

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FULMER INFANT SCHOOL**

Fulmer

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110227

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Roberts

Reporting inspector: Jo Cheadle  
23233

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 246968

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Aldbourn Lane Fulmer Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	SL3 6JB
Telephone number:	01753 662654
Fax number:	01753 662654
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. S. Barnes
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23233	Jo Cheadle	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Geography History Education inclusion Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? What does the school need to do to improve further?
9454	Deborah Pepper	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Music Physical education Religious education Provision for children in the Foundation Stage	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

**e-Qualitas Ltd**, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, OXTED, Surrey, RH8 0RE.

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The Complaints Manager, Inspection Quality Division, The Office for Standards in Education, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6SE.

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>24</b>



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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Fulmer Infant School is a small village school in South Buckinghamshire, close to the Berkshire border. There are currently fifty-one pupils attending the school. The vast majority of them travel to the school from areas outside Fulmer. While most pupils are from white heritage, the school also benefits from the cultural diversities of mixed race, European, Australian and American families. Around 10 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, but the majority are competent English speakers. Although no pupils at the school receive free school meals, pupils' social and economic backgrounds are varied. The proportion of pupils who receive support for their special learning needs is approximately two per cent. This is much lower than the national average. Children's skills and knowledge when they begin at the school have become increasingly more varied over the past three years. There continue to be some children who begin in the Reception class with better skills and knowledge than would be expected for their age, but generally attainment on entry is now average overall.

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

Fulmer Infant School is an effective school where pupils are provided with a good-quality education. Pupils do very well in national tests, attain above-average standards in their work and achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry. The headteacher has an extremely clear vision for the school's continual development and provides excellent leadership. The governors carry out their responsibilities very effectively and are fully involved in the life of the school. The overall quality of teaching is good and there are excellent links with parents. There is a superb sense of team spirit at the school and pupils are cared for very well. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils attain very good results in national tests at the end of Year 2 and standards of work in many subjects are above average.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The curriculum is very relevant, interesting and enjoyable.
- Links with parents are excellent.
- The school cares for pupils' academic and personal welfare very well.

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

- The accommodation.
- Some aspects of teaching.
- Pupils' attention in lessons.

*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 October 1997. Since this time, there has been **good** overall improvement.

In relation to the key issues of the previous inspection report:

- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is now **good**.
- The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is now **very good** and shows clear progression in learning.
- The governors' roles and responsibilities are now **very well defined** and they work very effectively to monitor and develop the school's work.
- The school's accommodation has improved, but is **still unsatisfactory**. The local education authority has worked with the school to improve the current accommodation. They have committed to funding fifty per cent of the necessary building work to ensure that pupils have adequate classroom space.

Other areas of improvement:

- Results in national tests have improved, particularly the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3.
- Attainment in information and communication technology, history and geography has improved.
- The quality of teaching has improved. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the current inspection.
- The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher has improved.
- The delegation of responsibility to staff and the contribution they make to school development and improvement is now very good.
- Links with parents are now excellent.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
reading	A*	A	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	A*	A*	A*	A*	
mathematics	A	A	A	A	

Pupils have consistently attained high results in national tests over the past three years. Results in writing have been in the top five per cent of all schools nationally since the year 2000. Two Achievement Awards have been presented to the school in recognition of maintained success. The school prepares pupils well for tests, ensuring that they are confident with the test procedures and have the required skills and knowledge to do very well. The school is successful in meeting the targets set for results in tests and has set appropriately challenging targets for next year.

Children’s skills and knowledge when they start in the Reception class are very varied and cover the full range of ability. There are some pupils with high levels of attainment, but, in general, attainment on entry to the school is average. During their time at the school, pupils achieve well. Good support is given to those pupils who would otherwise make slower progress than others, which means that they achieve just as well as all others. The highest-attaining pupils at the school are suitably challenged and attain the levels expected of them.

Standards of work are above average overall. In English, mathematics, science, ICT, music and PE, pupils attain above-average standards. Their speaking and reading skills are well above average and support learning very well in other subjects. In all other subjects, pupils attain average standards. Drawing skills in art are better than would be expected. Pupils are very good at researching and finding out for themselves and make use of a wide range of resources such as books, the television and the Internet to find out new information.

### PUPILS’ ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and are keen and enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Good.</b> Pupils generally behave well in lessons, at break times and around the school. On occasions, their enthusiasm can lead them to call out in lessons, and sometimes they need to be reminded of when it is time to listen and not talk.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils develop high levels of maturity and confidence. They work and play happily together. They show respectful attitudes to their teachers and other adults at the school and are well mannered and polite.
Attendance	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils are very happy to come to school and levels of absence are well below the national average.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	good	good

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning at the school is good.

#### Strengths:

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils’ academic performance and plan lessons that support lower-attaining pupils and challenge higher-attaining pupils. For this reason, pupils make equal progress in their learning.
- Teaching and learning in English and mathematics are good and basic literacy and number skills are taught well.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive so pupils are happy and develop confidence that encourages them to learn well.
- Teachers make very good use of homework to consolidate and extend learning.
- They make good use of their daily evaluations of pupils’ work to adapt and amend teaching and learning in future lessons.

- Discussions at the end of lessons are used well to assess, reinforce and extend pupils' understanding.

**Areas for development:**

- Sometimes teachers talk too much in lessons and explanations become confusing for pupils.
- In some lessons, teachers are not quick enough and firm enough in insisting that pupils should listen carefully and stop talking.
- After the initial introduction of learning intentions, teachers do not always make enough reference to them during the lesson to ensure that pupils' understanding of what and why they are learning is continually reinforced.
- Sometimes pupils do not understand the targets set for them because they are not written simply enough.

**OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Very good.</b> The curriculum for children in the Reception class is well - organised and effective. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very interesting and good fun. Very good links between subjects encourage pupils to see the relevance of what they are learning. The school makes excellent provision for clubs, after school activities, special theme weeks, visits and visitors to ensure that learning is very rich and diverse.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Good.</b> Early and effective support is provided for all pupils with special educational needs. The school works well with parents and necessary outside agencies to make sure that pupils receive good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Very good.</b> In lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness by exploring the beauty and wonder of life. Assemblies are not used well enough to extend this development. Pupils develop very good moral awareness through clear school rules. Their social and cultural development, including their awareness of other cultures, is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils are cared for very well. Procedures for checking how well pupils are doing are very good, and their personal and academic progress is carefully monitored.

The way that the school works with parents, and how parents contribute to the life of the school are exemplary. Parents provide excellent practical and financial support. They contribute to their children's learning by consistently encouraging them to work hard and behave well.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Very good.</b> The headteacher provides excellent leadership and manages the school extremely efficiently. The governors work very effectively to support the school. All staff contribute very well to the planning of the curriculum and day-to-day school organisation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Very good.</b> The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well. They are very well aware of the school's strengths and clearly recognise their responsibility in supporting the school in all development

	needs.
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Aspect	Comment
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Good.</b> The school is reflective of its work. There are rigorous and regular opportunities to monitor progress towards prioritised targets. The school is open to changing and adapting ways of working to ensure that targets are fully met. Teaching and learning is monitored very regularly, but the use of information gained from lesson observations is not yet used formerly enough to create individual development targets for teachers to ensure continual improvement.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Good.</b> Finances are well allocated to support the school's planned actions. In all decision-making there is a clear focus on continuously raising the standards attained by pupils. Specific grants are wisely used and the school plans very well for future spending. The principles of best value are applied well.

The school is well stocked with an appropriate number of good quality learning resources in all subjects. Staffing levels are appropriate and the school makes very good use of support assistants to ensure that pupils make equal rates of progress. The accommodation is clean and attractive, but too small to be able to teach the curriculum in a way that always benefits pupils' learning.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of parents are very confident that their children are making good progress and that they are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Parents believe that teaching is good and the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Parents are very happy that the school promotes good levels of behaviour and helps their children to develop maturity and confidence.</li> <li>• Almost all parents would feel very comfortable to approach the school with suggestions and complaints.</li> <li>• Most parents are happy with the level of homework that the school provides.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant concerns.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings fully agree with parents about those areas that please them most.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall standards are **above average** and pupils achieve **well**.

#### **Strengths:**

- National test results at the end of Year 2 are well above average.
- Overall standards of work are above average.
- Pupils are very articulate and confident speakers.
- Pupils read very well.
- Pupils know and apply a range of strategies in mathematics.
- Pupils have well developed research skills.

#### **Areas for development:**

- Handwriting and the general presentation of work.

2. Over the past three years, results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have been very good. The school has received two Achievement Awards in recognition of maintained high results. In the 2002 tests, results in reading and mathematics were well above the national average. In writing, results were in the top five per cent nationally. Test results have improved since the last inspection. Most significant is the improvement in the proportion of pupils who attain at the higher Level 3. Around a third of all pupils attain Level 3 in each of the tested subjects. The school prepares pupils well to take tests. Pupils are confident and familiar with test procedures and this helps them to perform well.

3. Pupils attain above-average standards in their work overall. Standards of work in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, history, geography, physical education and music are all above average. In art, pupils attain above-average standards in their drawing. In all other subjects, pupils attain average standards. Pupils start school with a range of skills and a good number of pupils attain high levels. Generally, however, overall attainment levels on entry to the reception class are average. Pupils achieve well compared with their starting levels to attain above average standards in their work and high test results at the end of Year 2.

4. Standards in speaking are well above average. In all year groups, pupils love to talk and can sustain conversation for good lengths of time. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to speak aloud and has high expectations of how pupils will articulate their ideas. The result of this is that pupils have very good vocabularies, explain their ideas fully and speak confidently. Parents support their children in learning new words and their meanings, and are very happy with the results.

5. Pupils' very good reading skills are key to their high attainment in all other subjects. For example, they approach tasks in history and geography with confidence and enthusiasm. Their work in these subjects often contains detailed information that they have independently researched and rewritten in their own words, a high level skill for pupils of their age, indicating their good levels of understanding. Pupils enjoy reading and have a lively interest in the books they read.

6. Pupils confidently use a variety of mathematical strategies to solve number problems. This is an improvement on findings of the last inspection. Good attention has been given to developing number skills, and pupils have a thorough knowledge of multiplication tables and operations. They enjoy solving problems, and challenging work is provided for the highest-attaining pupils to ensure that they attain well-above average levels.

7. Since the last inspection, the overall provision for ICT has improved and this has had significant impact on the standards that pupils attain. Pupils now use computers regularly, record evidence of their work in photographs, make use of television and video for learning and generally have a good understanding of the uses of ICT. Keyboard and basic computer skills are progressively developed and pupils use computers very confidently. Pupils use the Internet to research topics that have been introduced in school. Learning in ICT is supported well at home because many pupils have their own, or a family computer. Standards are above average.

8. The presentation of work and pupils' handwriting are not always good enough. Prior to national tests in Year 2, the oldest pupils are given ample opportunities to practise and perfect their writing, but it was evident during the inspection that they do not always write with neat and well-formed handwriting in their everyday work. The highest-attaining pupils, who have very good reading skills and superb ideas for writing, often write slowly and untidily, printing rather than joining their handwriting. When asked to do so, they can join letters, but they do not apply their skills consistently. In other areas of work, presentation is also untidy. Some mathematics work is not well set out and this leads to unnecessary mistakes.

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

9. Overall, standards are **very good**.

#### **Strengths:**

- Pupils have very good attitudes to school.
- Pupils behave well.
- Relationships and personal development are very good.
- Attendance is very good.

#### **Areas for development:**

- Inattention, chatter and calling out in some lessons.

10. Pupils enjoy school and are eager to take part in the wide range of learning opportunities the school offers. All parents say that their children like school. Pupils take a lively interest in their lessons and are keen to answer questions and contribute their views. For example, in a history lesson, Year 2 pupils responded well to a challenging task when they were asked to devise questions to find out more about the historical character they were shown in a picture. Pupils concentrate well on individual tasks and discuss their work articulately. Reception children worked cheerfully together, cutting and colouring spiral snakes. Pupils respond well to opportunities to carry out their own research. For example, a group of Year 2 pupils produced good-quality work completed at home about a famous person. Discussions with pupils showed how much they enjoyed the school's themed curriculum weeks and participation in village activities. Pupils' very good attitudes and enjoyment of lessons help them to learn effectively and make good progress.

11. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good. Parents agree that pupils behave well. Pupils understand the school's rules of conduct that are displayed in each classroom and generally comply with them. They are usually polite to each other and to adults. Pupils play co-operatively in the playground. No bullying was observed during the inspection and instances of bullying are rare.

12. Relationships within the school continue to be very good, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The school is a tight knit and inclusive community within which pupils, teachers and other staff and parents know and respect each other. Pupils work well in pairs and in larger

groups, for example, when Year 2 pupils developed a dance sequence. They respect and celebrate the diversity of backgrounds and beliefs within the school, for example when learning from each other about how different religious festivals are celebrated. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example on the recently established school council and as 'playground buddy of the week'.

13. In some lessons, pupils are restless and fidget, and do not always pay close attention when the teacher is speaking. Some pupils call out the answers to questions, rather than put their hands up, and chat too much. In addition, because classrooms are so small it is impossible for pupils to show how well they can use their initiative to support their own learning, for example by independently collecting a dictionary or thesaurus.

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

14. The quality of teaching is **good** overall.

#### **Strengths:**

- Teachers have high expectations of the standards that pupils will attain in their work.
- Teachers know pupils and their needs well and plan appropriate work for them.
- Teachers make very good use of homework.
- Teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing and use this information to plan what they will teach next.

#### **Areas for development:**

- Sometimes, teachers talk for too long.
- On occasions, teachers do not deal with pupils' lack of attention quickly or firmly enough.
- Teachers do not reinforce the aim of pupils' learning often enough throughout the lesson.

15. There has been appropriate improvement in the standard of teaching since the last inspection. The strengths previously reported are still evident and areas for development have been addressed, so that teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory and most often good. The quality of teaching and learning in just nearly a third of the lessons seen was good and in three out of 13 lessons, teaching and learning was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and attain high standards. The school aims for pupils to achieve their best and the focus on academic success is very evident.

16. The school is small and this helps teachers to know pupils well. They are very aware of the starting levels and specific needs of individuals and plan work that is very appropriate for the pupils. The result of this is that pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well on prior attainment levels. Pupils with special educational needs are identified very quickly and teachers plan work that is very specific to their needs. Teachers know when pupils are not making the same rates of progress as all others and respond to this effectively. Extra adult support is given, parents are told how they can support their child at home and all necessary outside help is sought. The result of this is that pupils with special educational needs attain nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2. Teachers provide good challenge for the highest-attaining pupils and those with special gifts and talents are clearly identified for even greater challenge. In lessons, there are extension activities for individuals and, during whole class discussion, teachers are very good at directing questions specifically at these pupils to make them think.

17. Very good use is made of homework to reinforce and build on pupils' learning. Parents are very happy with the homework that teachers expect their children to do. Homework is regularly given



and explained well. There are clear expectations of how much and when it should be done. One very good example was the homework given to Year 2 pupils in history. In their studies about famous people, pupils were asked to choose a person to study independently. Pupils used the Internet, books, and local and family knowledge to do their work. They were very interested in this work, and parents were involved with researching and presenting the work. Pupils' understanding of the contributions made by famous people to local and international causes was very well developed through this homework.

18. Teachers are very good at checking how well pupils are doing during lessons and quickly assessing the need to repeat, reinforce or extend learning. They ask very useful questions that test pupils' new learning and encourage them to think about the relationship between what they have learned previously and in the current lesson. In a Year 2 phonics session, pupils quickly understood that there was more than one way to spell a word containing an "-ooh" sound. After introducing words with an "-ew" spelling pattern, the teacher asked the higher-attaining pupils to verify that all spellings were correct, by identifying spelling patterns that were known to them from memory. Pupils had to think hard about when they had used such words and whether they looked accurate. This was good consolidation of their learning. Plenary sessions are used very effectively to check pupils' progress, consolidate their new understanding and, in all lessons, to add extra information or a thought-provoking question that extends new learning.

19. While teaching is good overall, there are some areas in which it could still improve. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long. During the inspection it was evident that they do this largely to make sure that all pupils know exactly what they have to do. However, pupils have good reading skills and are very confident. The majority are ready to get on with work without lengthy explanations. The longer they have to sit and listen, the more restless they become, their attention wavers and they do not learn as well as they should. Additionally, although teachers introduce lessons with a clear learning intention, this is not referred to enough during the course of the lesson. In some instances, the teacher responds to pupils' interjections and the lesson takes a different direction altogether. While this can sometimes be very useful and extend pupils' learning, in the lessons observed this was not the case. In these lessons, pupils who were not involved in the new discussion became inattentive and started to chat to each other. While behaviour was not unsatisfactory, this inattention was distracting and affected pupils' learning in the lesson overall. Moreover, when this did happen, teachers were not always quick enough or firm enough in insisting that chatting and calling out must stop and that pupils should listen attentively.

20. An additional factor hindering teaching and learning is the size of classrooms. In some cases, pupils' restlessness is very much due to the fact that they cannot move freely in the room. In normal circumstances, pupils of this age may, for example, move to spaces to work in groups, sit on the carpet to work in a focus group with the teacher, get up to fetch a dictionary or spelling aids independently and so on. The cramped conditions in the classrooms mean that this is virtually impossible and pupils most often sit at their desks for the majority of the lesson. When there are supporting adults in lessons, whose help is of great benefit to pupils' learning, the situation is even worse. The inevitable result, not unusual for pupils of this age, is that they become fidgety and talkative. The headteacher, governors and all staff try very hard to work as well as they can with the school building as it is. However, the unfortunate fact is that the classrooms are too small for the number of pupils in them.

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

21. The range and quality of learning opportunities provided for pupils is **very good**.

### **Strengths:**

- Learning is very interesting, relevant to all pupils and good fun.
- There are excellent links between subjects.
- The range of activities beyond lessons is excellent.
- Links with the local community greatly enrich the curriculum.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development is very good.
- There is excellent provision for pupils' cultural, including multicultural, development.

22. There has been very good improvement to the curriculum since the last inspection. Learning opportunities for children in the Reception class are now well planned, in line with recommended provision for the Foundation Stage. Across the school, very good attention has been given to ensuring that pupils learn in progressive steps that help them to achieve well and attain high standards. Excellent links are made between subjects that help pupils to understand the relevance of what they learn and make use of their learning in new situations. The school regularly plans special theme weeks where pupils are involved in such activities as planning the menu for the "Hedgehog Café". They use their numeracy skills to calculate prices, literacy skills to make lists of items on sale and artistic skills to design and decorate menu cards. Parents are invited to join in, and at the same time, see how well their children are making progress. Events like this give a real purpose to learning, make it really enjoyable and motivate pupils to attain high standards.

22. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been well implemented. Most importantly, the strategies are used in a flexible way to meet the needs of different abilities within each class. With equally good attention, the school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils. The teaching staff plan the curriculum jointly, which means that the provision for all year groups is of a similarly high standard.

23. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities and outstanding links with the local community greatly enrich the curriculum. Most parents are very happy with the number and quality of activities beyond lessons. These include short tennis sessions, football lessons and a gym club. There has been a French club in the recent past. Pupils are involved in a variety of performances involving singing, acting and dancing. Parents are very supportive of all events; for the Christmas Carol service, parents lined the road to light the pupils' way to the church with lanterns. Parents are very pleased that such activities and events develop their children's self-esteem and confidence and encourage good attitudes to their learning.

24. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are involved in acts of collective worship, offering prayers from their own faith traditions and in saying prayers before lunch and at the end of the school day. A particular strength is the way in which pupils are encouraged to share their own experiences, for example of the celebration of Eid or Diwali, promoting respect for and understanding of different beliefs. The school makes good use of opportunities in art and music and from nature to promote pupils' sense of beauty and wonder, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school's assembly arrangements, however, do not promote the development of pupils' spirituality fully. Assemblies are not always interesting and do not allow pupils opportunities to be reflective and thoughtful.

25. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development, helping them to distinguish clearly between right and wrong and understand the impact of their behaviour on others. They are encouraged to consider moral issues affecting the school community. For example, school council members considered what amendments they would like to make to the school rules.

26. Pupils' social development is excellent and is enhanced by the strong sense of community within the school and between the school and the village. Whole families, including grandparents, are actively involved in the life of the school. Pupils grow in confidence and feel valued in this inclusive,

family-orientated environment. The school's wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport and music, together with the involvement in village activities such as Fulmer Day, helps pupils work together and contribute to the wider village community. Minutes of the school council meetings show that pupils make thoughtful contributions to discussions. Involvement with national and international charities helps pupils understand the issues faced by people outside their own community.

27. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' cultural and multicultural development. Specialist teaching in music and drama, together with after school clubs for music, art and French and visits from outside music and theatre groups, ensure that pupils have excellent first hand cultural experiences. Pupils take part in drama productions and have also organised their own art exhibition. The school makes excellent use of the experiences of people within the school and local community to extend pupils' understanding of other cultures. Pupils have learnt about Japanese life, including songs and origami, from students at a local Japanese school. Parents of pupils come in to school to talk about their faith and cultural traditions. A particular strength is the use of well chosen 'big books' in literacy lessons to enhance pupils' understanding of other cultures.

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

28. Overall, the school cares **very well** for its pupils.

### **Strengths**

- Staff care very well for pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils' attendance is monitored very effectively.
- There are very good procedures for checking and recording how well pupils are progressing.

29. The quality of care for the pupils continues to be a strength of the school, as at the time of the last inspection. The small size of the school enables teaching and support staff to know all pupils very well and respond effectively to their individual needs. Staff, parents, governors and the village community share the school's values and this creates a secure and supportive environment within which pupils of all abilities thrive. Good support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make the same good progress as all other pupils. Parents said they were very happy with the quality of care and support their children received in all aspects of their school life.

30. Health, safety and security issues are addressed well by the school. There are effective procedures covering health and safety, risk assessment, medical issues and Internet access that are supported by regular monitoring. The school also reacts quickly to issues as they arise, for example site security issues. There is a child protection policy and the head teacher is the nominated child protection officer. Child welfare issues are discussed regularly at staff meetings.

31. The effective monitoring of pupils' attendance ensures high levels of attendance and good punctuality. Governors are informed of all requests for holiday during term time. Parking difficulties outside the school are the main cause of lateness.

32. The procedures for checking how well pupils are doing are very good. The Foundation Stage profiles provide useful information about children's starting levels. The school has effective methods for identifying pupils with special educational needs, including the more able, as early as possible. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly and closely and recorded in detail. Teachers rigorously track pupils' development through these records and identify those who are not making the expected progress and those who are achieving particularly well. Consequently their needs are met well, especially in literacy and numeracy, and they make good progress.

33. Very good use is made of information gained from continuous assessment in planning future learning for pupils. This has been substantially improved since the last inspection. Pupils are all set individual targets, particularly for English and mathematics, and pupils participate enthusiastically trying to achieve them. The comprehensive assessment policy also includes a monitoring programme. Marking of pupils' work is usually undertaken alongside pupils during lessons. This results in individual feedback to pupils as to how they may best improve their work.

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

34. The partnership between parents and the school is **excellent**.

### Strengths:

- Parents are extremely supportive of the school.
- Families contribute extensively to the work of the school.
- The information provided to parents is of a very high quality.

35. Parents are extremely supportive of the work of the school. They particularly like the school's ethos and values and its strong 'village' identity. Most say that their children like school and make good progress. They find staff approachable and are pleased with the information they receive about their children's progress.

36. The work of families with the school is exceptional and makes an important contribution to pupils' learning and the strong sense of community within the school. The school promotes an active partnership with parents which it sees as key to the learning and personal development of pupils. Parents value the way in which they are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school, without feeling any pressure where they have other commitments.

37. Parents and grandparents help in school with activities such as reading, the library and sewing and also run after school clubs, including art and craft. They also maintain the school's garden and carry out small building maintenance jobs. All helpers sign an annual contract with the school. The parents' association is extremely active and organises a wide range of social and fundraising activities, involving many parents. Much of the £40,000 recently raised by the school in matched funding for a building project, has been as a result of donations obtained by parents from employers and local businesses. Parents really appreciate the strong family atmosphere at the school and also support one another outside school.

38. The school provides very good information to parents, both formally and informally. Regular newsletters, which include curriculum information, keep parents up to date and are supplemented by curriculum evenings on numeracy and literacy. The school gives parents written information about how they can support their children's learning at home. Termly parents' evenings have been introduced for parents to discuss their children's progress, meeting an issue raised in the last inspection. Targets are also set at this meeting. Parents also value the regular informal contacts they have with the head teacher and other staff after school. Reports are comprehensive and clear, if rather formal in tone.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. Overall leadership and management of the school are **very good**.

### Strengths:

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership.
- The vision for the future development of the school is very clear.
- There is very good delegation of responsibilities and contribution of whole staff to school development.
- The governing body is very supportive and effective.
- The work of the school is very well monitored to lead to further improvement.

### Area for development:

- The accommodation.

40. Leadership and management of the school are very good. The improved quality of leadership and management has driven overall improvement since the last inspection. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and she has an outstandingly clear vision for the future educational direction of the school. Since the last inspection she has responded to the need to change in an extremely positive way, building on the strengths that existed, but fully recognising where improvements needed to be made and firmly implementing planned action. She is respected and held in high regard by the whole school community and supported by the very good governing body. The school's aims are exceptionally well met and give clear guidelines to all members of the school community as to how they can fulfil them.

41. The governing body is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities very effectively. The good balance of their interest and experience serve the school very well. Governors are well organized and carry out their work efficiently through a range of committees. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Many visit the school regularly to help in its work, for example in organising activities for the physical development of the youngest children and lunch-time music lessons. In the formal visits, they observe lessons and meet the headteacher to discuss development of subject areas. They monitor attainment and progress, review policies and school profiles regularly, have a good understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for development, and set challenging targets. They are fully involved in the development and monitoring of the school improvement plan.

42. Through monitoring, the school finds ways to make the best provision for all pupils. For example, pupils who have difficulties are quickly identified and given the appropriate help and support, and challenging work is set for the most able pupils. The headteacher monitors teaching and gives oral feedback to teachers. Improvements to teaching since the last inspection are the result of this regular and effective monitoring of teaching. However, feedback is not always sufficiently formal, nor used to create recorded targets for improvements to teaching and learning, as part of the whole school improvement plan. The need to formalise arrangements has already been highlighted through the development of performance management systems in school. There is a good programme of professional development in place, especially given the size of the school. Teachers attend appropriate courses and conferences and share initiatives with the other members of staff. They are very supportive of each other in facilitating attendance at daytime courses. Staff are well informed and up to date with educational developments.

43. The very good working relationship the headteacher has fostered with all members of staff has resulted in an effective and committed team. The delegation of subjects to teachers has meant that each has several areas of responsibility. Whilst English and mathematics are priorities, all other subjects are managed and monitored well. The very effective use of specialist teaching has ensured that high standards are maintained in subjects such as drama, music and physical education. Non-teaching staff are also very much part of the school team. They know the pupils well and help them with their learning. Classroom assistants work with groups of pupils to make sure they get the help they need. Lunchtime supervisors show high levels of care and are very much loved by the pupils. An army of helpers appears to help the pupils cross the busy road when they have lessons in the village hall.

44. The school's financial planning is very good. The headteacher and governors are provided with regular and accurate financial information to monitor the effectiveness of the school's spending. This is the result of very efficient records produced by the administrative assistant, who supports the headteacher very well and is a friendly and helpful first point of contact for parents and visitors. The parents, governors and school have raised a considerable amount of money towards the improvement

of the accommodation. The future use of these finances will be very carefully guided by consideration of how they will benefit pupils' learning. The school has carried forward finances from previous years to address accommodation issues, for example. A number of proposals are already in place and decisions are being made with meticulous consideration of how pupils' learning will be better. The school makes very effective use of new technology in many areas. The new computer suite has raised pupils' standards in ICT, the secretary has received training in the use of a new office program and the Reception teacher and nursery nurse use e-mail to share their planning.

45. Although accommodation is greatly improved since the last inspection, it is still unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has made the best use of the space available. The creation of a Year 2 teaching area has enabled the children following the Foundation Stage curriculum to have their own room. The library area and the new ICT suite are valuable facilities and have had great impact on pupils' learning. However, these have been created at the expense of the headteacher's office and a staffroom. One classroom is very small and totally unsuitable for young pupils. The size of the other classrooms, while being larger, still restricts teaching and the curriculum. A planned building project will provide a new classroom and outside play area that will somewhat alleviate the situation. Overall, the school is well resourced, particularly for the teaching of English, music and ICT.

46. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Issues identified at the time have been tackled well so that areas that were previously weaknesses, including the whole school curriculum, the curriculum for children under five and the use of assessment are among the many strengths of the school. Leadership and management, the quality of teaching and the procedures for assessing pupils' progress have been improved, and as a result, pupils' achievements are better. With the close and effective partnership that has been forged between staff, governors and parents the school has a very good capacity for further improvements.

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

47. In order to make further improvements, the headteacher, governors and staff should:  
development:

- (1) work with the LEA to improve the accommodation so that there is enough space for pupils to learn properly in all lessons;
- (2) improve those areas of teaching that are relatively weaker by:
  - a. always providing formal feedback after lesson observations;
  - b. ensuring that areas for development are used to create individual performance targets for teachers;
  - c. providing opportunities for all teachers to observe good teaching practice within and outside the school;
- (3) pay increased attention to developing pupils' awareness and understanding of when to stop talking and listen carefully.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

13
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

7
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### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	4	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	23	31	46	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 seven percentage points.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

YR – Y2
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Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	51
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Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0
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#### **Special educational needs**

YR – Y2

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
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Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1
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#### **English as an additional language**

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
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#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
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Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8
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### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	9	4	13

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	92(100)	92 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (86)	92 (86)	92 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	49
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	160176
Total expenditure	146978
Expenditure per pupil	3340
Balance brought forward from previous year	9365
Balance carried forward to next year	22563

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

50

Number of questionnaires returned

33

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	12	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	21	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	79	21	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	64	36	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	36	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	97	3	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	21	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	18	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	39	9	0	6

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

With the limited time available, inspectors could not gather sufficient evidence to enable them to make secure judgements about all aspects of every subject.

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

48. Overall provision is **good**.

#### **Strengths:**

- Children make good progress over time and achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- There are good resources and a stimulating learning environment for children.

#### **Areas for development:**

- Children sometimes pay insufficient attention.
- They do not always take turns to express their opinions or answer questions.

49. Children start school part-time at the age of four. Four children have attended full time since September; the remainder started full time from the beginning of the current term. Most have had some nursery or pre-school experience and the staff ensure that they settle into school quickly by providing opportunities for the children to visit the school prior to starting. Through careful observations and discussions with parents, the teacher assesses each child's particular needs. As a result, children who have particular difficulties or talents are identified early and given good support. The children come into school with broadly average skills and knowledge, and throughout their time in the Reception class they make good progress. By the time they go into Year 1, the majority are on course to reach the nationally expected early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage, and several will exceed them.

50. Provision for the children in the Reception class has improved since the last inspection. The accommodation has been reorganised so that children have their own classroom. Although there is no designated area for outdoor activities, very good use is made of the playground and children reach and sometimes exceed the standards expected in physical development. Teaching is good in all areas of learning. All staff and parent helpers are very knowledgeable about the needs of children of this age and provide worthwhile activities in all areas of learning. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection, and when planning and assessing the children, the teacher takes careful account of the early learning goals for children of this age. Sessions are carefully planned and organised so that all areas of learning are covered by a good balance of direct teaching and well-structured activities.

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

51. There is good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development and, as result of good teaching in this area, children achieve well. Children settle quickly into the school's routines and are very happy. They are very keen to learn but become fidgety and noisy when they are not directly involved. They show that they are confident in their relationships with other children and the adults who work with them. They share equipment and take turns when working or playing in groups. Staff set high expectations for behaviour. They insist on good manners and remind children that they must say "please" and "thank you" when something is passed to them. Children are also encouraged to make independent choices, which they do confidently, and most remain focused on their

chosen activity. They use their time well and are very keen to talk about what they are doing. In all activities, there are planned opportunities for children to develop their personal and social skills.

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

52. The teaching and curriculum for speaking, listening, reading and writing are good. Most children are confident speakers and this is developed well, with many opportunities for them to talk. The children are encouraged to build on their good vocabulary by explaining what they are doing, both in small groups and to the rest of the class. The good ratio of adults to children means they are constantly encouraged to listen and respond. All children know about books and how to use them. They take their books home to read and there is good communication between teachers and parents. Most have learnt letter sounds and are beginning to decode simple words. They apply their knowledge of sounds to their writing. Those who have not reached this stage are encouraged to write and read back to the teacher what they have written. Most children write their names clearly.

### **Mathematical development**

53. Little was seen of children's mathematical development during observed sessions. However, the work seen and displays around the classroom show that the majority of children are in line to attain the early learning goals. Most children recognise and write numbers to 10 and the more able children have knowledge of numbers beyond this. They add numbers to 10, and name common plane and solid shapes. They recognise and complete simple patterns. Children display a wide range of mathematical vocabulary, as when playing with building blocks, they compare the height, size, shape and numbers of blocks with each other.

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

54. There is good provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of their growing world, through class activities and whole school events. There was no opportunity to observe any sessions where this was a focus. Children learn about their environment when they go for nature walks. They have visited the Chiltern Open Air Museum and took part in the Victorian Day. They learn about different religious festivals and were involved in the candlelit carol service in the church.

### **Creative development**

55. Provision for children's physical development has improved since the last inspection. Although there is still no designated outdoor area, there is space for the children to use outside when weather permits. They have the opportunity to climb, ride, run and throw and catch balls. Interesting activities are organised to develop these skills such as road signs and cones set out on the playground. They not only acquire skills of controlling their wheeled toys but also learn about road safety. They are taught how to throw and catch and use a bat. Children who show aptitude for sport join older pupils in after-school clubs to develop their skills further. Fine control skills are encouraged well. The children hold pencils and paintbrushes with control handle scissors correctly and safely and are developing manipulative skills well.

### **Physical development**

56. The opportunities for children to develop their creative abilities are particularly good. Most children colour in carefully and are making good progress in drawing. They mix colours when painting and are given the experience of using a variety of brushes and pads to create their pictures. They followed instructions when they made kaleidoscopes and decorated the outside imaginatively. Carefully planned activities enable children to learn to appreciate colour and movement. They took

paper streamers onto the playground and waved them and marvelled at how the wind 'made them fly'.  
The children sing enthusiastically and all join in with the actions.

## ENGLISH

57. The overall provision for English is **good**.

### **Strengths:**

- Test results at the end of Year 2.
- Standards in speaking.
- Standards in reading.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.

### **Areas for development:**

- Handwriting.

58. Pupils' results in national test in 2002 were well above average in reading and in the top five per cent nationally in writing. All pupils attained at least at the expected level, Level 2, and over a third attained the higher Level 3. Results have been similarly good over the past three years. The school closely tracks the progress and attainment and it is clear that all pupils achieve well on their starting levels. Some pupils achieve very well.

59. Standards of work seen were above average overall. The school prepares pupils well for taking tests at the end of Year 2, addressing any areas of weakness prior to the tests. Aspects of the curriculum for the summer term are often taught earlier than planned and repeated before the tests to allow pupils ample opportunity to practice and remember. One pupil has been identified as being particularly gifted in literacy work. This pupil is being challenged appropriately and is attaining very high standards.

60. Standards in speaking are well above average overall. Pupils are very articulate, know and use an extensive range of words, explain their ideas carefully, in well-constructed sentences and are generally very confident speakers. The school promotes high standards in literacy. Adults demonstrate good language and have high expectations of how pupils should present their ideas orally. There are many opportunities for pupils to use their speaking skills in a range of performances. Pupils are very happy to speak aloud during lessons and chat happily in less formal situations. During a Year 1 art lesson, pupils were given good opportunities to develop their vocabulary while they talked about the textures of different fabrics. In a Year 2 history lesson, pupils discussed the phrasing of questions that might help to identify the person in a picture. Such chances to develop spoken language like this are commonplace in lessons. Some parents commented that their children's speaking skills were better than they would have expected.

61. Reading skills are well above average and are the key to pupils' good attainment in many aspects of their work. The school has a well-structured programme for developing phonic skills for reading and spelling. Pupils work hard during lessons to learn and remember new words, and recall them when they are reading. Most importantly, a good attitude to reading is fostered. Books are exciting and seen to be the path to new knowledge. Pupils talk about the books they have read with real enthusiasm. Non-fiction books are regularly used to support homework tasks and older pupils know how to use contents and index pages to locate the information they need. The highest-attaining pupils in Year 2 read demanding books with very good understanding. They talk and write about characters, comparing them with each other and explaining why they acted as they did in the story. In lessons, some books are chosen with multicultural themes to extend pupils' understanding in this area.

62. Teaching and learning in English are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are therefore confident in lessons. They make effective use of resources, such as big books and hand

puppets to engage pupils' interest. During introductions, and especially when the teacher reads aloud, pupils pay very good attention and are therefore ready to start independent work without problems. Good use is made of a published scheme to ensure that language skills are taught in appropriate steps. Additionally, the national strategy for literacy has been well implemented to ensure that pupils' learn progressively. Above all, teachers use both the scheme and the strategy flexibly and appropriately to suit the needs of the pupils. In this way, all pupils are suitably challenged and make good progress in lessons. Teachers' carefully check how well pupils have learned and plan for future learning in the light of their evaluations. In this way, all pupils are encouraged to make at least good progress. The school's records show how and when extra support or different learning opportunities have been used to ensure this good progress. The end result of this is that nearly all pupils attain at least the expected level in national tests at the end of Year 2, even those who started in the Reception class with levels lower than would be expected.

63. The main area for development within the subject is in handwriting. The school has focussed on writing as a priority. There are now improved standards in grammar, spelling and punctuation. Prior to end of Year 2 tests, pupils are given ample opportunities to practise their writing, improving speed, accuracy and content. However, in everyday work, the presentation of writing is not as good as it could be. Pupils do not start to develop joined writing skills soon enough and this means that, by Year 2, some have learned bad habits which they find hard to undo. Even the oldest, most-able pupils do not always join their writing and this affects the speed at which they work and the overall look of finished pieces. Some have sloppy sitting positions and this makes neat writing difficult to achieve.

## **MATHEMATICS**

64. Overall provision is **good**.

### **Strengths:**

- Well-above attainment in national tests and good achievement throughout the school.
- Good teaching of basic skills and strategies for solving problems.
- Good provision for higher-attaining pupils to tackle more challenging work.
- Very good summing up at the end of lessons, and good reinforcement and extension of the work covered.
- Good management and continuing development of the subject.

### **Areas for development:**

- Pupils' attention during the oral part of the lesson.
- Reference to learning intentions during the lesson
- The use of resources in some lessons.

65. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have risen since the last inspection and have been well above the national average for the past four years. In 2002, they were well above the national average, and above average when compared with similar schools. All but one pupil reached the expected Level 2 and the number attaining the higher Level 3 was above the national average. There has been no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Pupils are supported very well in preparing for national tests and this helps them to attain very good results. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above average overall. Pupils achieve well in mathematics.

66. Pupils in Year 1 know all the pairs that make 10 and identify doubles. The more able pupils are beginning to find near doubles by adding or subtracting 1. They understand the operations of addition and subtraction and explain their methods orally. In Year 2, pupils' knowledge of basic



number facts is good. They use different strategies to solve problems and explain what they did. For example, they mentally add 9 or 11 to a number by adding 10 and subtracting or adding 1, or use their knowledge of doubling and near doubling. Pupils learn to work methodically when investigating possible answers and to recognise that addition can be done in any order. They use mathematical names for common plane and solid shapes and recognise patterns and lines of symmetry. Lower-attaining pupils make good progress in lessons because they are well supported.

67. Teachers make effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy and this has improved teaching since the last inspection. Teaching is now good with some very good aspects. At the beginning of lessons, pupils are told what they are expected to learn although this is not always reinforced during the lesson. Pupils practise mental skills at the beginning of each lesson, which are related to work they are about to do. Appropriate activities are planned, taking into account pupils' different abilities. In a very successful lesson, the lively presentation and clear explanation motivated the pupils. Not all pupils give their full attention; some fidget and chat during the oral part of lessons. Nevertheless, most pupils understand what is being taught and settle to their written tasks quickly. Teachers use probing and open ended questions to encourage pupils to reason for themselves, recall previous learning and to check their understanding. They have good relationships with the pupils. Their support and praise encourage the pupils to work hard. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities, and so they complete what is expected of them. Very good summing up at the end of lessons gives pupils the opportunity to explain what they have learnt and enables teachers to evaluate and reinforce what has been taught.

68. Teachers plan with classroom assistants, who are involved in supporting pupils who need help. The extra support pupils receive from other helpers contributes to the good progress they make in lessons. Marking is relevant to the age of the pupils. It shows them how to improve and reminds the teacher of what needs to be reinforced. Teachers use assessment in lessons to alter their future plans if necessary. Individual targets related to the Numeracy Strategy are displayed on pupils' tables. These remind them of what they are expected to learn but are sometimes too difficult for some of the pupils to read. Pupils learn to collect data and use their information and communication technology skills to record their findings. The use of mathematics in whole-school projects such as the "Hedgehog Shop" gives pupils the opportunity to apply the skills they have learned.

69. The management of the subject is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are tracked through the school and teachers are able to identify pupils who fail to make the expected progress. The teachers know individual pupils very well and day-to-day work is matched to their individual needs. Resources for the subject are good.

## SCIENCE

70. Provision for science is **good**.

### Strengths:

- Teaching is very effective and results in good learning.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to discover things for themselves.

### Areas for development:

- The amount and quality of recorded work.

71. At the end of Year 2 in 2002, teachers assessed pupils' attainment to be in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was above the national average. Evidence from the one lesson seen and samples of pupils' work indicates that pupils attain above-

average standards. The school is sure that this difference in end of year assessments and general standards of work is that the aspect of scientific investigation is not evaluated for national assessment purposes. It is in this aspect of science work that pupils are now doing particularly well, making overall standards above average. Standards have improved since the last inspection because pupils because pupils now have better investigational skills.

72. Since January, pupils have been working in single age groups and this has meant that skills and knowledge can be taught at a more appropriate level for each year group. In the one lesson seen in Year 2, pupils were working on electricity, making simple circuits using batteries and bulbs. They learned that wires have to be connected to the positive and negative end of the battery and recorded their work using appropriate symbols. Teaching and learning in this lesson were good, because the lesson was well planned and resources well used. The teacher used good questioning at the start of the lesson to make sure that pupils remembered what they had learned previously. The classroom assistant supported lower-attaining pupils well to ensure that they made the same progress as all others. Higher-attaining pupils were suitably challenged. High expectations of what pupils should achieve resulted in good gains in knowledge and understanding. For example, the most-able pupils were required to show their understanding by completing an electrical circuit that could be used to confirm the correct answer to a question. At the end of the lesson, pupils clearly explained what they had learned, making use of new vocabulary that had been well introduced. The teacher talked about what the next lesson would be about and pupils were left enthusiastic and keen to learn more.

73. The curriculum has been improved well since the last inspection and learning now happens in appropriate steps that build pupils' skills and knowledge. There is now good emphasis on experimenting and investigating and good resources to support work in science. Pupils' work is thoroughly and regularly checked and the information that teachers gain from this is used to plan for new learning. However, pupils' work is not always marked in terms of how well it is presented, an important aspect when recording results of experiments, for example. The recording of experiments is sometimes not complete and tables and charts are untidily drawn so that it is difficult for pupils to look at results and draw conclusions.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

74. The provision for both subjects is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths:**

- Pupils' drawing skills.
- The progressive development of skills in both subjects.
- Good management of both subjects.

### **Area for development:**

- The accommodation.

75. In both art and design and design and technology pupils attain in line with national expectations overall and achieve satisfactorily. In art, within the aspect of drawing, pupils attain higher than expectations. Their drawings, both in art tasks and in illustrations in other subjects, show careful attention to detail, are interesting, colourful and neat.

76. Since the last inspection good attention has been given to the progressive development of skills and knowledge in both subjects. The subject manager has a clear understanding that standards cannot improve unless pupils are taught the necessary techniques and skills that they can apply in their independent work. Pupils now learn about the nature of materials and various ways of making and creating. In design and technology, the complete cycle of processes are well planned so that pupils

have opportunities to evaluate original articles, such as a copy of Joseph's coat, make judgements about the article and then go on to design and create for themselves.

77. Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection. No design and technology lessons were observed. For this reason, no judgements can be made about the overall quality of teaching. In the art lesson, pupils were involved in investigating materials and sorting fabrics according to their characteristics and possible uses. This work made good use of pupils' scientific and literacy skills, reinforcing previous learning from both subjects. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and attained good standards. However, their behaviour was unsatisfactory at times and a firmer hand was needed to insist that there should be no talking and calling out.

78. The manager of both subjects is well organised and has good subject knowledge. Pupils' art work and design and technology projects are well displayed around school. The presentation of pupils' art work is of a particularly high standard and creates an attractive learning environment. Parents commented with enthusiasm on the high quality of work displayed in the art exhibition at the local village hall. The major drawback for both subjects is the cramped conditions in which pupils need to work. Only one classroom is of a barely appropriate size for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to work. Even in this room, there is little room for display and insufficient space to store work in a way that makes it accessible for pupils. Not all classrooms have running water, so pupils have to move between rooms to carry out some activities. This is disruptive for young pupils and affects their levels of concentration and the time available to them to get really involved in their work. Storage of resources is also a problem.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

79. The provision for both subjects is **good**.

### **Strengths:**

- Standards attained in both subjects are above expectations.
- There are excellent links with other subjects.
- Learning is very interesting for pupils.

### **Area for development:**

- Reinforcement of learning intentions during lessons.

80. Attainment is above national expectations in both subjects and pupils achieve well. One reason why standards are good is that there are excellent links between the two subjects and with other subjects of the curriculum. This makes learning meaningful and interesting. Pupils understand that the geographical characteristics of the school's local area have been affected by changes over time. They know the features that were important to village life in past years, such as the post office, but understand that times and needs of people have changed, and now the post office makes a very attractive house. The school uses geography and history themes in special event weeks. The Victorian week gave pupils very practical experience of how they would have lived if they had been born during this period.

81. Only one lesson was seen in each of the subjects during the inspection. Teaching was satisfactory in both lessons, which were well planned with interesting activities for pupils. Pupils were able to talk with each other in small groups and this was good for developing their speaking skills. In the geography lesson, pupils looked at photographs of Barnaby Bear taken in a variety of locations. The task was for pupils to say whether Barnaby was at home or abroad and explain why. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed this activity and showed very good knowledge of other places when they talked

about windmills in Holland, the Eiffel Tower in France and the seaside in hot countries. They talked about varying climate in different parts of the world and used this as a criterion for identifying Barnaby's location in the photos. They had a good understanding of how Barnaby may have got to the countries they suggested. In the history lesson, there were good discussions about information that can be gained about history from looking at pictures. Pupils develop a lively interest in searching for historical clues from such activities. Pupils attained good standards in both lessons.

82. The curriculum is well planned and teachers have good knowledge of both subjects, which enables them to make learning interesting, relevant to the pupils and good fun. One area for improvement during lessons is in how teachers introduce and reinforce the main learning intention. Because pupils are very enthusiastic and know a lot, there is a tendency for them to call out and interrupt with information that is very interesting, but not wholly essential to the lesson or learning intention. When this is not stopped quickly enough the focus of the lesson changes and so the systematic development of skills and knowledge that had been planned does not take place. In the lessons seen, the learning intention was not referred to often and strongly enough to bring pupils back to the main point of learning for the lessons, and so, while lessons were interesting and pupils' attainment levels were good, pupils were not absolutely sure about the new thing they had learned at the end of the session.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

83. The overall provision is **good**.

### **Strengths:**

- Pupils attain standards that are higher than national expectations.
- Resources are good.

### **Area for development:**

- The use of control technology in other subjects.

83. There have been good improvements in ICT since the last inspection and the subject now has high profile at the school. Resources are now good and this has had a positive impact on the standards that pupils attain. The new computer suite is well equipped, centrally located and regularly used. Pupils have a very good understanding of how computers and the Internet can be used to extend their learning in other subjects. This is supported by the fact that many pupils have access to computers at home and see them as a normal part of everyday activities. Attainment levels are better than national expectations in the subject because pupils independently and confidently use computers and other everyday machines, such as tape recorders, with confidence and accuracy. Pupils achieve well on their starting levels.

84. In the two short ICT sessions seen during the inspection, pupils demonstrated very good mouse control, confidently used the task menu to print their work and compiled pictograms using previously collected information. While the observations were too short to judge the quality of teaching and learning overall, the depth of discussion between the teacher and pupils clearly indicated the teacher's good subject knowledge and very good links with learning in other subjects that made the sessions very relevant to the pupils. When asked which way of compiling graphs they found to be most useful, the pupils quickly identified the advantages of drawing graphs on the computer in terms of speed and accuracy. The teacher's patient explanation when pupils met a printing problem led to new learning of how to change the default printer when two printers are available. Pupils were very enthusiastic about their work. As yet, limited use is made of control technology in science and design and technology. Pupils have yet to be introduced to using technology to direct movement and changes and this is an area for development.

## **MUSIC**

85. Provision for music is **good**.

### **Strengths:**

- Music is taught well by an experienced and knowledgeable specialist teacher.
- Pupils have many opportunities to perform.

**Areas for development:**

- The accommodation restricts musical activities.

86. From the limited evidence of the lesson observed, photographs of musical productions and talking to teachers and pupils, it is not possible to make judgements about pupils' standards or achievements. Planning shows that pupils use a range of instruments, understand rhythms and sing and perform action songs. They learn songs for particular occasions such as Harvest Festival, the Christmas Carol service and the annual musical production, which involve the whole school. Pupils who join the music club learn to play the recorder and the ocarina. Pupils are introduced to other instruments through visits from the County Music Service wind band.

87. In the one lesson observed, teaching was very good. It was carefully planned to cover a variety of activities that included clapping rhythms, identifying instruments by their sound and building up a musical story. The teacher knows the pupils well and activities were matched to their abilities. The pupils listened carefully as the teacher clapped a short phrase and most repeated it accurately and confidently. Pupils show their enthusiasm through their lively singing. For the most part, there was a lively pace to the lesson. However, pupils' learning slowed at one point when it would have been an advantage for them to move to groups to practise their work ready for performance. This was impossible because pupils were working in cramped conditions.

88. Management of the subject is good. The specialist teacher is largely responsible for the richness of the curriculum. The school has a large range of instruments, but in the cramped classrooms there is a limit as to how many can be used at any one time.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

89. Provision for physical education is **satisfactory** overall.

**Strengths:**

- Good provision for extra-curricular activities.
- Good use made of specialists and the available facilities.

**Areas for development:**

- Accommodation restricts the opportunities for gymnastics.
- Pupils do not change into suitable clothes for physical education lessons.

90. Only one dance lesson was seen, which took place in the village hall, and so it is not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievement or standards overall. Teachers' planning shows that pupils experience all aspects of the subject, except the use of large apparatus, because the school does not have its own hall. The school provides a varied curriculum and draws on outside specialists to support the teachers. Pupils enjoy football lessons organised by a visiting coach. They have the opportunity to play football and short tennis in after-school activities.

91. In the one lesson observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Although all pupils changed their shoes they did not change into suitable clothes and there were no warming up or cooling down exercises. The teachers used the recorded music well, stopping it when necessary to explain or demonstrate. The pupils listened carefully and moved imaginatively to the music, improved their short sequences and work sensibly in groups.

92. Management of the subject is good. Despite the restrictions, pupils have a balanced curriculum and receive much support from parents. Sports day is held in the garden of one of the parents. Many

parents support teachers in lessons, and parent sponsorship ensures that no pupils are excluded from activities.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

93. Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

94. No lessons and few samples of work were seen during the inspection and so it not possible to make judgements about pupils' standards or achievement. The curriculum is planned using the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils study Christianity and other major religions, often introduced through festivals. For example, a visitor came to talk to the pupils about Ramadan. Displays showed the work pupils had done in relation to Diwali. Planning shows they follow the recommended topic "Ourselves", which is linked to their science work. The good links with the village and the local church include taking a prominent part in celebrations such as Harvest Festival and the candlelit Carol Service.