough. Although the cards were evident in all classes and gradually being added to, this will take time. The school is

aware of differences in performance of boys and girls in recent SATs results. As a result, some input to raise boys' interest in writing has been made with links to a local football club, and reading materials have been purchased which are specifically aimed at boys.

42. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall and is sometimes particularly well focused for the older pupils. However, pupils in Years 1 and 2 sometimes need more guidance about how to improve their work. Most pupils are aware of where they are against short-term targets. However, the school does not set individual or group targets for progress which means that pupils are not yet as clear of what their long-term targets are. As part of the marking scheme, there is a good set of symbols displayed in most classrooms. Once this is more consistently used, it will provide pupils with useful information about their progress.
43. Informal assessment of pupils' achievement of the learning targets for individual lessons is a natural part of teaching in each class, and the teachers in Years 3 to 6 are particularly adept at judging pupils' needs. Learning support assistants also make a valuable contribution by assessing the progress and learning requirements of pupils with special educational needs. Before beginning a new topic, particularly in subjects such as history, science and geography, teachers are beginning to carry out an assessment prior to learning by asking pupils to complete a concept map. They then use a second one at the end of the unit of work to compare progress. This is a sensible strategy. Subject co-ordinators are beginning to build up files of evidence including photographic records and work samples. The headteacher and the assessment co-ordinator are a strong partnership, having initiated many significant and appropriate assessment systems. The evidence these generate now needs to be more widely used to raise standards further.

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

44. Parents are very complimentary about the school and particularly value how easy they find it to talk to staff. They believe the school is well led and managed, and recognise that the 'new' headteacher has made important improvements. An effective partnership is established because the school provides helpful information and maintains good communication links with parents about their children. This builds up the trust parents have about the school and encourages them to share information about their children's circumstances. They know that they will be kept informed if the school has any concerns about educational, pastoral or behavioural issues. When necessary, the school uses help to communicate with parents who do not speak English.
45. Documentation, including the regular newsletters, provides clear and comprehensive information about the school and its activities. Summaries are sent to parents at the start of each half term outlining the topics that are to be taught; and occasional workshops are held to give parents more information about curriculum subjects. Parents enjoy the opportunities to attend special celebration assemblies such as Harvest Festival. The expectations for homework are clearly set out and shared with parents. Although a minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction about homework, evidence from the inspection shows that appropriate tasks are regularly set and marked.
46. Parents have the usual range of opportunities throughout the year to discuss children's progress with class teachers, and these consultations are usually well attended. Annual written reports give sound indications of pupils' strengths and

weaknesses, and their attainment and progress. Parents are asked their views and are also consulted from time-to-time about school issues e.g. the induction procedures for new children. Results of such surveys are always reported back to parents with indications of improvements that are to be implemented.

47. For their part, most parents are supportive of the school and their children's education. Some parents are able to help regularly in school and there has been a good take-up of the short training course offered to parent helpers. The school has a flourishing parents' association which organises a range of well supported social and fund-raising events that provide useful additional resources. The majority of parents are keen to support their children's learning. For example, most have responded positively to initiatives such as the 'year of reading' by encouraging their children to borrow books from the public library and by regularly hearing them read at home. However, evidence suggests that some parents could do more to support their children's learning at home or by listening to them read.
48. The school tries hard to involve all parents of pupils with special educational needs in their child's education and to keep them informed about progress. Parents are informed when their child's needs are first identified, and they are routinely invited to regular reviews of progress. While some parents are very keen to attend, and do their best to support their children at home, some feel unable to help or do not manage to get to meetings that have been arranged. In these circumstances, staff do their best to make contact with parents less formally, and also make what additional provision they can within school to help such children, for example by hearing them read.

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

49. The headteacher took up his post in September 2000. There was a good deal to do, since an inspection in January 2000 had found the school to be failing to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils, and that its leadership and management were unsatisfactory. In March 2001, the school was re-inspected and the beneficial impact of the new headteacher was clearly evident. The school was well led and managed, and was no longer failing. The current inspection confirms the impressive work of the headteacher. He has very good leadership skills and provides the school with a clear sense of direction. He promotes teamwork among staff and a positive attitude to school improvement. The headteacher communicates his high expectations well to the staff, and has significantly developed the roles of most co-ordinators by providing them with clear guidance and effective support. His interpersonal skills are very good, and his management of change has won him the confidence and respect of the school community. For example, parents have recognised the effective work of the headteacher and, in both the pre-inspection parents' meeting and in their questionnaire returns, registered their views that they believe the school is well led and managed.
50. The management skills of the headteacher are excellent, and he uses a good range of strategies to monitor the school's performance. He analyses the results of statutory tests rigorously and works alongside the co-ordinators for most subjects to analyse samples of pupils' work from across the school. In addition, the headteacher examines teachers' planning regularly and provides valuable feedback which has a beneficial effect on their work. He observes teaching in all classes, and his judgements clearly identify both strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher organises the performance management of teachers very well and ensures that targets are well matched to the needs of individuals and the school. As a result, performance management is having a beneficial impact both on teachers'

professional development and school improvement. The headteacher's effective analytical skills mean he is clear thinking and has a purposeful approach to his work. His energy, strong commitment and caring attitudes are also key strengths.

51. The deputy headteacher fulfils her role well, and works in close partnership with the headteacher. She provides a very positive role model for her colleagues through her effective teaching and attitudes to school improvement. She has made an important contribution to the improvement made by the school since its inspection in 2000. Most co-ordinators have developed their roles significantly since 2000, and have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. The majority examine samples of pupils' work, from across the school, and write useful reports of their findings. These are shared with staff and governors and help to inform future priorities for their subjects. Co-ordinators are conscientious and most are clearly having a very beneficial impact on the standards achieved in their subjects. However, there is scope for improvement in the co-ordination of art and design and design and technology, where standards are too low.
52. The headteacher has worked effectively with staff and governors to create the school improvement plan. It is well organised and includes sensible priorities. Detailed action plans show how individual initiatives will be undertaken, resourced and evaluated. A particular strength of the plan is the use of well defined success criteria which help the school to judge its achievements accurately. Overall, the plan represents effective strategic thinking, and is making a valuable contribution to school improvement.
53. The school benefits from a committed governing body which ensures that statutory requirements are met. A range of appropriate committees is established and makes a sound contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The chair of governors is well informed, visits often and works closely with the headteacher to foster school improvement. The governors with responsibility for literacy, numeracy, ICT, special educational needs, religious education and school ethos ensure they have a sound awareness of the school's work in their particular areas, and provide useful reports which inform their fellow governors. However, the governors for literacy and numeracy would benefit from sometimes observing lessons to see the national strategies being implemented. The governors appropriately value the good range of information they are given by the headteacher, and regular presentations by subject co-ordinators. The results of statutory tests are thoroughly discussed by the governors and they have a very sound awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development.
54. Overall, the school makes very sound use of its resources. The finance committee of the governors works closely with the headteacher, and takes careful account of the need to make the best possible use of its available resources. Individual initiatives in the school improvement plan are carefully costed, and funds carried forward from previous years have been sensibly used to improve provision. The governors are aware that these 'carry forward' sums have been very substantially eroded in the last two years, and of the need to plan carefully to ensure the school manages within its more limited resources in the next financial year.
55. The headteacher, special educational needs governor and special needs co-ordinator provide sound leadership and management for those aspects of the school's work related to special needs provision. Statutory requirements are met, and the governor, like the special educational needs co-ordinator, keeps abreast of recent developments in legislation by attending training sessions. The headteacher is largely responsible for links with outside agencies, but all three have worked closely together



since the OFSTED inspection of 2001 when a key issue identified was to ‘finalise the policy for special educational needs and ensure its systematic implementation throughout the school.’ Since that time, a sound policy has been produced which reflects the principles and guidance of the most recent Code of Practice, and much work has already been done to address a related cause of concern, namely the need for targets set during reviews of progress to be informed by assessment. The school now uses the results of both statutory and non-statutory assessments to identify pupils with special educational needs. The data is proving useful in identifying low achievement by individual pupils. However, work remains to be done on securing very precise information on pupils’ strengths and weaknesses, in literacy and numeracy in particular, so that planned intervention can be matched even more effectively to their needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator has substantial experience of special needs work, but is now working mainly as a class teacher, with very limited time to spend on the day-to-day management of special educational needs. Working with the headteacher, she has recently rationalised the deployment of support staff so that the available support is targeted appropriately at identified areas of need. Although there is a certain informality in the systems used to co-ordinate and monitor the work of all staff involved in special educational needs work, communication appears to be effective, and all staff are suitably informed about the needs of the pupils they teach. Learning support assistants are effective in their primary role, and their observations also contribute usefully to the school’s monitoring of pupils’ progress. Designated provision for individual pupils with statements or at ‘school action plus’ has been safeguarded, and every effort is made to secure the best provision available for these pupils from within the school’s resources and, where relevant, from outside agencies. A particular success in special educational needs work has been the provision for pupils with behavioural difficulties. A resources and teaching base – the Sunshine Room – has recently been established and is used to good effect when pupils are withdrawn from classes for group work.

56. There are appropriate policies for equal opportunities and for racial equality and a strong ethos of inclusion is promoted. The school appropriately monitors the progress of groups of pupils such as the more able or non-white pupils but this is made less easy as about a third of parents have not completed the forms on ethnic monitoring. A training session for staff on improving boys’ literacy is planned and will also be used to remind staff about the need to avoid gender stereotyping in questioning and expectations. The promotion of the richness of other cultures is recognised by the school as an area for further development.
57. There are sufficient teachers and, overall, they have the expertise and experience to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. Teachers’ knowledge of the National Curriculum is generally secure, and is usually strong in Years 3 to 6. However, most need to raise their expectations in art and design and in design and technology and to increase their knowledge of these subjects. In addition, there is scope for the teachers of reception children to increase their awareness of the need to foster creative development more effectively. Arrangements for the induction of staff are good. The school benefits from learning support assistants who develop positive relationships with pupils and make a valuable contribution to their learning. The school has efficient secretarial support, and this helps its day-to-day management to run smoothly.
58. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, and classrooms are of adequate size. It is kept in clean condition by the conscientious caretaking staff, and is enhanced by attractive displays of pupils’ work. However, there is no secure outside play area for reception children, and the library space requires improvement. Resources for

learning are mainly satisfactory, and include good provision for physical education and history. However, there are weaknesses in resources for reception children, in library provision and in relation to multicultural education, as well as in religious education, art and design and design and technology.

59. This school benefits from particularly effective leadership and management by the headteacher, and is consequently well placed to make further improvements. The quality of teaching enables pupils to make mainly satisfactory progress in their learning in the younger half of the school and generally good progress in the older classes. Pupils' standards in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with national expectations in Year 6, despite their starting points being mainly below average on entry to the school. There are weaknesses in children's creative development in reception, in their achievements in writing in Years 1 and 2, in design and technology in Year 6 and in art and design in Years 2 and 6. However, the school's strengths and sound achievements considerably outweigh these areas for development. It provides a sound curriculum for its pupils, is a caring community and provides effectively for their social and moral development. Overall, it provides sound value for money.

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

60. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher and governors should:
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing in Year 2 by ensuring that teachers in Years 1 and 2:
    - (i) raise their expectations as to what pupils can, and should achieve;
    - (ii) ensure that all pupils acquire a secure enough grasp of phonics, beyond initial sounds and blends, to help them build words in the early stages of writing;
    - (iii) implement relevant aspects of a comprehensive, whole-school approach to the teaching and learning of spelling;
    - (iv) give greater priority to the development of pupils' general vocabulary;
    - (v) alert pupils, in ways appropriate to their ages and abilities, to significant differences between their own use of language and standard forms of written English when this is necessary to improve the quality of their writing;
    - (vi) use information gleaned from the analysis of pupils' performance in tests – and in lessons – to address, directly, significant and persistent weaknesses in the written work of individual pupils, groups and classes;
    - (vii) expect pupils to use a cursive style of handwriting routinely in their day-to-day work when they can already do so in their handwriting practice books;
    - (viii) demonstrate – and give feedback to pupils about – ways in which writing can be improved and brought to a high standard. (see paragraphs 2, 18, 85-90)
  - Improve standards in art and design in Years 2 and 6, and standards in design and technology in Year 6 by:
    - (i) providing teachers with well focused in-service training to increase their knowledge and to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievements in these subjects;

- (ii) ensuring that resources are improved in both subjects and are better organised for accessibility.  
(see paragraphs 6, 21, 27, 57, 107-115)
  - Ensure that children in the reception classes have sufficient opportunity for their creative development by:
    - (i) improving teachers' planning for this important part of children's learning;
    - (ii) increasing resources to support creative learning;
    - (iii) encouraging teachers and support assistants to become more involved with children as they play and carry out practical tasks, in order to encourage children to develop their creative ideas.  
(see paragraphs 1, 17, 26, 64, 81 and 82)
  - Improve pupils' attendance, which was below the national average in the last academic year. (see paragraph 14)
  - Provide a secure outside play area for children in the reception classes in order to promote their learning, particularly in relation to their physical and creative development. (see paragraphs 63 and 80)
61. In addition to the key issues above, the headteacher and governors should consider the following, less important, issues for inclusion in the action plan:
- Rectify the weaker elements of some lessons in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics and science by:
    - (i) ensuring teachers always have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils, including for the most able in their classes;
    - (ii) improving teachers' questioning skills so they are able to probe pupils' understanding more effectively and target their teaching more precisely on areas for improvement;
    - (iii) ensuring teachers' feedback gives pupils more focused advice about how to improve their performance.  
(see paragraphs 19, 27, 98, 101 and 105)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	26	47	0	0	0
Percentage	1	8	33	59	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	336
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	64

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	23	27	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	42	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (83)	84 (78)	88 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	19
	Girls	26	25	26
	Total	44	43	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (83)	86 (90)	90 (93)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	18	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	19
	Girls	14	12	15
	Total	30	27	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (84)	68 (76)	85 (95)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	17
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	29	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (79)	75 (68)	80 (87)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

**Exclusions in the last school year**

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
216	3	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
104	0	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	25.7

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	227.5

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	730,269
Total expenditure	753,384
Expenditure per pupil	2,354
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,042
Balance carried forward to next year	28,927



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	334
Number of questionnaires returned	240

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	38	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	43	5	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	44	12	4	2
The teaching is good.	63	34	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	39	7	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	25	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	57	37	5	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	72	23	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	36	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	35	13	5	11

## **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**

62. Children are admitted to the school in the September of the year in which they become five. There are appropriate arrangements to introduce children and their parents to the school, which include opportunities for them to visit and spend time with their teachers in the term before they start. The children initially attend school on a part-time basis. This gradual introduction to school life ensures that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure from an early stage. Most children have attended some form of pre-school provision. The school rightly recognises the importance of the experiences that children have before they enter school and has well established plans to develop their links with pre-school settings.
63. The children are organised into two reception classes which are housed in a temporary building. Although space is limited, the classrooms are of adequate size and benefit from a shared area which is used for a range of activities including role play and art. However, provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory because there is no secure allocated area. There are also weaknesses in resources to support learning in all the areas of the curriculum.
64. There is a wide spread of attainment on entry to the reception class, but overall it is below average, particularly in the basic skills of communication, language and literacy, and in mathematics. The curriculum that the school provides emphasises direct teaching in all areas of the curriculum. This ensures that children make satisfactory progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, provision for creativity is unsatisfactory and there are not enough opportunities for children to develop the skills of independent learning, to use their imagination and to apply what they know through purposeful practical activities which involve exploration, play and talk.

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

65. The personal, social and emotional development of most children as they enter the school is a little below the level expected for their age. They make good progress in their social and emotional development and rapidly gain in confidence because of the supportive and caring ethos that is provided in the reception classes. Many achieve the standards expected of them in their emotional and social development by the end of the reception year as a result of the sound teaching they receive. Children are helped to settle into well established routines and, as a result, they quickly understand what is expected of them. They have a developing awareness of their own needs and learn to express them clearly because they know that they will be listened to. The caring ethos in the reception classes and the good role models set by all the adults who work in the area help children to develop their understanding of how others feel. As a result, children are very sensitive to each other's needs and feelings. They develop good relationships with their classmates through taking part in activities which require them to share ideas, equipment and materials. For example, children are often asked to play board games together, to discuss their ideas with their friends and to speak to the whole class. This helps them to learn to take the ideas of others into account and to understand the importance of turn taking and sharing.
66. The high expectations of behaviour that the teachers have of the children are consistently reinforced and, consequently, good habits are established from an early

stage. Children are keen to do their best, respond well to their teachers' instructions and they take part in all the activities provided for them willingly. However, there is an over emphasis on tasks which are directed by the teacher and insufficient planning for the development of the skills of independent learning. As a result, children do not develop the skills that they need to take responsibility for their own learning and to make informed choices and decisions in the course of their work.

67. There is sound support for children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language from the teachers and classroom assistants. This helps these children to develop the confidence that they need to take part in lessons and ensures they make sound progress.

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

68. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are below those expected for children of a similar age when they start school. Although children make sound overall progress, as a result of satisfactory teaching, at the end of the reception year overall standards remain lower than in most schools.
69. Children listen with enjoyment to stories and sustain attentive listening during whole-class literacy sessions when they respond with relevant comments to their teachers' questions. A small number of children demonstrate that they already have quite a sophisticated vocabulary, for example one child used the word 'nostril' to describe the features of a cockatiel. However, a significant minority do not have a wide and varied vocabulary, and they find it hard to speak in full sentences and pronounce words correctly. Although these children are initially quite reticent in whole-class situations, they gradually develop the confidence to answer questions and pass comments because of the good support they receive from the teaching assistants and the encouragement of the teachers. Most children use the correct words to name objects and can retell their experiences when asked to do so. Their skills in using language for thinking are not sufficiently developed and there are insufficient opportunities for children to talk through their understanding. They do not readily commentate on their own actions, and make little use of language to create roles, develop stories and interact imaginatively with others. This is, in part, due to the paucity of resources to promote and develop the use of language in play and insufficient involvement of adults in playing alongside children to help them develop their ideas through talk.
70. There are regular opportunities for children to select books from collections in the classroom and the school library, and to share them with each other and with adults. They enjoy looking at books, are aware of how books work and are able to tell their versions of the stories using clues from the illustrations. The higher-attaining children read simple stories independently. Most children show a secure understanding of the elements of a story, and follow the events as the plot unfolds when they listen to stories being read aloud. During the inspection, children sequenced pictures of the events in story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and this helped them to retell the story, in the correct order. The majority develop a satisfactory awareness of the initial sounds of words and can associate them with letters of the alphabet. In the best teaching, there is good encouragement for the children to use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them read unfamiliar words. They are also encouraged to use their knowledge of familiar stories and the clues given in sentences to predict what unknown words might say. For example, in the course of a whole-class literacy lesson, words in a story had been covered up and the children had to predict what they might say. Where there are weaknesses, it is because the rate of introduction of phonic knowledge, and in teaching children to blend sounds together, is too slow for

some, particularly those who are more able. They often repeat what they already know in group-work sessions. There are currently two phonic schemes in use which do not entirely go together. There is a need to decide upon a consistent and coherent scheme to support children's progression in phonic knowledge.

71. The children are actively encouraged to make their own attempts at writing from an early stage. As a result of this, children gain a clear understanding that print carries meaning and that writing can be used to record their personal ideas. Children are formally taught how to hold a pencil and form their letters correctly and, as a result, most children can do this and can write their own name neatly by the end of the reception year. Guided writing is used to help children to apply their knowledge of letter sounds when writing. For example, a group of children, under the guidance of their teacher, wrote a simple letter to Goldilocks. More able children compose and write down short, simple statements. Although they begin to use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell words, there is scope to place more emphasis on helping children to use their knowledge of letter sounds, to build simple three-letter words and to make plausible attempts at spelling the more complex words. There are insufficient opportunities for children to use their writing skills independently in the course of play activities and to make up their own imaginative stories in the role-play area and when using small toys which represent the real world.

### **Mathematical development**

72. When children enter the school at the age of four, their mathematical development is below the level expected for their age. Their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their starting points although standards are below average at the end of the reception year. Where weaknesses occur, it is because activities do not meet the needs of all the children in the class and some children, particularly those who are more able, repeat what they already know in group-work sessions.
73. Most children recognise the numerals from one to nine, and can count accurately from zero to ten, for example, when counting out piles of pennies. Activities such as singing and counting rhymes and practical board games also help them develop their counting skills. There are appropriate strategies to help children visualise numbers. For example, children secretly counted the number on a dice and then mimed the number by flapping their arms for an equivalent number of times to help their classmates deduce what it was. More able children recognise higher numbers and are beginning to make good progress towards counting to 20. As a result of counting, children begin to gain a sound understanding that the last one in the count is the same as the number in the set. They begin to gain an early understanding of addition and subtraction when they work out how many objects they have when one more is added to a set or one is taken away. More able children take apart towers of cubes in different ways, count the number in each tower and then calculate how many they have altogether. There is insufficient planning for number work in the context of play and this limits the development of children's mathematical development because they do not apply what they have learned in a sufficiently wide range of situations which require them to solve problems and think for themselves.
74. Many children can identify simple two-dimensional shapes such as squares, circles, rectangles and triangles, and some can describe in simple terms the properties of these shapes, using the correct mathematical vocabulary. For example, they make plausible attempts at describing a square, a circle and a triangle by saying how many sides and corners they have. Children are developing a satisfactory knowledge of three-dimensional shapes and know the names of a sphere and a cone. They

recognise the everyday language of position when following directions in physical education. However, more could be done to help them use the language for themselves. The best activities help children to develop their understanding of shape, space and measure in practical ways and encourage them to think for themselves. For example, their knowledge is enhanced by the provision of mathematically shaped blocks which children use to build towers and cube like structures. In the course of their play in one lesson, a child found that a cylinder rolled off her construction when placed on its side, and another found that two triangles put together made a square. Opportunities to make models from used cartons and from construction equipment also contribute to children's understanding of three dimensional shapes. They develop the language that they need to compare heights by measuring how tall they are as they grow during the year. Cooking activities help them to develop an understanding of weight and the language of quantity such as more or less. Where weaknesses occur, it is sometimes because activities do not provide sufficient challenge for more able children. Play activities which involve the use of sand, water and malleable materials are also under-used to help develop children's learning about shape, space and measure.

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

75. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are generally below the levels expected for their age by the end of the reception year. However, this represents sound achievement in relation to their starting points on entry to the school and is a result of the satisfactory teaching they receive. Children show curiosity and interest in their surroundings and in the activities that are provided for them. They find out about the natural world by making close observations of guinea pigs and stick insects that are kept in the classroom, and learn to know something about their needs by helping to take care of them. Sometimes the children are allowed to hold the guinea pigs and this not only gives them opportunities to feel the texture of their fur and the weight of the bodies through first hand experience, but also contributes to children's personal skills by teaching them how to handle vulnerable creatures sensitively. During the course of the inspection, the children looked carefully at a cockatiel and compared its external features with those of their own. They demonstrated sound observational skills and could name the features of their own faces and compared them with those of the cockatiel. They were also able to deduce that certain features such as the bird's nostril and ear may be hidden underneath its feathers. Opportunities for cooking give children the opportunity to use their observational and sensory skills to find out about how things change when they are mixed together and put in the oven to heat. Where weaknesses occur, it is because children do not have sufficient opportunities to explore the natural and material world independently in the course of practical activities which involve play, both indoors and outside.
76. Opportunities are given for children to build and construct with a small range of construction equipment and also with used cartons and containers. For example, in one lesson they constructed go-karts and then took pictures of them using a digital camera. During this work they devised their own solutions to problems, such as how to make wheels, and they extended their range of skills such as cutting materials and joining them together. There are, however, insufficient resources for building and constructing, and this limits the progress that children make.
77. Children develop an understanding of the passing of time and of how people change over times by looking at photographs of themselves as a baby and discussing the sort of things they needed then and comparing them to their needs now that they are older. Opportunities to look at photographs of a person at different stages of their life

have contributed further to children's understanding of past and present. They develop an understanding of where they live by visits to the locality and by working in the role-play areas when they have been set up to represent local services, such as the post office or clinic.

78. Children control the mouse well when using the computers in the ICT suite. Sound teaching successfully introduces children to the basic skills they need to control images on screen, such as selecting pictures and dragging them to the correct position. They have insufficient opportunity to apply these skills in the course of their everyday work, largely because of a lack of reliable equipment in the reception area. There are, however, well-developed plans to remedy this situation.

### **Physical development**

79. Teaching for physical development is satisfactory and results in pupils making sound progress and developing an appropriate degree of dexterity for their age. There are opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills when using construction toys and when drawing and cutting. They are taught how to hold pencils and scissors correctly and this supports their work in other areas of learning.
80. Appropriate use is made of the hall for physical education and, as a result of working with large and small apparatus, children learn to move safely with control and co-ordination, and develop a sound awareness of their own space and that of others. One good lesson was seen in which the children developed the control of their movements well as they moved along, over, through and around the apparatus. They were gradually being trained to put out the equipment for themselves, safely and sensibly. The teacher not only gave very clear instructions but also participated in the movements herself. This acted as a good role model for the children and resulted in them having a good understanding of what was expected. They participated with energy and enthusiasm, throughout the lesson, and not a moment was wasted because the children were so well managed. Because of lessons such as this they are well prepared for their work in Year 1. However, provision for children to develop their physical skills through outdoor play is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient resources and there is no secure allocated space for reception-aged pupils. This limits opportunities for children to develop control of the speed and direction of their movements by exploration in a larger area.

### **Creative development**

81. Insufficient lessons were seen to make a judgement about teaching for children's creative development. However, all available evidence shows that provision for creativity is unsatisfactory and that children do not make sufficient progress in this area of development. Children's skills in making up their own imaginative stories when using the role-play area are not sufficiently developed. This is in part due to the paucity of resources that have been provided, a lack of precise planning and limited involvement of adults in playing alongside children to help them develop their imaginative ideas. A lack of small toys representing the real world limits the development of children's ability to visualise and think through their imaginative ideas and to practise their use of language in different situations.
82. Children enjoy painting and drawing, and respond willingly to instructions to paint what they see, for example. However, early drawings of people made by the children show that not all of them are ready for representational work and they are not being taught the correct techniques for painting. Children have insufficient opportunities to explore

the media and tools that they use and to develop their own creative ideas of what they see, hear and feel. The reception-age children readily join in with nursery rhymes and action songs and enjoy these whole-class opportunities to respond to songs and rhymes. In assemblies, many of the children are already trying to join in with repeating phrases in school hymns. In structured music-making sessions the children have well-planned opportunities to explore sounds and rhythms.

## ENGLISH

83. When pupils enter Year 1, their attainment in language and literacy is below average overall. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary, and their communication skills are often poor.
84. In 2002, the school's results in the national tests of reading for pupils aged seven were below the national average and also below the average results of similar schools. In the national tests of writing, results were well below the national average and below the average results of similar schools. Few pupils exceeded the standard set nationally for pupils aged seven in either reading or writing. In the same year, however, pupils aged 11 did significantly better than this in the national English tests: the school's results were in line with the national average and above the average results of similar schools. The school's own systems for tracking progress and analysing results shows that these pupils had made good progress over time in Years 3 to 6.
85. Inspection findings broadly confirm the results of the national tests. Pupils make broadly adequate progress in Years 1 and 2, and good progress overall in Years 3 to 6. Attainment in Year 2 is currently a little below average in reading. However, standards in writing are lower, and the performance of a significant minority is well below average. The need to raise attainment in writing in Year 2 was identified as an area for improvement in the OFSTED report in the Year 2000, and the same issue – expressed this time as a key issue – re-emerged in the report of the follow-up inspection in 2001, this time also linked to low achievement by boys in comparison with girls. The current inspection finds no specific evidence to show that girls outperform boys on a day-to-day basis. There are, however, significant variations in the overall performance of different year-groups, and these are likely to be reflected, year-on-year, in the results of national tests. Aware of weaknesses in both reading and writing in its Year 2 results, and responding to criticisms raised in the previous reports, the school has identified two related goals in its current improvement plan and is working towards developing a whole-school approach to writing development and a more coherent approach to the teaching of reading. Inspection evidence shows that some pupils may not be making the progress of which they are capable in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2. Some of the persistent weaknesses in the written work of older pupils also stem from an insecure foundation in early literacy skills. In reading, for example, lower attaining pupils in Year 2 use a very limited range of strategies for decoding unfamiliar words: they rely mainly on their ability to recognise some common words on sight, to identify initial sounds or to use clues presented by illustrations. Generally speaking, they do not routinely use the context of a piece of text to help them, nor do they use their knowledge of grammar or of patterns of language to predict what the 'next' word or words are likely to say. Most significantly, however, they lack the thorough knowledge of phonics essential to tackle unknown words confidently, and they seem unaware of ways of breaking words down into syllables or other recognisable parts – such as common prefixes and suffixes. These same weaknesses persist amongst the relatively few older pupils in the school who still experience difficulties with reading. In Years 1 and 2, it is also pupils' lack of

phonic awareness which represents the biggest hurdle to their early progress as writers; at this very formative stage, with only a scant knowledge of initial sounds and very few blends, some pupils find it difficult to 'build' recognisable words and to communicate their ideas successfully. The fact that there is no comprehensive whole-school approach to the teaching of spelling, compounds pupils' difficulties at a later stage: amongst older pupils, poor spelling is one of the most common weaknesses in writing.

86. In all year groups, the highest attaining pupils do well in most aspects of language work. By Year 2, the most able pupils already read simple texts suitable for their age accurately, fluently and with understanding. In their writing, they retell familiar stories convincingly, write simple descriptions and record work done in other subjects in appropriate ways. These pupils usually use full stops and capital letters accurately, and they have learned to join ideas by using simple connectives such as 'and' and 'then.' They have learned to produce joined-up handwriting neatly in their practice books, although very few carry this style of handwriting into their day-to-day work in English or in other subjects. Most pupils of average and lower attainment usually understand the literal meaning of what they read but find inference difficult, and even those who read accurately are not always fluent or expressive. While most of these pupils are keen to write, they find it difficult to combine, simultaneously, all those skills necessary to produce high quality work. To varying degrees, their work is affected by weaknesses in style, structure, punctuation, grammar, spelling and presentation. Overall, very few pupils in Year 2 have a wide enough general vocabulary to give their writing real impact and precision, and very few have learned to construct complex sentences.
87. Inspection evidence points to a marked acceleration in pupils' progress in English from Year 3 onwards. By Year 6, pupils of all abilities have made good progress in relation to their starting-points, and attainment overall is in line with national expectations. With rare exceptions at this stage, pupils read fluently and expressively and can talk with understanding about what they read. They generally understand, and can talk knowledgeably about, the plot and characters in fiction, and most are capable of using information books well to find out about topics studied in other subjects. While library skills are by no means securely established in the school as a whole, pupils in the oldest classes are accustomed to using library resources for research purposes and are also adept at organising and writing up their findings in their own words, as is evident in their work in history. For some lower attaining pupils in Year 6, inference remains a difficulty which limits their progress in reading. More able readers use inference well and also recognise the techniques authors use to create a pre-determined impact on readers. However, although most pupils enjoy reading, few read very widely, and few choose to read texts which are linguistically or intellectually challenging. For many pupils whose own vocabulary is relatively weak, even texts which are appropriate for their age present them with unfamiliar, and sometimes daunting, words. Nevertheless, by Year 6, most pupils have acquired a good repertoire of technical terms associated with their work in English and in other subjects, and this enables them to talk with some authority about their actual learning. Written work produced by pupils in Year 6 shows that they have been taught – and have largely learned – the skills and knowledge necessary to produce work of good quality. For the most part, they are able to produce well organised and well structured writing with interesting and relevant content and ideas, and are able to match form and style to various different purposes for writing in English and in other subjects. Although poor spelling, a limited general vocabulary, grammatical errors and the inappropriate use of non-Standard English continue to detract from the overall quality of the written work of a significant minority of pupils, standards of handwriting and



presentation are generally quite high. There are also some good examples of creative, discursive and informative writing by pupils of all abilities. Where there are weaknesses, at this stage, in the organisation of written work and in the use of punctuation, they clearly occur as a result of oversight rather than a lack of understanding.

88. Pupils' communication skills are generally below, and in some cases well below average when they enter Year 1. However, their listening skills develop more quickly than other aspects of language work and they are very soon able to listen with concentration and take turns politely during discussions. In almost all lessons seen, pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen well, and teachers rarely need to explain things more than once. Pupils' spoken language develops satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, but less rapidly than their capacity to listen, and lower attaining pupils sometimes struggle to find the right words and to express their ideas clearly. In Years 3 to 6, progress is more marked; by the time they reach Year 6, most pupils can make sustained contributions to discussions and debates, and will do so when directly invited to do so. However, as elsewhere, more confident pupils tend to be more willing to participate than their more reticent peers.
89. In lessons seen, the teaching of English is consistently sound in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, teaching is mainly good and occasionally very good. All teachers plan lessons thoroughly. All communicate very clearly to pupils what they are intended to learn, and all have established trusting relationships with the pupils they teach. Lessons proceed in an orderly manner, with a clear sense of purpose. Teachers manage pupils well, so that behaviour is good and pupils are willing to learn. There is a strong emphasis on inclusion: all pupils are valued equally, and pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are well supported and encouraged to play a full part at each stage of the lesson. Learning support assistants are well briefed, well informed and competent: they make a significant impact on the attainment and progress of those pupils with whom they work. In most lessons, tasks are matched appropriately to pupils of differing abilities, and learning builds appropriately on work completed in previous lessons. However, the pace of lessons is more exacting in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 than in Years 1 and 2, and teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are also higher. In Years 1 and 2, a general weakness in the teaching primarily concerns its impact on pupils' progress over time, although its roots can also be found in individual lessons. For example, while teachers take care to set each lesson in context and to make sure pupils know what they are intended to learn, this close focus on current learning objectives sometimes takes undue precedence over significant and persistent weaknesses in pupils' individual performance, whether in speaking and listening, in reading or in writing. Sometimes, concerns for pupils' self-esteem appears to take precedence over concerns for their learning, and, in the absence of appropriate and timely intervention, some pupils' misconceptions, mistakes or lack of understanding become entrenched and enduring. In the best practice seen, in Years 3 to 6, teachers pay appropriate attention to pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses at all times, as well as to the defined objectives of lessons. They are alert for any signs of misunderstanding or under-performance, and they are able to seize opportunities, as they arise, to make valid teaching points. They ensure that pupils learn to evaluate their own, and others' performance, and that pupils are routinely involved in improving on their first thoughts and efforts, either through discussion or through re-reading and refining written work. The teaching of writing through 'shared writing' sessions (where teachers demonstrate the very skills they require pupils to learn) is well established and is a strength of practice in the older classes. In Years 1 and 2, the choices of texts for 'shared text' work are not always challenging enough and do not always

demonstrate 'best practice' in terms of exemplifying those aspects of language use pupils are meant to be learning about. Teachers of older pupils generally give constructive feedback, both verbally and in writing, so that each pupil knows how to improve his or her performance. Rigorous and detailed guidance such as this is less evident in Years 1 and 2 where praise is freely given, and where mediocre performance tends to be too readily accepted from pupils who could do better.

90. The school has undergone many changes since the last two OFSTED inspections of 2000 and 2001, not least in staffing, and senior managers are aware that some inconsistencies in practice remain to be addressed. Plans related to the introduction of a systematic and progressive approach to the teaching and learning of phonics are under discussion, and staff are already working towards a coherent, whole-school approach to the teaching of spelling. A recent initiative designed to improve boys' performance has led staff to consider the topics and texts they use and to target boys with specific tasks likely to engage their interest. There has been a significant, much needed investment in books for shared reading and for guided reading sessions. Nevertheless, resources are only just adequate, and there will need to be substantial investment over time in order to provide appropriately for the number of pupils and for the full range of reading abilities represented in the school. Library resources are inadequate, and the junior library, sited in the entrance hall, is particularly ill-equipped and badly situated to serve as a centre for class sessions or research. Support staff have been deployed effectively to target the greatest areas of need in literacy and to support those individual pupils entitled to individual help. The best examples of the use of ICT to support work in English are found in the teaching of spelling, in work with special educational needs pupils and in the presentation of work in some classes. Overall, however, ICT is not yet used consistently by all teachers or in all year groups, and this is an area for further development. Both the headteacher and the English co-ordinator have observed lessons and given staff useful feedback on their teaching of the literacy hour, and some general aspects of concern have been identified and addressed. Suitable assessment procedures are now in place, and the school is able to analyse data related to the performance of individuals, groups and cohorts in order to set future targets for performance and calculate the value added over time in terms of each pupil's progress. However, the results of statutory and non-statutory tests are not routinely analysed to identify pupils' very specific weaknesses in aspects of reading and writing, nor are they used to set individual targets for pupils that focus on aspects of reading or writing. The conscientious English co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and gives advice and support whenever appropriate, but there is limited coherence in teaching approaches across the school as a whole, and this is a weakness. Standards in English have risen in recent years in the Year 6 national tests. However, standards in writing are still too low in Year 2, and this is the key issue which remains to be addressed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

91. On entry to Year 1, the mathematical knowledge and understanding of most pupils are below average. The 2001 inspection of the school considered pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 to be reasonable over time, but needed to be steadier. Standards were judged to be broadly in line with national expectations, particularly in mental skills and in oral work. The overall results of the Year 2 SATs in 2002 were in line with the average results of similar schools but below the national average; with relatively few pupils exceeding the expected standard. Inspection findings show most pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 from their starting points at the beginning of Year 1. The majority of pupils currently in Year 2 achieve the level

expected but, overall, standards are below average with relatively few pupils exceeding the national standard.

92. In Years 1 and 2, pupils steadily acquire key numeracy skills and demonstrate a growing understanding of shape, space and measures although evidence suggests that some unevenness in their learning still exists. They make sound overall progress in consolidating their knowledge and understanding of place value, describing and extending simple number sequences and learning to employ the correct number operations when making calculations. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils begin to recognise and use a symbol to stand for an unknown number; while in a Year 2 lesson, they can partition a two digit number into tens and units. Across Years 1 and 2, work undertaken, for example, with 100 squares, odd and even numbers, sequences related to  $2x$ ,  $5x$  and  $10x$  multiplication tables and simple fractions makes a sound contribution to the development of pupils' key numeracy skills. Older pupils also satisfactorily build on Year 1 tasks related to sorting two-dimensional shapes, reading 'o'clock' times and ordering different lengths, as they investigate the properties of two-dimensional shapes and digital time; and measure accurately in centimetres.
93. The last inspection reported that standards in Years 3 to 6 were well in line with national expectations and that pupils' progress was secure. Overall, the results of the 2002 Year 6 SATs were below the national average but in line with the average results of similar schools. More detailed analysis of the results shows that, over the last three years, girls do significantly better than boys in the tests. Inspection evidence indicates that the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make mainly good, and otherwise sound, progress in relation to their starting points. Overall, the standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 6 are broadly average. No significant differences in the performance of boys and girls were evident during the inspection.
94. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, develop a secure understanding of the number system and of measures, shape and space; and handle data competently. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils benefited from very good teaching by the co-ordinator as they practised the quick recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20 during the introduction to the lesson before making good progress in learning to read and write the vocabulary of direction. Their efforts culminated in being able to program a small 'robot' to respond accurately to their instructions. Effective teaching in Year 4 resulted in pupils making good progress in developing their understanding of the mathematical symbols for 'greater than' and 'less than' when comparing numbers. Their secure skills of mental calculation and knowledge of negative numbers was also demonstrated as they counted backwards together, for example, in tens from 50 or in fives from 15. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils made good progress when using a protractor to measure and draw acute and obtuse angles; while a group of less able Year 6 pupils effectively improved their knowledge of fractions through the very good teaching of the headteacher. Other pupils in this year group demonstrated a secure knowledge of factors, multiples and prime numbers. Good teaching enabled them to order fractions successfully by converting them to a decimal using a calculator. Homework makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning particularly in Years 5 and 6 and many pupils take mathematics games home on a weekly rota system.
95. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is broadly satisfactory and, in Years 3 to 6, it is mainly good and never less than sound. The majority of teachers have attended a five-day numeracy course and some have completed training focused on the needs of more able pupils. Pupils and staff also benefit from the presence of a local authority

'Leading Mathematics Teacher' in Year 4. Following the 2002 SATs, the school appropriately identified the need to improve provision to meet the needs of all pupils in Years 5 and 6. As a consequence, the headteacher is now involved daily in teaching one of four mathematics 'sets' and, through his very good teaching of the subject, provides a good model for other members of staff. The last inspection identified the need for teachers to ensure that sufficient time was left to summarise learning at the end of each lesson; and to think through the purposes of these plenary sessions and ensure that these were achieved. The school has now addressed this issue and, in general, the conclusions to lessons are satisfactory.

96. Teachers plan together in year groups and their planning takes account of guidance contained in the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and learning objectives are clearly defined. These are appropriately shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. In Years 3 to 6, pupils use these objectives as the title for their work each day and this good practice helps to raise their awareness of their daily targets for learning. However, the school does not set longer-term targets for individuals or groups of pupils based on an evaluation of their strengths and areas for improvement. Resources are well prepared and appropriate, and instructions and teaching points are clearly explained. Learning support assistants are well briefed and provide good support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. A well-equipped computer suite has been established in the last 12 months and teachers are beginning to make sound use of ICT to extend pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding.
97. Teachers know their pupils well and this ensures that the work set is carefully matched to their needs. They make sound use of day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress to inform their weekly planning and of 'end of unit' testing to check on the progress of individual pupils mainly on a half termly basis. The results of statutory testing in Years 2 and 6, and of a range of other standardised tests, are evaluated in order to track the development of pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge over a longer period of time. Assessment information is also used in Years 5 and 6 to 'set' pupils for mathematics teaching and this also ensures that the tasks they undertake provide an appropriate level of challenge. However, the school does not set targets for individuals or groups, based on an evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses.
98. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from the most effective teaching in the school. Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of them. There is a good pace to these lessons, particularly in the mental/oral starter, and teachers use skilful questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. The last inspection indicated that insufficient thought was given to ways of ensuring the work throughout Years 1 and 2 was well paced; and identified the need to ensure that pupils make steady progress in these year groups. Since that time, the school has appropriately replaced the previous mixed year group classes with four classes of single aged pupils and made changes to the teaching staff. The teaching is now satisfactory overall and, as a consequence, pupils make broadly satisfactory progress. However, the quality of teachers' questioning is more variable in these year groups and the time available in lessons could often be used more efficiently. The expectations teachers have of what pupils should achieve as they undertake the tasks, and of their ability to demonstrate independence and responsibility for their own learning, are also too low in some lessons. In addition, pupils sometimes need more focused advice about how to improve. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, are sometimes insufficiently challenged in these sessions.

99. The last inspection noted that the co-ordinator had undertaken a scrutiny of pupils' work across the school and this good practice has continued, enabling her to identify the progress which pupils are making and any areas requiring improvement. Verbal and written information are appropriately provided for staff. Teachers' planning is checked regularly by the headteacher. Both the headteacher and the co-ordinator have observed numeracy lessons across the school and provided valuable feedback to staff. A helpful action plan for the subject has been formulated by the co-ordinator and appropriately forms part of the school development plan. This clearly identifies priorities for the development of mathematics during the current school year.
100. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

## **SCIENCE**

101. On entry to Year 1, the scientific knowledge and understanding of most pupils are below average. The results of the statutory teacher assessments in science in Year 2, in 2002, were in line with the national average and the average results of similar schools in relation to the percentage reaching the expected standard. The percentage exceeding this level was below the national average but was in line with the results of similar schools. Inspection findings reflect these results, and show that overall standards in Year 2 are below national expectations. While a satisfactory percentage of pupils demonstrate average standards, relatively few do better. Overall, however, pupils' standards in Year 2 represent sound achievement, given pupils' starting points at the beginning of Year 1. Nevertheless, the more advanced learners could sometimes reach higher standards if they were given more challenging work. When the school was last inspected, in 2001, standards in science were judged to be reasonable in Year 2 but there was evidence that pupils could be doing better.
102. The results of the SATs in science in Year 6, in 2002, were below the national average but were in line with the average results of similar schools. Inspection findings show that current standards in Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations. A high percentage of pupils are achieving the expected standard but the proportion exceeding this level is a little lower than in most schools. Overall, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is mainly sound but is sometimes good. In general, they make better progress in developing their knowledge about science than in learning the skills of scientific enquiry. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in these classes, while the most advanced learners make mainly sound progress but could sometimes do better. When the school was last inspected, no judgement was made about standards in Year 6, but pupils were making sound overall progress in Years 3 to 6.
103. In Year 1, pupils know that there are many sources of sound and understand that they hear with their ears. However, their skills in describing sounds are limited, and some find it difficult to decide whether they believe sounds are loud or quiet. Year 1 pupils make satisfactory progress when learning about different sources of light, and can name the main external parts of the human body. In Year 2, pupils can identify a satisfactory range of common materials but a significant minority are uncertain about whether these occur naturally or are made. They are aware of the dangers of electricity and can identify some appliances which use electricity. They make sound progress when creating circuits, using wires, batteries and bulbs but average and lower attaining pupils sometimes find it difficult to predict accurately whether circuits shown in simple drawings will work.

104. In Year 3, pupils make sound progress when learning about the properties of magnets, and begin to use terms like 'attract' and 'repel' correctly. They understand that they need to care for their teeth, and know that humans have molars for chewing, canines for tearing and incisors for cutting food. They can identify uses for some common materials but need more opportunities to carry out simple experiments to discover why certain materials are more appropriate than others for particular uses. In Year 4, pupils' progress is mainly good. They achieve well when learning about the human skeleton, can name some major bones and understand the basic function of muscles. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are well aware of the dangers of drug misuse and understand that the body needs regular exercise. Most can identify foods which provide protein, carbohydrate, fat and fibre, and can name the benefits derived from each. Year 6 pupils understand that seeds can be dispersed in a variety of ways; and can identify the main parts of a flower, including organs such as stamen and stigma. They recognise that the Earth, Sun and Moon are spherical, know it is daylight in the part of the Earth facing the Sun, and that the Moon orbits the Earth. They can explain why shadows change during the course of the day, and have a satisfactory grasp of the relative sizes of the Sun, Earth and Moon.
105. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory, overall, across the school. However, in Years 3 to 6, it is generally more effective than in the younger classes and includes good practice. As a result, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make mainly sound progress in the subject while older pupils make mainly sound but sometimes good progress in their learning. Across the school, teachers have secure subject knowledge and their planning is sound. The learning intentions of lessons are clearly identified and all teachers ensure that their classes know what they are expected to learn. However, the planning sometimes takes insufficient account of the needs of the more advanced learners and their tasks are sometimes too easy as a result. All teachers have positive relationships with their classes, motivate them effectively, and provide clear instructions and explanations. As a consequence, pupils behave well in science lessons and persevere with their tasks. In the older classes, teachers often use good questioning skills to assess pupils' needs but, in Years 1 and 2, questions sometimes need to be more focused in order to probe pupils' understanding. Scientific vocabulary is appropriately introduced by all teachers but some need to provide more consistent reinforcement of its use. In the best lessons observed, in Year 4, good use was made of the time available but in some lessons the pace of learning could be faster, particularly in Years 1 and 2 where teachers sometimes need to expect more from their pupils. Good, well-focused feedback to pupils is evident in some lessons, particularly in the older classes, while some teachers need to give pupils clearer guidance about how to improve further. Pupils sometimes need more opportunities for practical, active involvement in their lessons in the younger classes; and there is scope for teachers to give more emphasis to the development of pupils' enquiry skills across the school.
106. The science co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and has led in-service training sessions for his colleagues. He is well supported by the headteacher, and together they have examined examples of pupils' work from all classes to provide teachers and governors with a useful analysis, including the identification of pertinent areas for improvement. While assessment procedures are broadly satisfactory in the subject, the co-ordinator appropriately accepts that a more detailed analysis of pupils' responses to the SATs papers would help the school to be clearer about what, exactly, pupils could or could not achieve in the tests. Resources for science are satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107. Standards in art and design are below average in Years 2 and 6, and pupils make unsatisfactory progress, overall, in the subject. When the school was last inspected, in 2001, no judgements were made about art and design and in the previous inspection, in 2000, there was insufficient evidence of pupils' work to judge standards.
108. In Year 1, pupils' self portraits demonstrate satisfactory achievement but their pictures of toys show limited observation and drawing skills. In a lesson seen in Year 1, pupils made adequate progress when making simple collage pictures but most gave insufficient thought to the organisation of textures and colours. In a lesson observed in Year 2, pupils enjoyed drawing a selection of fruits and vegetables but demonstrated skills which were below average, overall, for their ages. Work completed earlier this term by Year 2 pupils is of a similar standard.
109. In Year 3, pupils have made adequate progress when drawing local buildings and when copying examples of art from the ancient Egyptians. Year 4 pupils have drawn portraits but these suggest that many need to look more closely and to develop more advanced technical skills, including shading techniques. However, their clay plaques of faces are expressive and represent sound achievement. In a lesson seen in Year 4, good teaching enabled pupils to learn about the paintings of Paul Klee and to create pictures which reflected elements of the artist's work. However, their colour mixing and brush skills were generally underdeveloped. In Years 5 and 6, pupils examined a range of containers but most had limited skills in discerning and describing the functional and design features of the containers. Their drawings of the disciples of Jesus, and of their own faces, are typical of work usually achieved by younger pupils. The simple cross stitch samplers made by pupils in Years 5 and 6 do little to enhance their artistic skills or knowledge, and also represent underachievement.
110. In the lessons observed, the teaching was mainly satisfactory. Some good teaching was seen but some of the lessons which were satisfactory, overall, included weaknesses. While the teaching resulted in pupils making mainly satisfactory progress in the lessons observed during the inspection, a careful analysis of pupils' completed work shows it does not enable pupils to make sufficient progress over time. In the most effective lesson, in Year 4, the teacher's skilful questioning resulted in pupils making good progress when learning about the work of a famous artist. All lessons were efficiently organised and motivated pupils well. However, in most, teachers needed to provide more specific advice and guidance to develop pupils' skills and understanding. Evidence, particularly from pupils' completed work, suggests that teachers need to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievements in art and design, and that they would benefit from well-focused in-service training to develop their knowledge about the subject.
111. The art and design co-ordinator checks teachers' planning for the subject and willingly provides advice to her colleagues when it is requested. She appropriately recognises that teachers' expertise and confidence are variable, and that the sequential progression of pupils' key skills in the subject are not secure as they move through the school. However, she has yet to analyse examples of pupils' work to identify particular strengths and areas for improvement. Resources for art and design need to be improved and to be stored in a more organised manner.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. Attainment in design and technology is average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. Progress to the end of Year 2 is satisfactory, but it is unsatisfactory through Years 3

to 6. Sound skills in designing and evaluation are mainly evident across the school. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 create models which demonstrate making skills which are below average and reflect their lack of progress in developing key skills. As no lessons of design and technology were taught during the inspection, judgements are based on a work scrutiny of pupils' planning books, observation of constructed artefacts, photographic records, display and discussions with staff and pupils.

113. In Year 2, pupils make sound progress when designing and making hand puppets. Well presented displays of the finished product gives value to the work; and it is clear that pupils have considered the various stages of the design process carefully. Evidence in pupils' books shows that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are making sound progress, and overall standards are average in Year 2. Pupils in Year 4 have looked at pencil case design, considering style and the suitability of different fabrics. They have also designed and made their own sandwiches after testing and evaluating types of bread, and looking at a range of sandwich types and fillings. This work represents sound achievement. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress when designing toys which move. They have considered the use of cams, and chose their construction materials from a range of resources provided by teachers. However, their finished models lack finesse and demonstrate limited skills in joining materials. They show making skills which are usually typical of much younger pupils, and suggest pupils require more informed guidance and higher expectations from teachers.
114. It is not possible to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, pupils' completed work suggests that teachers in Years 3 to 6, in particular, would benefit from well-focused in-service training to increase their knowledge and to raise their expectations of pupils' potential making skills. ICT has a limited impact in design and technology, and there is a lack of appropriate construction kits. Resources are poorly stored and much better use could be made of tool boards to ensure tools are valued and readily accessible.
115. The recently appointed co-ordinator accepts the need to raise staff expertise, and to develop a whole-school understanding of expected standards. At present, however, there are not established procedures for monitoring standards, and for identifying strengths and areas for development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. As a result of timetabling arrangements, only two geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are made on the evidence of the lessons that were seen, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and discussions with staff and pupils. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of places, patterns and processes, and the standards which they achieve are broadly in line with national expectations. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about pupils' progress and the standards in Years 1 and 2 because of the limited amount of completed work available for scrutiny. No judgements were made about geography in the last inspection, but the inspection in 2000 found that standards were average in Years 2 and 6.
117. Year 1 pupils can identify some features in the immediate locality of the school and make sound use of ICT to draw pictures of different types of buildings. They create simple maps of their journey to school and know their own address. However, when studying the local area, they do not benefit from visits into the locality aimed at providing opportunities for them to make observations and to ask important questions



about the place in which they live. As a consequence, they make barely satisfactory progress in developing geographical enquiry skills through fieldwork. These pupils do follow 'Holiday Horace's' journeys around the world and, through the travels of this toy bear, deepen their understanding of the notion of travel and develop their awareness of the similarities and differences between other countries and their own. The current Year 2 focus on an 'Island Home' is at a very early stage but is helping pupils to build on their understanding of different localities. However, evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work suggests that last term's study of 'Australia' provided few opportunities for pupils to extend their geographical knowledge and understanding in a meaningful way. Work planned for Year 2 pupils in the summer term focuses on 'Going to the Seaside' and, given the school's location, should provide ample opportunities for valuable fieldwork.

118. In Year 3, pupils make sound progress when investigating the weather in the UK and further afield; and are currently using appropriate resources to compare and contrast an overseas locality with their own. Their studies of Chembakolli in India are enabling them to pose and answer geographical questions and to develop their geographical skills. Year 4 pupils recognise maps as sources of information and consolidate their mapping skills through activities designed to promote their understanding of grid references, symbols and 'keys'. Plans to visit the local High Street in the summer term should provide good opportunities to use these skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 hone their mapping skills through atlas work, for example on latitude and longitude and, in their current study of 'Mountain Environments', can quickly locate mountain ranges and peaks in Great Britain and further afield. Work planned as part of this unit for older pupils should enable them to benefit from carefully focused geographical enquiry, which is designed to enhance their skills of collecting and interpreting information, and presenting their findings.
119. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. Helpful guidance, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, has been used to inform the school's planning and this is having a positive impact on classroom practice. However, the implementation of the school's new long-term curriculum plan will need to be closely monitored to ensure the progressive development of key skills in the subject and the regular use of fieldwork activities.
120. The co-ordinator is conscientious and, with the support of the headteacher, undertakes audits of pupils' work across the school. She then provides both verbal and written feedback on the outcomes of this monitoring to all staff, on an annual basis. The co-ordinator also appropriately monitors teachers' half termly planning and assists with its formulation when required. She has revised the school's long-term plan for the subject as changes have been made to the organisation of year groups, and a new policy has been written.
121. Resources are adequate but the school is aware of the need to update and improve the quality and range of atlases and resources for the study of contrasting localities overseas.

## **HISTORY**

122. As a result of timetabling arrangements only one history lesson was seen during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to form overall judgements about teaching or standards in Years 1 and 2. The very limited range of recorded work available for scrutiny in Year 1 indicates very light coverage of the subject in this year group. In Year 2, the range and quality of work produced shows that pupils make

satisfactory progress. The work produced by pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 shows clear evidence of effective teaching and comprehensive coverage of subject content in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills. In the one lesson seen, in Year 4, teaching was excellent and pupils' attainment above average for their age. All available evidence indicates that these standards are sustained in the older classes and that attainment is also above average in Year 6. No judgements were made about history in the last inspection but the inspection in 2000 found that standards were in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6.

123. Written work produced by pupils in Year 2 shows that they acquire a satisfactory knowledge of famous people and events from the past. For example, they learn about some aspects of the lives of Queen Elizabeth 1, Guy Fawkes, Louis Braille and Florence Nightingale, and they learn about famous events such as the Gunpowder Plot and the Fire of London. Their study of the Fire of London involves some understanding of the event from a particular perspective – namely through the written accounts of an eye-witness, the diarist Samuel Pepys. Work related to Louis Braille and Florence Nightingale addresses not simply facts but also shows how people can bring about change: Florence Nightingale through her role in improving hospital conditions, and Louis Braille by inventing an alphabet which enables the blind to read. By comparing hospitals in Florence Nightingale's day with those today, pupils develop a broader view of change over time. Pupils use appropriate dates and technical terms in relation to the topics they study, but little of the work seen records more than basic coverage of each topic, and there is little evidence to suggest that pupils learn to ask as well as answer questions about history, or that they are encouraged to initiate historical enquiry.
124. Thorough, detailed studies and well-organised, well-presented topic books characterise work produced by pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Pupils in Year 3 have learned a great deal about the ancient Egyptians, while those in Year 4 have a comprehensive view of life in Tudor times; and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are well versed in different aspects of life in the Victorian period. In each of these year groups, pupils have undertaken individual, though teacher-guided, research. As a result, their finished project books present not random collections of information, but well thought out, wide-ranging studies which cover, appropriately in each case, social, political, religious, military, educational, commercial and other dimensions of particular significance to the period.
125. The lesson seen in Year 4 typifies the very best characteristics of teaching and learning which results in the generally good quality of recorded work produced by pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The teacher concerned has an excellent understanding of the subject requirements and a thorough knowledge of the topic to be studied, in this case the Vikings. The lesson plan built on previous work, and early questions ensured that pupils had a secure grasp of previous knowledge before new concepts were introduced. Starting from what pupils already knew about the Vikings, the teacher gradually helped them to develop hypotheses in the form of reasons why the Vikings might have invaded Britain. Later, a very sharp focus on knowledge and understanding of the part played in invasion by Viking longboats led to the formulation by pupils of very relevant, precise questions which inform their independent research. The teacher had selected a suitable variety of resources which included eye-witness accounts and poems from the Viking period as well as secondary evidence in the form of extracts and illustrations from many different information books, and even a book with relevant information from a structured reading scheme. When groups worked independently, these resources were closely matched to pupils' reading capabilities, so that each pupil, including those with special educational needs, was

suitably challenged but able to work in a constructive way on the topic in question. Towards the end of the lesson, when pupils were invited to share their findings, it was clear that the different lines of enquiry suggested by pupils' initial questions, together with the wide range of resources consulted had resulted in a shared understanding of longboats which was far from superficial. At every stage, the lesson was well organised, purposeful and enjoyable, but it was the pupils who, quite rightly, had been required to take responsibility for their own learning – and who had succeeded admirably.

126. The school is well resourced for history, particularly for topics studied by older pupils, and visits to museums and other centres of historical interest enrich pupils' experience of the subject. Since the last full OFSTED inspection of 2000, standards in Year 6 have risen. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and has sampled pupils' work. As a result, she has a good understanding of the relative amount of coverage in different year groups, although her overview is better informed in relation to the work in older classes than in Years 1 and 2. As yet, she has not had an opportunity to observe lessons directly or to give staff feedback on teaching and learning. The assessment of pupils' work remains an area for development, and there is scope to extend the use of ICT to support work in history. In Years 3 to 6, history is used to good effect to support the development of literacy skills. A school scheme of work for history is nearing completion. This should reflect the good work already in place in the older classes, but also needs to give very clear indications as to the school's expectations in regard to teaching and learning in history in Years 1 and 2.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

127. The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic temporary co-ordinator who is building on the secure curriculum framework and scheme of work put in place by the co-ordinator who is currently on maternity leave. She is very well supported by a talented teaching support assistant. Both co-ordinators have ensured that all staff have received subject training from an outside provider and much in-house support. As a result, all teachers are confident when using the ICT suite.
128. Standards have improved again since the last inspection when pupils had started to make up for lost ground but still were below average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils are making sound progress in Years 1 and 2 and mainly good progress in Years 3 to 6. Standards are broadly average in Years 2 and 6 but are set to rise further in Year 6. The improvement in standards has been achieved in a number of ways, most significantly:
- the creation of a computer suite with 15 networked computers;
  - the timetabled use of this suite from reception to Year 6, which ensures that it is used regularly by all classes every week;
  - training for all teachers;
  - support for all teachers by demonstration lessons from the talented co-ordinators;
  - the creation and implementation of a scheme of work;
  - the production of a long-term curriculum plan that ensures full coverage of the National Curriculum backed-up by formal monitoring of teachers planning; and

- the use of an assessment record that allows teachers to track pupil progress closely linked to national curriculum strands.
129. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are improving their computer skills and learn to load, print and save their work as files. They use keyboards with growing confidence to word process text to which they add pictures and borders effectively. Pupils develop good skills in amending their work, including changing the font style, size and colour. They use ICT to access sources of information and work well in pairs to import it and print to support work in other curriculum areas, especially history and geography. Occasionally, in Year 1, pupils marked time, however, when they completed their tasks quickly and no extension activities were planned to develop their skills further.
130. In Years 3 to 6, pupils increase their knowledge of the opportunities provided by word processors as they produce work in other subjects. They develop good use of backgrounds and font styles to create the desired look for their pages. In Year 4, pupils used a computer program to develop paint pictures in the style of Seurat. Pupils continue to develop their understanding of control technology through work in mathematics with “Pixie” programmable toys which they successfully direct through a system of commands to reach an object through a prepared grid. In Year 6, they give a series of instructions to control visual representations of zebra crossings, traffic lights and a lighthouse to make them flash at the appropriate sequence. Pupils experiment with each other’s commands, share ideas about problems they encounter and how these can be improved.
131. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and is good in Years 3 to 6, where pupils are progressing well and standards are set to rise further. Particularly effective use is made of an interactive white board in Year 4 to support pupils’ learning in English and mathematics; and of the Internet to support pupils’ learning in Years 5 and 6. Teachers and a talented LSA have developed a secure knowledge of the subject and their planning and delivery of lessons support this. Lessons are very well organised in the computer suite and the keen interest of the pupils ensures that behaviour is good.

## MUSIC

132. The 2000 OFSTED report judged standards in music to be in line with national expectations in Years 1 and 2 but there was not enough evidence to make a judgement for Years 3 to 6. However, the time allocated to the subject for some pupils in this age group was deemed to be insufficient. Singing across the school was judged to be satisfactory. Provision for music has improved since that time and pupils, throughout the school, spend a satisfactory amount of time on musical activities. Pupils’ singing is good and, in other aspects of the subject, where there is sufficient evidence to make a judgement, progress is satisfactory and standards are in line with those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6.
133. During the inspection, music lessons focused predominately on pupils’ listening skills, and singing was heard in some lessons, assemblies and in two hymn practices. As a consequence, it is not possible to make a judgement about pupils’ skills in composing. Pupils clearly enjoy singing and achieve good standards. They listen carefully to the guidance provided by their teachers and strive to do their best. Pupils are taught to pay attention to their breathing and their diction is clear. They have learned a good repertoire of songs and can sing some in two parts. All pupils take part in at least one ‘performance’ a year and an annual school ‘Talent Contest’ is eagerly awaited by many pupils.

134. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils made sound progress in developing their ability to recognise the difference between pulse and rhythm as they listened to a range of music. By the end of the session most could identify the pulse of the 'Grand Old Duke of York' as they marched on the spot. Year 2 pupils demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of how different sounds can be made when exploring with their teacher a range of different instruments; while those in Year 3 extended their understanding of musical terms such as 'ostinato' as they explored rhythmic patterns. Effective teaching in a Year 4 lesson enabled pupils to appreciate that music can create images and moods as they responded sensitively through words and drawings to Grieg's 'Morning' from 'Peer Gynt'. Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrated good listening skills as they listened to 'Mars' and 'Mercury' from Holst's 'The Planets' and their understanding of technical vocabulary such as timbre, dynamics, pitch and tempo is appropriate for their ages.
135. Some pupils benefit from the weekly tuition for violin, guitar and flute provided by visiting specialists, but this did not take place during the week of the inspection. There is also a regular orchestra club which provides opportunities for pupils to enjoy musical activities with pupils from other schools. The school plans, in the near future, to extend the musical opportunities available to pupils by providing after school clubs for recorder players and a choir.
136. The quality of teaching is mainly sound, and occasionally good, across the school. For most of the time, pupils are taught by their own class teachers and some lack confidence in the subject. As a consequence, the school has recently invested in a new commercial scheme of work to support planning and to promote progression in key skills. Although this has been in place for only a short time, evidence suggests that it is having a beneficial effect on practice. Teachers also benefit from, and value, the good support they receive from the local education authority music service. A music curriculum co-ordinator from the local education authority has modeled lessons in most year groups, has observed teachers and provided helpful advice.
137. The co-ordinator is conscientious and enthusiastic, and has attended in-service training and various music workshops organised by the local education authority. She is ensuring that teachers have the resources they need to deliver the new scheme of work, and boxes of instruments are appropriately stored in classrooms and shared by each pair of teachers.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

138. Standards in physical education are average overall in Year 2 and Year 6, and reflect the situation when the school was last inspected. However, a significant minority of pupils achieve good standards in gymnastics in Years 2 and 6 and achieve very well in swimming in Year 6. The curriculum overview and developing scheme of work provides pupils with regular experiences in dance, gymnastics, games, athletics and swimming. Swimming is linked to a scheme of skill progression which leads to achievement of the school's own grade certificates. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident in their movement as they successfully interpret music imaginatively to develop dance sequences. They link movements into simple sequences successfully and show an increasing awareness of space around them. Pupils are given time to reflect and offer views on their own and others' performance, which significantly contributes to the progress they make. In a good lesson on football skills, there was a clear emphasis on the development of passing, dribbling and control in short game tasks. Pupils quickly grasped the need to use different parts of their foot to kick and control the ball. The lesson had good pace, with pupils being challenged by a number

of short tasks. Pupils worked well in pairs and small teams and their behaviour was good.

139. In gymnastics, Year 3 pupils are learning to control their bodies well and perform a sequence of jumps and landings including different travelling movements showing clear starting and finishing positions. Pupils were encouraged to look at the efforts of their peers and make sensible suggestions for improvement. All pupils appreciate the need for safety and they know exercise has a positive effect on their physical health. In Years 3 to 6, lessons were observed in outdoor games and gymnastics. The school enjoys strong links with Wyvern Sports College and external expert coaching enriches the curriculum. In Year 3 pupils demonstrate average standards of passing and catching skills in simple competitive situations. They show growing understanding and appreciation of attacking and defending techniques in netball. In Year 4, pupils make good progress in stick handling and ball control in hockey tasks. This was evident in the skills of pupils attending an after school hockey club who were benefiting from well-informed teaching from the physical education co-ordinator. In Years 5 and 6 pupils demonstrated precision and control of movement as they successfully linked a range of balances and twists and turns into fluent, controlled sequences. A good feature of lessons in Years 5 and 6 was the use of music to support warm-ups, and the encouragement of pupils to self-evaluate and analyse the work of others to support improvement.
140. The quality of teaching is good, overall, across the school, and enabled pupils to make good progress in most of the lessons observed. Evidence from pupils' standards, however, suggests that pupils' progress over time is generally sound in the subject. Most teachers are enthusiastic about teaching physical education, and all have sound or better subject knowledge. In all lessons seen, the planning was good with clear learning objectives outlined to pupils. In the best lessons, appropriately challenging tasks are set, a brisk pace is maintained, and teachers take an active part in the activities. They give well-informed and practical support to individuals and working groups. In these lessons, teachers encourage pupils to observe others and refine their own skills.
141. The enthusiastic and well-trained co-ordinator has overseen the revision and implementation of the long-term curriculum plan and is developing a scheme of work across the whole school. She has attended appropriate courses and fed back through in-service training for the staff. She has also organised visiting tutors and coaches to inform and enrich the curriculum. A small number of extra-curricular activities enhance the physical education curriculum, as does the experience gained by Year 5/6 pupils in an annual multi-activity residential visit. Resources for physical education are plentiful, in good condition, well-organised and easily accessible to staff and pupils.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

142. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The last inspection, in 2001, did not make judgements about pupils' standards in religious education, but the previous inspection, in 2000, found they matched the expectations of the agreed syllabus. The introduction of a new policy and scheme of work has ensured that religious education is being taught regularly in all classes, and has helped to raise teachers' confidence. Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. More able pupils make satisfactory progress but opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons to encourage them to

look more deeply into issues. For example, when Year 5 and 6 pupils considered the importance of a parable, follow up work was limited to re-writing the story of the parable, and there was no opportunity for discussion which could lead to a greater understanding of the message behind the parable. Some pupils were able to complete their work using a word processor.

143. Year 2 pupils listen well to the story of Noah, many recognise it and are able to join in enthusiastically at times. They are keen to answer questions. They show that they remember the story and can reflect on times that they have broken rules and displeased others. More able pupils are encouraged to consider the feelings of those people left outside the Ark when the rain started to fall. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the classroom assistant and are given tasks which ensure their sound progress. Year 6 pupils demonstrate that they can relate stories from the Bible to their everyday lives. The school has recently purchased a small stock of Bibles and these are being used to good effect, but the pupils are not yet familiar with the layout and some find difficulty in locating passages. Less able pupils are given vocabulary lists to help them record successfully.
144. Overall, teaching is satisfactory across the school. However, good or very good teaching is sometimes evident in Years 3 to 6. Where teaching is good, teachers use focused questioning to probe pupils' knowledge, make good use of differentiated activities and are well prepared with resources. Pupils' understanding is further developed when they are required to empathise with characters in the story. In a very good Year 4 lesson, the pupils dressed up in special Jewish clothes and had essential vocabulary e.g. Kippa, Tzitzit and Tallit, displayed in front of them. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils acted out short parts of the story of the paralysed man. They were keen to participate and showed respect for their peers' contributions. Pupils with special educational needs were helped to make good progress by the teacher scribing the words they wanted to use on a whiteboard. Teaching was less effective when teachers' instructions lacked clarity because too many complex instructions were given at one time; and when teachers failed to check that pupils working independently were remaining on task.
145. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has had a beneficial impact on the quality of teaching in the subject. Some new resources have been purchased recently and these are already being used effectively, but the school remains under-resourced for religious education and the range and amount of resources for Christianity and other faiths needs improvement. A development plan for religious education is in place and the co-ordinator has appropriately collected work samples from throughout the school, in order to judge pupils' standards.