

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MELBOURN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Royston

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110614

Headteacher: Mr Maynard Dunlop

Reporting inspector: Dennis Maxwell  
8798

Dates of inspection: 28 - 31 October 2002

Inspection number: 247014

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:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mortlock Street Melbourn Nr. Royston Herts
Postcode:	SG8 6DB
Telephone number:	01763 223457
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Clare Hughes
Date of previous inspection:	12 June 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11104	Michael Fleming	Lay inspector		How high are standards? 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?
23805	Margaret Lygoe	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage	
22948	Mary Vallis	Team inspector	Geography Physical education Religious education Educational inclusion	
4486	Michael Weller	Team inspector	English History Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Melbourn Primary is an average sized community school for pupils aged four to 11 years. There are 263 pupils on roll. It is situated centrally in the village of Melbourn and serves the local community. The area includes a mixture of local authority and private housing. The socio-economic circumstances of the community serving the school are similar to those found nationally. There is a wide range of ability amongst the children and, overall, their attainment on entry to the school is average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, at around 10 per cent, is below the national average. A very small number of children comes from ethnic minority backgrounds, and a few of them are at an early stage of acquiring English. The school roll has been stable over the past few years, although around six per cent of pupils enter or leave the school other than at the usual time. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average, with most of these having moderate learning needs. Three pupils have a formal Statement of Special Educational Need. The school aims to provide a challenging education that takes account of pupils' personal as well as academic development.

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

This is a successful school that provides a good standard of education for the children. The leadership and management by those teachers with whole-school responsibilities is good overall. The headteacher and senior management team provide very good leadership that has resulted in good recent improvements in the school to overcome the underachievement noted at the time of the last inspection. Teachers ensure that all pupils have full access to the activities. They plan worthwhile tasks that provide good experiences so that by Year 6 pupils' standards are above what would be expected in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils have good concentration and try hard to do well. Teaching is good, although some basic learning skills are not given enough attention. The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 in particular has a strong impact on pupils' learning so that it is good. The pupils' personal development through the school is good, reflecting the very good focus and support by all staff. The management of special educational needs is good. School developments are managed very well by the senior staff and governing body working together. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Children in the reception classes get a good start to their schooling through the good management and teaching.
- Standards are above average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils are quickly interested in the activities, have good attitudes to work and their behaviour is good. The provision for pupils' personal development is good so that by the end of Year 6 they are responsible young people.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with particular strengths in Years 5 and 6.
- The curriculum is well-planned and interesting, and assessment procedures are good, keeping a careful track on pupils' progress.
- There is a good sense of community and parents feel comfortable about mentioning any concern.
- The headteacher and deputy provide very good leadership, with a very clear understanding of how they want the children to develop and learn. They are supported well in this by all staff and the governing body.

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

- There is not enough attention to several basic learning skills, such as spelling, independent learning and the use of computers in lessons. The focus on improving pupils' writing at length needs to continue, particularly for pupils in Year 3 and lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Some aspects of teaching and learning are not always effective. This is so particularly in the mixed age Year 1/2 classes.

*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 June 2000, when it was found to be underachieving. The governing body has appointed senior staff to join the headteacher who are all highly committed to school development. As a result the school has made good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in leadership and management, although the full impact of this is still working through the school. The headteacher and senior staff have

established good monitoring and evaluation procedures to identify strengths and weaknesses. They promote an open approach to discuss how teaching may be made more effective. Standards in Year 6 have improved well over the past two years. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and the school has made good use of external advice. The planning and delivery of information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education have improved and led to higher standards. The underachievement by higher attaining pupils has been tackled thoroughly. There is a whole-school curriculum plan, with relevant schemes of work for all subjects, although the time allocation for some subjects is tight. The governing body is effective in its role; and responses to weaknesses are planned carefully into the management plan. The staff and governors have a very good capability for further improvements.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. The **similar schools** grade shows the school's performance compared with other schools that have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	B	B	A
Mathematics	C	B	C	C
Science	D	C	C	C

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

Standards in the work seen during the inspection are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. This indicates good improvement since the last inspection. Standards in religious education have improved since the last inspection by both Years 2 and 6 and now meet the expectation of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained in the other subjects and meet the expectations by Year 6, except that standards in history exceed the expectation. Standards are average by Year 2 in all subjects, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. There is evidence, however, of pupils lacking confidence and attainment in several basic skills, such as hand-writing, spelling and writing at length. The more challenging work set for higher attaining pupils enables them to reach higher standards. In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well; the majority of pupils are likely to meet the expectation for each of the six areas of learning, maintaining standards since the last inspection.

The table above shows that standards in the most recent national tests in Year 6 were above the national average in English and average in mathematics and science. In relation to similar schools standards in English were well above average. Fewer pupils gained the higher Level 5 in mathematics than average, and this had a lowering effect on the overall standard. The trend in results from 1997 to 2001 was in line with the nationally improving trend. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 2 and it is good in Years 3 to 6 through the impact of effective teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets. The school has agreed targets for all pupils in English and mathematics and these are often referred to in lessons, helping to raise standards. The school met its target for English and exceeded the target for mathematics, for the percentage of pupils expected to gain Level 4 or above in 2002. The school has set suitably challenging targets for English and mathematics for the summer tests of 2003, based on internal assessments of the pupils, and is on course to meet them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils respond well to teachers' clear expectations, particularly in Years 3 to 6. There is a good working atmosphere through the school. Most pupils persevere well and complete the expected amount of work. A small minority of pupils has not yet learnt to concentrate for a reasonable period.



Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils' usually good behaviour in class helps their learning. They are considerate with their friends. They understand the school's clear system for rewards and sanctions. Most pupils have good personal discipline.
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Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships are very good amongst the children. They are sensitive to the personal feelings of others. Pupils' good personal development is a strong influence on their progress and learning by Year 6. Assemblies are orderly and thoughtful occasions, evoking a highly spiritual feeling and sense of community.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, helped by the clear procedures to monitor and encourage regular attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	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 is good overall and has a clear impact on standards and pupils' learning. Children in the reception classes get a good start to their schooling through the good management and teaching, the school having placed a strong teacher as co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage to solve the identified weaknesses. A significant proportion of teaching was very good or excellent in the lessons seen, indicating many strengths. Examples of good or very good teaching were noted in all subjects and classes, showing that curriculum planning, monitoring and management are effective. Very little teaching was unsatisfactory, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. The weaknesses in behaviour management noted at the time of the last inspection have been addressed and teachers are consistent in their expectations.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 to 2, where for example teachers are not teaching guided reading in small groups well to meet differing levels of reading ability. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily so that pupils gain skills increasingly through the school. However, insufficient attention is given to such skills as spelling and writing at length, and teachers are not consistent in using classroom strategies that encourage pupils to become independent. Lesson planning is good and is set out to meet the learning needs of all pupils. The teaching of science is generally good, with opportunities for pupils to gain investigational skills, such as testing foods with their senses. The teachers set high expectations for the quality of work in Years 3 to 6 but this is not consistent in Years 1 to 2. Pupils often make good gains in their learning during lessons but several need consistent support. Daily assessment is good in Years 3 to 6, since teachers are observant of the pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but advice in written comments to pupils varies in quality about how they may improve. Pupils apply skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT suitably in other subjects, for example in Years 5 and 6 they are beginning to collect historical information about the Victorians off the Internet.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Schemes of work provide good structure and support. The time allocation for several subjects is tight, but links between subjects are developing. There is some good oral work but pupils are not always encouraged to explain or reason.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school provides well-planned opportunities to meet their needs. The support staff provide thoughtful support so that pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good overall. The provision and support ensures their learning and progress are satisfactory in Years 1 to 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Other pupils are friendly and help in many ways. The pupils take a full part in lessons and mix with other children with no distinction between them.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision is a strength of the school. All members of staff encourage pupils to be responsible and considerate so that provision for pupils' social development is very good. Provision for their cultural development is satisfactory, and there is a developing emphasis on pupils' multi-cultural understanding. By Year 6 most pupils understand about citizenship and how to take moral decisions through the good provision. The school offers good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual understanding, for example in anticipating what could be in a box in assembly.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Members of staff provide a good level of personal care for the children. There are very good procedures to deal with behaviour when specific incidents occur. Information from the assessment systems is used well to plan further work.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	There are well-established links with parents. They receive good quality information about school activities and their children's progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy provide very good leadership and management so that the school has a strong sense of direction. The senior staff with whole school responsibilities give good leadership overall. Decisions are based on very clear educational principles designed to promote good standards and a love of learning by the pupils. School priorities are expressed well in the management plan, which is contributed to by all sections of the community. The school identified the need to strengthen management in the Foundation Stage, though has not fully resolved the need for further development in Years 1 to 2.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Members of the governing body have good arrangements to make regular visits to the school which give them a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their responsibilities well, ensuring that their decisions are based on educational priorities, for example the good level of staffing for children in reception classes. They monitor school developments carefully to help inform future decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has several good procedures now to monitor standards and provision which place clearly expressed expectations, with support, on all staff for their quality of performance. Lesson observations are a regular and valuable exercise which has a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The analysis of information is used effectively in further planning, with a good focus on standards. The governors monitor the effects of spending decisions carefully to ensure they obtain good value.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its resources effectively to develop pupils' skills and understanding as well as their personal development. Specific grants are used well for their intended purposes. The school is beginning to use new technology in school management, for example in tracking pupils' progress.

The level of staffing is good. The accommodation is satisfactory and provides a secure place for the children to learn. The quality and range of learning resources is satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school and are being helped to mature.</li><li>• There are good standards of behaviour and the school provides good care.</li><li>• The parents think their children get the right amount of work to do at home.</li><li>• They find teaching is good, so children learn well and they feel well informed about how their children are getting on.</li><li>• There are good relationships with parents.</li><li>• They think leadership and management is good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A significant minority of parents does not think there are enough activities outside lessons.</li></ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. Parents are given good information about their children's progress and the annual reports are clearly set out. Homework is given regularly, with more for older pupils, and this helps to reinforce their learning. There is a good range of activities outside lessons, which take place both during lunch times and after school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Evidence from the work seen in lessons, and from pupils' previous work, indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science are average by Year 2 but below average, particularly in writing, in Year 3, supporting the results of national tests for these pupils the previous year. Standards in the work seen by Year 6 are above average. This maintains the position since the last inspection at Year 2 but is a good improvement at Year 6. The school's own evaluation procedures as well as the measures taken following the last inspection have been effective in raising standards. Pupils make the expected progress through Years 1 and 2; but during Years 3 to 6 their progress is better than might be expected, particularly in Years 5 - 6, and pupils reach standards above the expectation through the impact of good teaching and provision.
2. Good management and teaching in the Foundation Stage provide good opportunities for the children so that learning is good and pupils achieve well. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The school's initial assessments of children as they enter the school in reception class, and inspection evidence, indicates that attainment on entry is broadly average. Teaching for children's personal and social development is very good, and is a significant strength. All children are making good progress in this area and most are likely to exceed the expected standards by the time they reach Year 1. This represents good achievement and reflects the staff's very good understanding of the needs of young children. Teaching for language and literacy, for mathematical development, for the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and for their physical development is good overall. As a result children are making good progress, so that most are on track to meet, and some to exceed the nationally expected standards. In general, children's large motor skills are better than their fine skills with pencils and scissors. Teaching is good for children's creative development and ensures that the children receive a wide variety of experiences. All children are on track to meet the expected standard.
3. Standards in the 2002 national tests at Year 2 were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, standards were also well below average. Fewer pupils than usual gained the higher level 3 in reading and mathematics. These results were predicted by the school's internal monitoring for this year group. Inspection evidence confirms that standards for these pupils, now in Year 3, are well below average but they are achieving appropriately. There is a higher proportion compared to other year groups in the school of pupils with special educational needs and other identified learning needs, and the school has invested in additional teaching time and classroom assistants in order to provide a good level of support. This is generally effective. The trends in reading, writing and mathematics have been broadly in line with the national trends over the past five years although with more variation. The results of all three tests in 2001, for example, showed good improvement over 2000 to above average and this higher attainment matches inspection evidence for that year group, now in Year 4.
4. In the 2002 national tests at Year 6, the percentage of pupils gaining the expected level in English was above the national average, while in mathematics and science standards were well above average. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level in mathematics was well below average, while the proportion was average in both English and science. As a consequence, standards overall were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well above average in English and average in both mathematics and science. The trend in standards has been broadly in line with the upward national trend over the past four years.
5. When the performance of pupils in the 2001 Year 6 year group in their national tests in 2001 is compared with their prior attainment when they were in Year 2, their results indicate satisfactory progress overall in comparison with schools having similar Year 2 results. They made good progress in English and mathematics, and satisfactory progress in science. This indicates that the school's teaching and provision are having a positive impact on standards. These 2001 results support the judgement that the school has addressed issues of underachievement successfully.
6. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, ICT, music, physical education and religious education meet the expectation. Standards in history exceed

the expectation by Year 6, and meet it by Year 2. The school has set suitably challenging targets for English and mathematics, that relate to projected attainments of the pupils by Year 6, and is on course to meet them. The carefully planned activities and teaching have a positive impact on standards in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils generally make good progress. The pupils with special needs make good progress in relation to their targets through the good support.

7. Additional time has been allocated since the last inspection to improve independent reading and for writing workshops, which are having a positive impact on standards. However, although the school has introduced arrangements to improve spelling and handwriting, the impact is not yet apparent, particularly in Years 3 to 6, where correct posture, pen grip and correctly formed letters are not insisted upon. There is also inconsistency in how key vocabulary is displayed and used. The school provides opportunities for speaking and listening but these are not fully effective. For example, opportunities for more able pupils to speak were limited in one lesson, or to use improvised role-play and inventive oral work in another. Teachers also need more guidance in how to meet the widely differing needs and ages in mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes.
8. The progress made by pupils with SEN is good. They make particularly good progress with literacy skills. Through good support they are able to read independently from both fiction and non-fiction, write with increasing fluency and feel confident to speak out in class. There are no significant variations in attainment among pupils of different ethnic groups or background or in relation to gender. Pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) make satisfactory progress. There is enough support for EAL for the numbers of pupils and their stage of learning.

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

9. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to school. They enjoy coming to school, and the rate of attendance in 2000-2001 was broadly in line with the national average for comparable schools, which is satisfactory. The level of unauthorised absence was below the national average. Pupils arrive punctually to school and settle quickly to early morning tasks. Pupils also arrive for assemblies in silence, sharing the school's belief that these events are an important part of the day which should be treated seriously. Very young children who have only attended school for a few weeks quickly acquire sufficient confidence to enter happily into the spirit of school life.
10. Pupils are polite and considerate to each other, their teachers and learning support assistants. They are cooperative and support one another. They work together well in lessons. Some pupils in Years 1 and 2 collaborated effectively, for instance, in a brainstorming session about different types of celebration. Relationships are very good among pupils, especially between boys and girls, and are good between pupils and adults. These relationships form an effective basis for teachers' management of pupils, so undesirable behaviour does not get out of hand and no pupils have been excluded in recent years. Pupils develop a good understanding of other people and their motivation. Some pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, used their capacities for imagination, empathy and understanding to describe the feelings of some fictional characters who were being bullied. Bullying and racism are not a problem at this school. Instances of such oppressive behaviour are very rare and are dealt with effectively.
11. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and concentrate well on the work their teachers set. There are occasions, sometimes as a result of pupils having been in the same position for a long time, that they become restless and fidgety, and distracted from their tasks, and the noise levels rise. However, pupils usually exhibit good self-control and are more interested in the lesson than being distracted. They are keen to answer questions and are eager to learn. They enjoy their work and try hard to achieve well. They treat resources responsibly. Pupils' ideas or suggestions are listened to carefully by their peers and teachers; they are willing to risk being wrong because they understand that their efforts will be respected and valued. Pupils are so keen to participate in lessons that they often raise their hand before formulating an answer, sometimes even before the question has been articulated. They also participate very keenly in extra-curricular activities such as by joining the school sport, dance or art clubs, by learning musical instruments, or by playing a part in the school's large-scale dramatic productions.
12. Pupils with SEN respond well in lessons and are generally well-behaved. Because they are well-supported and included in teachers' questions they participate well in class discussion, listen well and sustain concentration.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is good overall. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6, indicating good improvement since the last inspection, while it is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 2. A significant proportion of teaching was very good or excellent, indicating a real depth to the quality and skills of teaching. Examples of good or very good teaching were noted in all subjects and classes, showing that curriculum planning, monitoring and management are effective. The weaknesses in behaviour management noted at the time of the last inspection have been addressed and teachers apply behaviour strategies well to hold pupils' attention and correct minor disturbances. There is an improved focus on correctly expressed English and the key words related to lesson content, although classroom strategies do not support this consistently. For example, on many occasions questions are expressed so as to get single word, correct answers. Opportunities for pupils to write about their ideas or results are not fully exploited, in mathematics for example. On-going assessment in class is frequently good and the school's assessment procedures provide a good basis for forward planning. However, the process of adapting planning to match pupils' prior attainment remains an area for further development, particularly in the mixed-age Years 1 and 2 classes.
14. There are now good arrangements to support and manage subject planning. All subject leaders monitor colleagues' lesson planning and provide helpful comments. Teachers meet together weekly in groups to evaluate progress and to plan ahead, thus providing good shared observations and experience. This supports effective teaching, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers usually give lively and well-considered introductions to lessons. This was noted for example in a Year 4 science lesson on common materials, where the teacher created a high level of interest and thinking by inviting pupils to describe what an unseen object felt like. In a Year 5/6 English lesson on playscripts, the teacher prepared pupils for their own writing by using excellent strategies. He modelled the process pupils were to use, drawing ideas from them and helping them to recognise how a phrase might portray character: ... "from inside there is the sound of a vase smashing: Dan. 'Typical.' " Teachers' positive styles encourage pupils to contribute. All teachers value pupils' ideas and answers so that there is usually a good sense of interest, purpose and effort.
15. Teachers have good relationships with the children and manage them well to hold their attention so that their gains in knowledge, skills and understanding are often good in lessons. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and follows from the improved teaching strategies. Particular elements of teaching that were unsatisfactory occurred in several lessons, noted particularly in the Year 1/2 classes. On a few occasions, insufficient attention was given to allowing for pupils' differing learning needs. All pupils received the same introduction, which was usually carefully presented, but pupils were frequently kept sitting on the carpet for too long so that they became restless and inattentive, instead of allowing more flexibility. On a few occasions teachers had insecure subject knowledge, pointing up the need for more direct involvement by subject leaders at the time of lesson planning, for example in science. Marking is regular, and praise is usually used sensibly, but the practice of making comments to show how pupils may improve varies considerably. Some marking provides clear and focused guidance while much is a tick or general praise. A few teachers employ the good strategy selectively of confirming what a pupil has achieved through the work.
16. Teachers provide good personal care for the pupils which has a clear impact on their learning. They ensure that all pupils are included in discussions, questioning and activities, so that they are ready to learn. Within the reception classes for example, good relationships and management provide pupils with many opportunities for choice so that they are gaining independence. However, in the mixed-age classes in Years 1 - 2, more variety is required to meet the wide range in the children's stages of learning, particularly for the youngest children. By Year 6, the school's good support for pupils' personal development is demonstrated through many pupils' good levels of personal interest and concentration so that they often make good gains during lessons.
17. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good overall in Year 3 to 6. The implementation of national guidance for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The approach is still becoming established, however, and is yet to have a full effect on such basic skills as spelling. In general teachers give good attention in specific subject lessons to the teaching of a wide range of those basic learning skills: literacy, mental calculation, ICT and science investigation although the same attention is not always given to these skills in other subjects. Further attention is required to extend the writing of pupils in Year 3 and the lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2. Also, the teaching of reading is

not sufficiently focused in Years 1 and 2 to meet the differing levels of reading ability. In a few lessons, teachers do most of the talking, giving too little opportunity for pupils to explain their ideas or to reason. Teachers' expectations are not always made clear before group or individual work as to the quality or quantity of work expected, and expectations are not sufficiently high generally in the mixed age Year 1/2 classes. In all year groups, there are a few times when teachers' daily assessments and classroom strategies are not clear enough to help meet pupils' learning needs consistently.

18. Lesson planning is usually clearly set out. Notes include ideas on how tasks are to be adapted for pupils of differing attainment. The lesson planning format includes headings for different teaching strategies but on most occasions these are ticked generally rather than considered for a particular part of a lesson. Learning intentions for the whole class are clearly identified but these are seldom adapted, for example to indicate the extended learning and further challenge for higher attaining pupils. On a few plans teachers set out the expected time for parts of lessons, but this good practice is not shared since several introductory sessions are too long. This makes the time available for pupils to become engaged in group or individual work too short for good quality.
19. The teachers use teaching strategies that are usually effective in extending pupils' understanding. This was shown, for example, in a practical demonstration on the senses by testing crisps in Year 1/2 science or by high level questioning that gets the pupils to think - about how to plot points in all four quadrants of a graph. Discussion times are used effectively to check and assess pupils' understanding. Teachers arrange pupils well to work in differing groups which helps both their social development and learning. Resources are used well in most lessons and they are generally matched to pupils' needs. Most class discussion sessions at the end of lessons are used carefully to reinforce pupils' understanding, although a few of these are too brief to be of real value. Teachers provide suitable homework for pupils to consolidate their learning.
20. Teachers' good management of the pupils and firm behaviour strategies are effective in most lessons, and maintain a good work focus. Learning support assistants are frequently very perceptive in their handling of pupils, encouraging them through their quiet support to concentrate and take a good part in the tasks.
21. Teachers plan well for pupils with SEN and they receive good support from teaching assistants. In Year 3 where there is a high proportion of pupils with SEN an extra support assistant is deployed and teaching is shared between the class teacher, who is also the special needs co-ordinator, and the headteacher. In most classes teachers plan and prepare tasks and resources matched to pupils' special needs. For example, for reading tasks, some pupils are provided with enlarged or simplified versions of texts; or a printed version of a hand-written document in history. Learning support assistants engage pupils well in dialogue, ensuring that they understand, and enabling them to join in whole class discussion. Pupils with SEN also benefit from additional individual or small group support for handwriting, spelling and reading. Sessions are short, well-paced and pitched appropriately so that pupils can achieve a high level of success which boosts low self-esteem.
22. Pupils learning English as an additional language are helped to learn from classroom strategies such as questioning employed by their teachers. Pupils and staff also gain from teaching materials and multi-cultural resources that are a developing feature in the school.

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

23. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. It meets all statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Religious Education is taught to all classes according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus, with sufficient time which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school follows the nationally agreed frameworks for literacy and numeracy with satisfactory effect. The school has adopted national guidance for other subjects, and is adapting them to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. The teachers mostly make a good choice of activities for the pupils so that they have good learning opportunities to gain new skills and experiences.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they have full access to the curriculum. Pupils are well supported in class by teachers and teaching assistants. They also receive additional help for reading, spelling, handwriting, and some for behavioural difficulties. All class teachers contribute and



refer to pupils' Individual Education Plans and pupils make good progress towards their agreed targets. Support is mainly in class although some pupils are withdrawn for brief periods of time for additional literacy support. Teachers ensure that this does not impede progress in other subjects. Pupils with English as an additional language also receive good support in class. Although initially the school did not identify any pupils at the early stages of learning English, individual language programmes are provided when required.

25. A key issue from the previous inspection was the development of pupils' spoken and written English across subjects. Time has been allocated during the school week for discrete writing workshops and speaking and listening lessons. There have been clear improvements in written expression. By Year 6 pupils are producing more extended pieces of writing that are fluent and neatly presented. They are able to use a variety of formal and informal styles, adapting their language so that it is appropriate for a particular purpose or audience. Speaking has also improved, pupils often giving extended explanations and using appropriate vocabulary. However, the opportunities provided in lessons reserved for speaking and listening are not always as good as in some other lessons, both in the Literacy Hour and in other subjects, and the productive use of this time needs reviewing. Policies have also been introduced to improve pupils' spelling and handwriting. It is too early to see the full impact of these policies, but evidence suggests that in some junior classes that did not receive formal instruction earlier in the school there are still inconsistencies in handwriting and common spelling errors are still occurring.
26. The numeracy curriculum enables pupils generally to gain a secure grasp of the skills, and a good range of strategies for calculation is included through the years. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2, for example, can explain several ways to check whether a number is odd or even. Lessons follow the pattern recommended in the national strategy with an introductory mental activity. In a few lessons these activities are too short and the approach does not challenge all pupils across the wide range of ability. There is a mostly consistent emphasis on confident calculation through the school, although at times teachers do not plan to spend enough time on reinforcing basic methods before moving to more complex examples.
27. The school has made good improvements in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Overall, the quality of the curriculum offered to the children gives them a good start to school life. The two classes plan and work very closely together, and share one room with immediate access to a fenced outdoor learning area. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Curriculum planning is detailed and follows the recommended framework for Foundation Stage children. The day follows a very carefully designed routine, which teachers plan to adapt during the year to prepare children for literacy and numeracy periods in Year 1. A satisfactory new system for assessment has just been introduced.
28. Concerns were raised in the previous inspection report that the curriculum was not always adapted effectively to meet the needs of the full range of ages and different levels of attainment in mixed age classes. This is no longer a problem in Years 5 and 6 where differing needs are met well through careful planning and a variety of activities and resources. The management in the Foundation Stage is good but the school has not fully resolved the need for further development in Years 1-2, particularly in the first term of the school year, for example by allowing more time for pupils to adjust to the transfer from the reception classes. By contrast the teaching of phonics to groups organised by prior attainment and identified spelling needs in these years is very good.
29. Appropriate policies are in place and have been agreed with parents and governors for sex and drug education. These are taught as part of a well-planned and effective programme for personal, social and health education throughout the school. There are also several examples of curriculum enrichment. An interesting innovation is Task time for pupils in Years 1 and 2 where pupils select their own self-directed tasks that encourage independence and personal enquiry. There is also a good range of extra-curricular activities including clubs for art, computers, dance, drama, football, circuit training, recorders and an environmental club. All classes also have the opportunity to develop an area of the school garden. Virtually all Year 6 pupils attend residential courses in the Isle of Wight, and all Year 4 pupils have applied to attend a similar course at Graffham Water.
30. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. There are good links with local nurseries and pre-school playgroups and at secondary level with the Village College which shares some training days. Pupils have visited local old people's homes and a centre for learning difficulties to give concerts, and have invited residents back to school. There are good links with local churches. The Parish Council

presented a prize for the environment and geography for pupils' suggested improvements to the village. The village is used as a learning resource for history, geography and ICT: pupils producing digital photographs and maps. Local doctors, vets, the fire service and parents have visited to give talks, for example one parent explaining about the festival of Divali.

## **Personal development**

31. Although the school does not plan specifically for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, provision is good overall. Social development is a particular strength.
32. Provision for spiritual development is now good, showing an improvement since the previous inspection. This is a community where individuals, their opinions, talents, faiths and backgrounds are treated with respect and sensitivity. Good planning for assemblies ensures that sufficient time is given to collective worship. This is broadly Christian based but members of other religions are sometimes welcomed to lead an assembly; or an important day in the year of another faith is celebrated. Pupils understand that this is a time to display respect so the atmosphere is calm and reflective as they participate in consistently well-led assemblies centred round a theme for the week such as water. Improvement in religious education means that the subject is now in a better position to contribute to pupils' spiritual development with pupils showing particular respect for displays and artefacts of significant world faiths. The school teaches the importance of major, common milestones in life and believes that 'children should hear truths.' Birth is celebrated but death and its impact is also acknowledged and quiet times, for example during personal, social and health education lessons (PSHE) are set aside for discussing emotions. Some moments in lessons provide a sense of wonder. Children in reception watched wide eyed as they learnt about Divali from a visitor. 'You look beautiful' one child told his teacher as she was dressed in a sari. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed an excitement in new learning as they discovered they had language to describe mathematical shapes. The good display throughout the school not only lifts the spirits but acknowledges and celebrates achievement in many areas.
33. The good provision for moral development has been maintained. This is reflected in an orderly community where pupils learn positive behaviour from an early age. Good opportunities for discussion about feelings and issues such as drugs, bullying or racism help ensure that unacceptable incidents are kept to a minimum. Personal targets support positive behaviour. These include encouraging pupils to move away from potentially volatile situations or to tell an adult about a worry. Pupils are well aware of consequences and help devise a code of conduct for each class. Rules include 'try your hardest, 'act sensibly' and 'don't distract others.' Opportunities within the curriculum are taken well to reinforce moral development. For example, pupils keep to the rules in team games. They understand that many stories have a moral. In a particularly good geography lesson they learnt that everything in life has to be paid for in one way or another and that sometimes compromise is inevitable.
34. Provision for social development has improved significantly in the last two years and is now very good. Pupils are given responsibilities from an early age. The youngest children are watched as they carry the register carefully across the playground, other pupils act as monitors, being responsible for areas of the classroom and the oldest pupils befriend and sometimes work with younger pupils. The high number of clubs, especially for sport, instils a sense of community and responsibility especially when pupils represent Melbourn against other schools. Pupils negotiate with staff about which charity to support, alternating yearly between national and local charities, with the RNIB currently being supported. They are responsible for fund raising and for advertising the events. Membership of the school council teaches pupils the rights and responsibilities of citizenship as well as giving them an insight into negotiation and how to present an argument. They are conscious that the actions they take will have an effect on their peers. Almost all lessons provide good opportunities for pair or group working, with pupils learning to represent their group as they feed back to the whole class. The school is particularly successful in providing very positive residential experiences that give very good opportunities for support and enrichment across many areas of the curriculum but also teach pupils to live together and cope as individuals and a group in unfamiliar surroundings. Recent productive visits have been to Graffham Water and Llandudno. The school and the local community benefit each other with pupils visiting a residential home and making use of local facilities and residents contributing their experiences to the school so that youth and experience learn from one another. The school makes additional provision for pupils who find difficulty in a variety of social situations to work in small groups on specific tasks.
35. The school makes satisfactory provision for cultural development and for the preparation of pupils for life in a culturally diverse society. Pupils have good opportunities for learning about the music of a wide

range of cultures, although planning seldom identifies opportunities for multi-cultural experience specifically. Visitors from ethnic minorities and representatives of many faiths enrich the curriculum, as do visits to several places of worship. However, there is little influence of the work of artists other than white European and there are no visiting artists or craftspeople or visits to galleries or museums. Books reflect cultural and ethnic diversity and pupils learn traditional stories and nursery rhymes. There are few visits or visitors to enrich English, drama and dance. The school has made good progress in providing artefacts, displays and teaching about major world religions and other areas of the world.

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

36. Melbourn school takes good care of its pupils. There are regular fire practices, Health and Safety matters are dealt with effectively when identified and there is adequate provision for recording and dealing with minor accidents. Procedures for dealing with Child Protection issues are good, including further training which is planned for all adults who work in the school. Appropriate attention is paid to internet safety.
37. The management of pupils' behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good overall. Teachers make good use of other adults in lessons by ensuring that learning support assistance is well directed according to pupils' identified social or academic needs, so the tendency for pupils to become disengaged in lessons has been effectively reduced. Teachers establish good relationships with their pupils, which both promotes pupils' learning and contributes to their well-being. By targeting different kinds of questions at appropriate pupils and by organising the pupils to do different tasks or use different resources, teachers take care to ensure that all pupils find their work interesting. Classes which include pupils of the whole range of attainment within two year groups require a wide range of different work and teachers are usually, but not always, successful in providing this at appropriate levels to match the needs of all pupils. Specific provision for pupils with special educational need is aimed both at those who are identified as having problems and those who are more able than expected, enabling pupils of all levels of attainment to make good progress.
38. The support for pupils with specific educational needs is very good. For example, pupils entering the school from special units or with speech and language difficulties have been particularly well supported by specialists and through therapy continued in school. Such provision includes the installation of a shower, dietary support and regular visits from nurses.
39. Teachers have very good procedures and oversight to monitor the personal development of pupils, for example through frequent discussion at staff meetings. A suitable range of records is kept so that teachers are able to provide meaningful targets for pupils' personal development as well as for English, mathematics and science. Pupils' responsibility is developed from an early age by ensuring they play a part in many aspects of school life, from tidying up in lessons to participating in the school council or charity events.
40. The school has satisfactory procedures for encouraging full attendance. Parents are made aware of its importance and good attendance is among the positive behaviours that are recognised by a range of awards. These awards are worthwhile because they are valued by pupils and parents. Pupils' personal development is greatly enhanced by their participation in clubs and visits, particularly the two residential visits which virtually all pupils enjoy in Years 4 and 6.
41. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and have contributed to the raising of standards. The school effectively tracks pupils' progress using the results from baseline assessment, diagnostic reading tests and both statutory and optional national assessment tests. Pupils are set targets for literacy, numeracy and one other area that might relate to academic subjects or might be for personal development. Targets are reviewed every week and discussed more formally with individual pupils every five weeks.
42. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is good in Years 3 to 6. The systems are in place in Years 1 and 2 but are not being used as effectively. Learning objectives and skills are identified in teachers' medium term plans. Teachers then identify during their weekly planning meetings which tasks will be used to assess which skills or objectives. These are reviewed at the end of the week and planning is adjusted accordingly. At present, although teachers are aware of pupils' differing attainment in Years 1 and 2, the activities they plan are not always meeting the wide range of needs.

43. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Every pupil has a Weekly Review Book that contains their targets and records of behaviour, attitude and achievement. Pupils are encouraged to make their own assessments, recording what they have enjoyed doing, something new they have learned and something that has really worried them. Foundation and Year 1 pupils complete these orally, in groups; all other pupils from Year 2 complete them for themselves. Targets are reviewed and shared with parents at termly meetings. Specific details of the nature of their needs, actions required and evaluations of the effectiveness are recorded in Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs, and their progress reviewed every half term. The great majority of these plans are very specific, but a few are less detailed in their identification of teaching methods and resources. The plans have all been transferred this school year to a 'School Action' format as required by the new Code of Practice and now need to be checked.

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

44. The school has effective links with the parents that are shown through the high levels of agreement to most statements in the questionnaire. This shows continuing good relationships with parents and that parents continue to express positive views about most aspects of what the school does. Most parents find that the school expects their children to work hard; they are satisfied by the progress their children make and the standards they achieve. They feel well informed about their children's academic progress and personal development and are very confident that the school is approachable if they require any further information. Parents also have confidence in the standards of teaching and management at the school. They believe that the school is effective at helping pupils to mature, so behaviour is good and they report that their children enjoy school. A few parents question the amount of homework provided, and a significant minority are less than satisfied with the activities provided outside lessons. Inspection findings support the parent's positive views of the school, but the amount and nature of work provided for pupils to do at home was found to be appropriate for the ages of these pupils. The range of extra-curricular activities is unusually good for a primary school.
45. Communication between parents and the school is good. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented and parent-friendly, providing essential information and giving a good feel of what the school is like. Annual reports meet statutory requirements fully. They present parents with clear information about what their children know, understand and can do in English, mathematics and science and also indicate appropriate areas where each pupil should focus their efforts to improve. Parents are also informed about their children's work in all other academic subjects and in personal, social and health education. Teachers make useful observations and comments about pupils' personal development (such as how sociable they are), sometimes suggesting targets. The school has solicited the views of parents and former pupils and taken action in the light of these findings. For instance, there is now a fortnightly newsletter as well as the constant flow of letters home, so parents are kept well informed of forthcoming events.
46. The contribution by parents to their children's learning is satisfactory, since most parents support their children's learning by listening to them read at home or discussing homework, although fewer are involved within the school. A useful number of parents help on school outings, including the residential visits, which benefit greatly from their support. Sometimes parents provide valuable input to lessons, such as a parent who entranced young pupils with clothing, stories and pictures about Divali. Parents also support the school through the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association which provides valuable funds to support school resources.
47. Communication with parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good. A fact sheet is provided that explains what 'School Action' is. Both pupils and parents contribute to Individual Education Plans and are invited to annual reviews of statements. Parent groups to help support literacy at home have been run by a specialist support teacher. When appropriate parents have been put in touch with social services or school nurses.

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

48. The headteacher provides very good personal leadership and is giving the school very clear direction. The headteacher and senior management team together provide good leadership and management based on

- good, well-considered management principles. This is a good improvement since the last inspection in June 2000. The headteacher has established a good team spirit and cohesion amongst the staff that is enabling the school to tackle positively areas for improvement. He has a good insight for both immediate and longer-term priorities, and applies very good principles to ensure that all members of staff are included and that their views are taken fully into account. With the governing body he has made decisions that are having a clear, positive impact on the quality of work and are beginning to show through standards in the school. This is exemplified particularly in the strong leadership now provided by the structure of the senior management team. They have rightly identified staff professional development and having a well-structured curriculum supported by subject leaders as amongst the priorities. The procedures and support arrangements introduced by the headteacher are encouraging the whole staff to work together and to share a clear vision for the school.
49. National guidance is now in place to provide structure and progression in all subjects, and the school is adapting it to be relevant for the children. The headteacher has introduced formal assessment procedures to track pupils' progress and these together with improving teacher assessments are being used effectively for further planning. Performance management is well established and the agreed targets are part of a wider system to monitor teaching and provide support where weaknesses are identified. The subject leaders have a strengthened role, for example in monitoring planning, lessons and pupils' work, which is having a clear positive impact on learning.
50. The headteacher and governing body have prepared a school management plan which takes full account of weaknesses identified at the last inspection, and consolidates and builds upon recent decisions. The priorities are clearly set out, having been identified through good procedures that include all members of the school community, and reflect the headteacher's analysis of strengths and weaknesses. The school recognises that further work is required to strengthen management and support in the infant classes; and that further improvement is needed in pupils' spelling, writing skills and other learning skills. The school has established a good level of effectiveness since the last inspection through the headteacher's determination and open approach. The school has a growing understanding of the need to have evaluation as an integral part of school life.
51. The governing body is influential in shaping the direction of the school and fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors make good use of training opportunities to become familiar with their responsibilities and apply them effectively in their decisions. They have established good procedures to visit the school with a clear focus, having productive links with subject leaders. They are generally well informed of the school's needs, strengths and weaknesses through their discussion and reports. The governors convey a good sense of commitment to the school and are taking an active part in shaping its direction. They have a clear view of financial priorities, having for example put additional funding into the reception year and increased classroom support in Year 3 to meet identified needs.
52. The headteacher has established staff appraisal and performance management to clarify the expectation and accountability on all teachers related to their levels of responsibility. This, together with the arrangements to monitor teaching, is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and hence on standards. The headteacher was working with a management structure that did not meet the needs of the school at the time of the last inspection, hence the need for improvement. With the governing body, he appointed highly committed senior teachers to give a cohesion and direction to the work of the school that is now successful.
53. The identified developments have been budgeted for carefully with a clear time-scale. The school's financial planning takes good account of identified needs. The governors' finance committee sets a balanced budget based on priorities, with a prudent carry-forward figure. The headteacher and governors have established good oversight of the finances and budget and are supported well in this by the school's finance officer. They seek to obtain best value when considering improvements and efficiency, taking careful account of the intended impact on standards. Money obtained through the standards fund and other specific grants is used effectively for its designated purpose. Funding for special educational needs is prudently and well used. The financial control is very good, although the school is still becoming familiar with a new finance package.
54. There is a good level of teachers and support staff to provide for the pupils' learning and to cover the curriculum. The teachers have been deployed well to ensure that their expertise is used to full effect. The general support assistants and special needs staff are deployed effectively and make a considerable contribution to pupils' progress, particularly of those pupils with special educational needs. Induction procedures are good, and newly qualified staff are given good support. The administrative staff provides a

very efficient, friendly and reliable service. The school's site manager and the cleaning staff ensure that the school is cleaned and maintained to a good standard. Resources are satisfactory overall, and good in English and religious education. They have a generally positive impact on learning through the teachers' choice and use of relevant materials, such as those provided for the weekly "task" activities. There have also been several good recent improvements such as the ICT and library suite.

55. The accommodation has some strong features which have a positive effect on standards and a number of shortcomings, but is satisfactory overall. The hard surfaced playgrounds and grassed areas are good, and the school has a small swimming pool which is used fully during the summer months. Provision for the reception classes has been improved, including the fencing of an outdoor learning area, and this supports the children's learning well. However, the school is housed in four separate buildings, and this means that most pupils have to cross in the open for assemblies, ICT lessons, physical education and for school lunches. The teachers have created interesting displays of pupils' work which give a good sense of valuing their work. The arrangement to allocate a garden plot to each class has clearly resulted in some focused work as well as creating an attractive show alongside the new pathway, enabling some teachers to take pride in their garden's autumn display.
56. The leadership and management of special needs are good. The co-ordinator is a full-time class teacher, but also is given half a day per week for special needs administration. The co-ordinator organises the time-tabling and deployment of the learning support assistants. She meets with them formally every half term, as does the headteacher, but there is regular daily informal contact. The co-ordinator has led staff in-service on the new Code of Practice, has drafted a new SEN policy in the light of recent changes and is about to present this to governors. Class teachers have been fully involved in transferring Individual Education Plans for the pupils in their classes to the new School Action and School Action Plus format. They also completed School Action yearly reviews at the end of the last school year. Most documentation is maintained very efficiently. There is a clear improvement plan for special educational needs and inclusion that relates closely to the school improvement plan and school targets. SEN funding is used appropriately: the majority is spent on staffing, but some is made available each year for resources. The SEN governor is well informed and governors report annually to parents on SEN provision.

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

57. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of learning, the governors, headteacher and staff should give attention to the following.
- (1) Improve the current practice and focus for developing pupils' basic learning skills by: (Paragraphs 12, 14, 16, 24, 25, 72, 73, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 83, 84, 85, 92)
- ◆ Providing training to support every teacher's understanding of how children learn;
  - ◆ Reviewing, and then using, effective classroom strategies to promote learning, including those that encourage pupils' independence and research skills;
  - ◆ Applying teaching strategies consistently across subjects;
  - ◆ Improving attention to hand-writing, spelling and the vocabulary to be developed in lessons;
  - ◆ Supporting strategies that encourage pupils to write at length, to write extensively in all subjects, and to develop their dictionary skills;
  - ◆ Extending the use of ICT across subjects.
- (2) Improve the quality of learning and teaching, particularly in the mixed-age Years 1/2 classes to match the good quality found elsewhere in the school, by: (Paragraphs 12, 14, 18, 25, 28, 29, 76, 77, 88, 101)
- ◆ Providing additional leadership and management support in Year 1/2 classes that is as effective as that in the Foundation classes and in Years 3 - 6.
  - ◆ Reviewing the organisation and teaching in the core subjects to take account of pupils' stages of learning, in Year 1 especially.
  - ◆ Adding opportunities for children of similar attainments to work together.
  - ◆ Improving the approach and organisation for learning for pupils in Year 1.
  - ◆ Taking further account of the wide range of ages and abilities in the classes.
  - ◆ Improving the teaching of reading in Years 1 and 2 to meet differing levels of reading ability.
  - ◆ Clarifying the learning intentions of the Year 2 higher attaining pupils to ensure a good level of challenge.

- ◆ Employing teaching strategies that are listed in planning more selectively for identified parts of lessons.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	28	31	1	0	0
Percentage	1	15	39	43	1	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)		263
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		74

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.6

#### 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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	19	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	11
	Girls	15	15	16
	Total	26	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (94)	77 (94)	77 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	15	12
	Girls	15	16	17
	Total	27	31	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (94)	89 (97)	83 (97)
	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	21	12	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	21	21
	Girls	10	9	10
	Total	28	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (92)	91 (90)	94 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	21	21
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	27	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (92)	94 (95)	94 (100)
	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
217	0	0
1	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
35	0	0

The 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)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	27

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	207

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	524,027
Total expenditure	538,691
Expenditure per pupil	1,980
Balance brought forward from previous year	42,352
Balance carried forward to next year	27,688

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9
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	263
Number of questionnaires returned	100

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	39	3	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	2	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	58	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	56	6	1	6
The teaching is good.	47	50	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	50	5	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	32	1	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	31	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	48	46	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	39	58	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	50	1	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	39	25	1	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**

58. The school has improved the provision for children since the last inspection. Overall, the quality of the curriculum offered to the children gives them a good start to school life. Teaching is good overall and is at least satisfactory in all the areas of learning, and as a result learning is good and pupils achieve well. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
59. This year the school has invested heavily in developing the Foundation Stage. There are two very small classes, with two teachers and a full time support assistant. These classes are housed separately from the other year groups in one of the three school buildings. The classes work very closely together, and share one room with immediate access to a fenced outdoor learning area. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, and although the school recognises there is scope for improving the outdoor area further, it is adequate and used very effectively. Curriculum planning is detailed and follows the recommended framework for Foundation Stage children. The day follows a very carefully designed routine, which teachers plan to adapt during the year to prepare children for literacy and numeracy periods in Year 1. A satisfactory new system for assessment has just been introduced.
60. Although baseline assessments in previous years show attainment on entry to be a little above average, discussion with teachers and inspection evidence indicate that in the current year attainment overall is broadly average. Most children have attended playgroups before starting school during the autumn term of their reception year. Admission arrangements are good, and children are gradually introduced to full-time school. Children were just beginning their third week of full-time school during the inspection week. At this early stage no children had been formally identified as having special educational needs. Nevertheless, staff were already monitoring a number of children carefully, and giving good support where necessary.

### **Personal and social development**

61. Teaching in this aspect is very good, and is a significant strength. All children are making good progress and most are likely to exceed the expected standards by the time they reach Year 1. This represents good achievement and reflects the staff's very good understanding of the needs of young children. The development of confidence and independence is supported very well by the activities planned during the day. There is a very good balance of group and whole class teaching, tasks directed by adults and regular opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning. Children have settled confidently into school, and understand the routines. They tidy up efficiently at the end of activity sessions, taking care of equipment. Most are able to concentrate, work together in groups, take turns sensibly and listen to others in class sessions. The consistent approach from all the staff ensures that children understand what is expected of them. Staff encourage children to talk, listen carefully and value their ideas and efforts. Any potentially silly behaviour is managed skilfully, and children have a good understanding of right and wrong. The children's spiritual and cultural development is fostered effectively through stories such as the Diwali story, through discussions and the ethos of the classes.

### **Communication language and literacy**

62. Most children are likely to achieve the standards expected in all aspects of language and literacy. Teaching is good overall, and children are making good progress. Staff encourage children's speaking and listening skills during all activities. They listen carefully, question children about their work and give them time to answer fully. The most able children speak confidently and clearly but there are also some children whose speaking skills are below average. Children enjoy listening to stories and take books home every day from the class library. A few higher attaining children have begun to take books from the structured reading scheme. Phonics skills are taught and reinforced daily during two short sessions, and all children are beginning to recognise the shape and sound of letters. There is scope for teachers to place greater emphasis on showing children written words and sentences to ensure that early links are established between the reading, writing and speech. Some children attempt to write their names, although few form their letters correctly. Teachers demonstrate correct letter formation and guide those children who hold their pencils awkwardly. An "office" area and shop offer very good opportunities for independent writing.

## **Mathematical development**

63. Teaching in this aspect is good, and as a result most children are on track to meet and some to exceed the expected standards. Children readily take part in a variety of counting activities, and join in number rhymes and songs. There is a good emphasis on the development of mathematical language and some children use terms such as “more than” and “less than” while they work. Staff are generally quick to take opportunities to reinforce learning and to ensure that mathematics is introduced as a purposeful activity. Teachers take advantage of registration periods, for example, to introduce counting. The outdoor learning area is used particularly well to develop this area of learning. Activities such as skittles and building with large bricks are enjoyable as well as providing practice in counting and comparing. More able children are challenged appropriately. For example, with the teacher’s encouragement, a group of children correctly sorted a series of floor tiles numbered from one to twenty four.

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

64. Most children are on track to meet, and some to exceed the nationally expected standards in this aspect of learning. The quality of teaching is good overall, and children are making good progress. Activities are very carefully planned and are skilfully linked to capture the children’s imaginations while reinforcing learning. For example, the story of Rama and Sita provided a good stimulus for many activities including role-play and puppet making during the week. The children listened enthralled as a visiting parent told them about the Diwali festival, and showed them how a sari was worn. Children have good opportunities to develop skills in building and constructing, and most use the woodwork tools confidently. Teachers are skilled in building on children’s interests, for example when a child brought in a piece of lava, the teacher was effective in encouraging close observation and introducing new vocabulary. Both reception classes visit the computer suite for short lessons. In the one lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory, although not enough is done to ensure that less dominant children have a turn when sharing computers. Most children use the mouse confidently and some use a simple drawing program skilfully.

## **Physical development**

65. Teaching in this aspect of learning is good, and most children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the time they reach the end of the year. In general, children’s large motor skills are better than their fine skills with pencils and scissors. Although a few children use scissors competently, and have very good pencil control, many others find cutting out difficult and need guidance in developing a good pencil grip. The teachers plan a good range of purposeful activities to develop and reinforce these skills, and staff ensure that they support those children who need help. Indoor physical education lessons are taught well, and in a dance lesson the children moved expressively and with control. A variety of equipment in the outdoor area, including wheeled toys, supports learning in this area and children have good opportunities for vigorous outdoor play. However, there is currently no equipment for climbing and balancing.

## **Creative development**

66. All children are on track to meet the expected standards in their creative development. Teaching is good, and ensures that the children receive a wide variety of experiences. Role-play activities, linked with the Diwali story, reinforced learning and encouraged some of the more reticent children to take part in imaginative play. Staff use resources, such as masks and puppets, very effectively. Children handle glue, paints and paintbrushes with confidence. There is a good balance between direct teaching of skills, such as making clay pots, and giving children the opportunity to explore and experiment independently with materials. The children respond well to music, both in their movement lesson and when listening to contrasting pieces during a music lesson. They are given good opportunities to recognise and use a variety of percussion instruments, and they are taught a variety of songs and rhymes.

## **ENGLISH**

67. Despite great improvement in 2001, standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 were well below the national average for both reading and writing. Standards in the national tests by the end of

Year 6 in 2002 were above average, however, maintaining the improvement of the previous year. Evidence from the work seen in lessons, and from pupils' previous work, indicates that standards in English are average by Year 2 but below average, particularly in writing, in Year 3, supporting the results of national tests for these pupils the previous year. Standards in the work seen by Year 6 are above average. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4. It is good in Years 5 to 6 where pupils make good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language generally achieve in line with their year group. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress overall in relation to their targets.

68. Standards of speaking and listening in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory overall. Pupils of all abilities respond well to teachers' questions and listen very attentively in whole class and group sessions. They are able to explain what they enjoy when sharing a poem. They also make clear, confident suggestions for what items might be included in a poem about the contents of a teacher's or witch's pockets, with their reasons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are included well in discussions. Pupils with English as an additional language receive satisfactory support when required, and they take a full part in lessons. There are a few good examples of the application of pupils' speaking skills in other subjects, for example in history lessons where pupils presented and explained about their toys while others questioned them. There is satisfactory use of ICT although evidence shows that this is still a developing aspect.
69. Standards of speaking and listening are also satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Year 3 pupils give clear, extended explanations of features of non-fiction texts. Year 4 pupils listen very attentively to an audio-tape of the start of a children's novel, making judgements and predictions about characters, well supported with reasons. Year 5 and 6 pupils discuss the features of a newspaper article, clearly and confidently, using vocabulary precisely.
70. Standards of reading are good throughout the school and have improved since the last inspection. Year 2 pupils of all abilities read regularly and enjoy reading. They have the skills to locate information in information books using contents pages and the index. Higher attaining pupils read independently from challenging texts, coping well with difficult vocabulary. They have the skills to discuss characters and reasons for their actions referring to other parts of the story. Several average attaining pupils read fluently from their own choice of texts showing good understanding; others are less fluent and their understanding is more at a factual level. Several lower attaining pupils use a number of strategies to work out meaning, sounding out more difficult words. The least able have weaker word recognition skills and are limited to reading most frequently used words.
71. By Year 6 all pupils are able to discuss books, authors and preferences and talk confidently about them. They read regularly, and most of them with enjoyment. They have the skills to read independently from both fiction and non-fiction texts. Higher attaining pupils have an extensive vocabulary and understand inference well. Lower attaining pupils have the skills to recount the plot and content of books but are more hesitant. They do not always self-correct, nor read ahead in a sentence.
72. Standards of writing are satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 high attaining pupils are varying their sentences, punctuating mainly accurately and spelling all but unusual words correctly. Non-fiction writing such as a leaflet on 'How to Care for Fish' is well organised and sequenced using well-chosen vocabulary. Average attaining pupils write quite fluently but in relatively simple sentences and some spelling and basic punctuation is inaccurate. The writing of lower attaining pupils is well below average at the start of Year 2. Little is developed at any length; spelling is 'phonetic'; full stops are used inconsistently and small and capital letters are confused.
73. Standards in writing at the start of Year 3 are well below average. Some pupils are still printing or using a mixture of print and joined-up handwriting. There are no examples of pupils writing continuous, extended prose. Comprehension exercises are answered in single sentences. By Year 6 pupils have made good progress. Standards of writing are above average and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils are able to write for a range of purposes and audiences such as stories, poems, advertisements, leaflets, arguments, newspaper articles, using appropriate language for each. For example in a mock-scientific 'Alien Report' one pupil writes: "Thornton Science has unearthed a new form of life during a space experiment on Halenica. Essential to this mammal's diet is the Reptasnake...". Even low attaining pupils use vocabulary adventurously, if not always accurately. Punctuation is accurate and pupils are writing in increasingly complex sentences. Pupils are able to organise their writing into paragraphs, expressing themselves fluently and at length. Written work is neatly presented. Spelling, however, is still inaccurate with some errors based on simple spelling rules being repeated. There are also variations in handwriting

with some pupils printing, others using a joined-up style and some lower attaining pupils continuing to confuse capital and small letters.

74. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Spelling and phonics are taught well in different attainment groups for twenty minutes at the start of the Literacy Hour. The sessions are very well prepared, well resourced, taught at a good pace and a variety of strategies are employed to ensure all pupils are actively involved. For example one teacher checked pupils' spellings quickly by inviting them to write words on portable whiteboards; another captured their attention with a monkey glove puppet that made 'deliberate mistakes' for them to spot. They were also invited to re-arrange magnetic letters correctly. Pupils are grouped according to spelling needs and make good progress. Other strengths include the teachers modelling reading using a big book, or modelling writing in shared whole class sessions, asking for ideas from pupils, for example "What do I put at the end of a sentence?" Pupils are then able to try for themselves.
75. Less effective teaching occurred when the teacher did not ascertain whether all pupils understood, or could read a shared poem, before asking whether pupils liked it. In another lesson pupils were expected to share poems with others from memory, no copies of the poems being available. A few examples of teaching did not address the needs of the differing attainment and ages in the class. On a few occasions teachers' questions did not stretch higher attaining or older pupils. Tasks set for lower attaining pupils did not sufficiently reinforce reading and writing skills. For example these pupils were encouraged to draw picture webs with no expectation to add word labels or even initial letters to them.
76. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good, ranging from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers' questioning is skilful and includes pupils of all abilities insisting that pupils use the appropriate vocabulary. Teachers also effectively demonstrate reading and writing in whole class shared sessions. For example one teacher used a big book and an enlarged fact sheet to help pupils to identify the main features of an information text. Another used an overhead transparency to highlight and make notes on features of newspaper articles. Others demonstrated how to write a play-script. In each case pupils were well prepared to continue to read or write independently. The most effective lessons are very well planned to meet differing needs and levels of attainment. In a lesson aiming to teach pupils to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction texts, higher attaining pupils were expected to skim and scan through a selection of books. Average attaining pupils read and compared shorter extracts independently; lower attaining pupils compared shorter extracts with the help of a learning support assistant. Because tasks were carefully structured, all pupils were able to show understanding of the differences between the texts and to report back their findings. Another feature of the most effective lessons is the teacher's infectious enthusiasm that is shared by the pupils.
77. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Most of the key issues for improvement, identified at the last inspection, have been addressed or are being addressed. The National Literacy Strategy is better understood and has been fully implemented. Marking and assessment are greatly improved. All pupils have literacy targets that they understand and which are regularly reviewed. Teachers' planning is monitored regularly and is more consistent. The co-ordinator also observes lessons and ensures a better understanding of shared standards. Extra time has been made available to encourage individual, independent reading, and writing workshops. These are clearly contributing to raised standards. However there is a continued need for improvement in some areas. Although the school has introduced policies to improve spelling and handwriting, the impact is not yet apparent, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Some teachers are not insisting on correct posture or pen grip or providing guidelines so that letters are of the correct height. Although key vocabulary is displayed and referred to in some classes, this is not practised consistently. The school has also identified time for discrete speaking and listening lessons but these need reviewing and possibly more guidance for less experienced teachers. For example, in one lesson the opportunities for more able Year 1 and Year 2 pupils to speak were limited. In another Year 4 class pupils were expected to write and to read aloud, but were not given an opportunity for improvised role-play and inventive oral work. The use of ICT to support and extend pupils' English skills is not yet fully exploited. Teachers also need more guidance in how to meet the widely differing needs and ages in mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection and are above average, through the impact of good quality teaching. Achievement by the time the pupils leave the



school is good. This is the result of very good teaching in the Years 5 and 6 classes. The standards achieved by the end of Year 2 remain broadly similar to the national average. Although learning in lessons observed during the inspection in the mixed Year 1 and 2 classes was satisfactory overall, partly because of the nature of the activities, planning is not always focused sharply enough to provide for the very wide ability range within these groups.

79. Results in the national tests at Year 2 and Year 6 vary considerably from year to year. In 2002 results were lower for both groups than those achieved the previous year. School data shows very clearly that the Year 6 pupils made very good progress during their final year in the school. The school exceeded the targets set for this year. Year 2 results were significantly lower than the good results achieved in 2001. However, inspection evidence indicates that this reflects the number of lower attaining pupils in this year group. Pupils who have English as an additional language generally achieve in line with their year group. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress overall in relation to their targets.
80. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some very good lessons taking place in Year 6. Pupils are organised according to ability during Years 5 and 6 and this allows the teachers to focus on a somewhat narrower range of ability. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils quickly became confident in working with co-ordinates in all four quadrants. The pace of the lesson was brisk, but the teacher's explanations were very clear and systematic and he carefully summarised learning before pupils began any tasks. As a result all pupils happily used negative numbers on both axes. The teacher extended the highest attaining pupils very effectively by setting a much more challenging activity. In some lessons, the teachers' explanations are not as clear and they do not spend enough time on reinforcing basic methods before moving to more complex examples. This happened in a Year 4 lesson, where many average attaining pupils became confused once they tried to apply a new strategy for multiplication. A group of lower attaining pupils coped well, by contrast, because the support assistant spent additional time on going over the method step by step. Support assistants are very effectively deployed in all lessons, and as a result individuals and groups make good progress towards their targets.
81. Pupils generally gain a secure grasp of the number system, and they are taught a good range of strategies for calculating mentally and on paper. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 could explain clearly different ways to check whether a number was odd or even. In most lessons teachers encourage pupils to explain their thinking and deal sensitively with those who make mistakes. Lessons follow the pattern recommended in the national strategy with an introductory mental activity. In some lessons these activities are too short and questions are not targeted well enough to challenge the wide range of ability within the groups. In the very large Year 4 class the teacher used a very effective strategy to include all pupils in answering questions about halving and doubling numbers. The pupils worked in two groups, with the support assistant providing easier questions for the less able group.
82. There is a very wide range of attainment within Years 1 and 2. A number of pupils in each class have started Year 1 with a limited understanding of number and frequently reverse their numbers when writing them. The highest attainers in Year 2 read and write numbers to 1000 quite competently and can count on in 2s, 3s, 5s and 10s to create number patterns. Teachers vary the work to accommodate different ability groups, usually providing for three different tasks. The activities are often not matched accurately enough to the wide range of needs within the classes. In a lesson where the teacher worked separately with groups from Year 1 and 2, higher attainers in Year 2 were extended effectively. Activities, however, were not sufficiently varied to challenge the potential higher attainers in the Year 1 group. In some lessons Year 1 pupils are held too long on the carpet, and some of them lose concentration.
83. Lessons are well organised and prepared. Shortcomings identified in the last inspection report, in relation to the overuse of worksheets, have been tackled. Teachers' behaviour management is good, and expectations are consistently high. Learning in the Year 3 class is slowed at times, however, because the teacher has to deal with a small number of boys with limited concentration spans. Mathematics work is carefully marked and teachers often add useful comments. However, there is scope for more attention to be paid to correcting basic spelling errors, and reinforcing literacy work.
84. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities in other subjects to use the skills learned in numeracy periods. A geography game gave Year 4 pupils the excellent chance to practise their skills in halving numbers as well as working out prices. In science pupils collect and present data in different ways and use and record a range of measurements. Although ICT is used in occasional lessons to support learning, this aspect of the subject needs development.

85. Management of the subject is good overall. Assessment procedures are good, and the co-ordinator analyses test results carefully to identify areas of weakness. The co-ordinator is a skilled practitioner, and has suitable opportunities to monitor and support teaching and learning.

## SCIENCE

86. Standards in the work seen in science are average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. This is an improvement at Year 6 and maintains the position at Year 2 since the last inspection. Standards in the national tests at Year 2 for 2002 by teachers' assessments show that pupils' performance was average, with a much lower percentage gaining the higher level 3 than usual. Standards in the national tests of 2002 for Year 6 were in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. The trend in science at Year 6 is similar to the upward national trend. Pupils are making appropriate progress and achieve as expected overall, except that within Years 5 and 6 pupils make good progress through a combination of good teaching, pupils' personal development and effective monitoring. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school.
87. By the end of Year 2 pupils have had opportunities to learn about a good range of topics, covering all aspects of the National Curriculum for science so that the subject meets statutory requirements. In the lessons observed, the teachers established pupils' attention and interest well by discussing what they recalled about the senses. Careful questioning brought out simple ideas of how objects may be identified by taste, touch and so on. Most pupils know the parts of the body giving this information and what they should experience. The practical work that followed provided pupils with good opportunities to listen to a crisp cracking, for example, or to describe its surface as bumpy, making good links with their spiritual experiences as they showed delight in the sounds. The higher attaining pupils demonstrated good knowledge which they expressed clearly. The pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contributed positively to their learning since they concentrated well on the task and enjoyed the challenge. Most pupils collaborated well together. All pupils took part, although there was insufficient freedom for pupils to explore the materials through their own choices since the activities were carefully controlled by the teachers. Pupils with special needs made good progress with support. Pupils' previous work shows that they have a good range of practical experience and have an early understanding of the need to be methodical and to record their results. Standards overall are average across all aspects of the subject.
88. In Year 4, pupils had the opportunity to discuss then investigate materials and their properties. Through the teacher's focused questioning and thorough discussion, many pupils suggested relevant properties such as flexible or opaque - indicating sound knowledge of materials. The very good teaching strategy of having pupils describe what they can feel of an object inside a bag emphasised well the need for knowledge as well as accuracy. Most pupils have an early understanding of the need to use properties of materials for the job they are to do, such as that bicycle tyres need to be flexible, or that a crash helmet needs to absorb force. The very good interactive teaching style promoted good learning as pupils examined real objects for useful properties.
89. Within the Year 5/6 classes pupils studied how electrical circuits are made and the effects of varying components. Nearly all pupils recognise the common symbols and have the skills to draw out a diagram as well as make it with components. The higher attaining pupils have a good understanding. Overall, the teachers' good practical approach and thorough discussions led to good understanding, although some explanations about the effects of varying components indicated the need for further discussion. There is also a tendency amongst some teachers to ask questions to elicit a correct answer rather than to encourage discussion and reasoning.
90. Pupils' previous work in all years shows a good practical basis to promote their learning. There is a good selection of investigations, set out with methods, results and interpretations. For example, pupils have covered work on differing food values, micro-organisms, materials, plant and animal growth. The pupils' good attitudes and behaviour are positive influences on their learning since they are keen to take part and to learn. Pupils' previous work shows full coverage of the curriculum, with good attention to practical investigation. The use of ICT within science is satisfactory, but could be extended.
91. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress overall in relation to their targets and pupils who have English as an additional language generally achieve in line with their year group. Teachers ensure that all pupils are included in the tasks through their questioning and management, although there is insufficient attention to helping pupils to pose their own questions. The subject makes a good contribution to several aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the social group work and sense of excitement, for example, as pupils listen to crisps snapping.
92. Teaching and learning are good for science overall, although there is variation from very good to satisfactory. Pupils' work is marked, with some developmental comments, which are good by a few

teachers. Teachers usually manage pupils' behaviour well and positively, making clear their expectations. Teachers give good attention to how literacy and numeracy may support science, for example in the clear focus on vocabulary. The use of ICT to support pupils' understanding of science is under-developed.

93. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory support. She has had the opportunity to observe lessons, and makes good use of these to form a view of provision and how the subject may develop. She has ensured that the curriculum is fully in place, and that resources are well organised for easy collection. She also monitors lesson planning, giving helpful feedback. She also sees samples of pupils' work and checks standards through looking at test results. There is a satisfactory level of resources.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

94. Standards in art and design have been maintained since the previous inspection and remain in line with those expected by the time the pupils reach Years 2 and 6. Art is taught in alternate half terms, and no art lessons took place during the week of the inspection. Judgements on attainment are therefore based on displays of work, sketchbooks and on discussions with pupils.
95. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have satisfactory opportunities to experiment with different techniques and materials. They use pencils to develop line and texture, and to respond to different moods and stimuli. One group, for example, had illustrated windy and rainy days. In one class, pupils had responded very well to some work by Andy Warhol, creating colourful portraits. Sketchbooks clearly illustrate satisfactory progress over time as pupils move through Years 1 and 2. Similarly skills in colour mixing become more advanced. Samples of work from previous years indicate that pupils are offered an appropriate range of experiences, for example printing and working with fabrics.
96. During Years 3 to 6, teachers build appropriately on the work covered in the infant classes. Techniques such as colour mixing and drawing are reinforced and extended. Finished work is carefully finished. For example, Year 4 pupils had worked carefully with watercolours to produce effective still life pictures of fruit. Pupils in some classes use their sketchbooks to practise techniques, but these books could be used more consistently to collect and develop ideas. Teachers make learning more interesting by emphasising links with other subjects. Work in Years 5 and 6 this term was effectively linked with the history topic on Victorians. The pupils describe a satisfactory experience of different techniques and materials, including some 3-dimensional work. Sketching skills observed in the design and technology lessons are generally good. In discussion the pupils demonstrate a good understanding of their recent work on perspective. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the work of a few artists, such as Dali and Seurat, although their experience of non-western art influences is limited. Although pupils have made some use of ICT in their work, this is also an area for development.
97. It was not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. However, the work seen indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. Pupils continue to have positive attitudes towards art and are confident that their work is valued. Displays in classrooms and round the school are of a consistently good quality, and generally make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
98. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator has made a good start by checking planning, auditing the resources and identifying areas for improvement.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. Attainment in design and technology for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with that expected nationally. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and enables pupils to demonstrate sound achievement and progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are given a good level of support, and as a result they are fully included in the lessons and their progress is often good. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is at least good and at times very good, and ensures that pupils develop a sound understanding of the purpose of products and consider the aesthetic qualities of commercial artefacts before they develop their own designs.

100. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a satisfactory range of skills to design and make artefacts using a range of materials including cardboard and textiles. The weekly “task” activities offer pupils a good opportunity to practise their skills independently. Pupils show a satisfactory range of making skills. They understand the need to plan their work and to evaluate it when they have finished. In the design and technology lessons, pupils were initially very excited by the variety of puppets they were given, but settled down to look at how they were made. With the teachers’ guidance, most pupils were able to identify the materials used and to describe the way in which the puppets worked.
101. Teachers in all year groups used a very good range of resources as they introduced pupils to a new unit of work. Year 3 pupils looked carefully at a variety of purses as they prepared to make a container for Christmas chocolate coins. Higher attaining pupils created careful and detailed drawings and most pupils have realistic ideas for their designs. Pupils in this lesson benefited considerably from the help of a very able support assistant who circulated, ensuring that all pupils were fully focused on the task. In their planning, teachers identify appropriate subject vocabulary and they are generally careful to encourage pupils to use the words as they describe artefacts. By Years 5 and 6 pupils are encouraged to spend longer in considering the function of products. Lessons were very effectively linked with the history topic of Victorians and pupils spent time looking at modern footwear and subsequently examined pictures of Victorian boots and shoes. In one lively and interesting lesson the teacher was particularly skilful in encouraging pupils to communicate and justify their ideas. By the end of the sessions pupils had a secure understanding of the need to consider the function of a product when they start their design.
102. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The school’s medium term planning ensures that the required curriculum is covered. Provision to include ICT in some topics is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had a good opportunity to extend their understanding of structures by attending a schools’ activity day at Duxford during the summer.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103. Provision for geography is satisfactory overall which shows an improvement since the previous inspection when a number of weaknesses were identified. Very little geography was time-tabled during this inspection so judgements have been based on discussion with pupils and teachers as well as analysis of pupils’ work and observation of two lessons.
104. Standards of work are in line with those expected of pupils of similar age. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 observe that geography is ‘learning about the local area’, and ‘all the traffic.’ Pupils produce effective road maps of the area surrounding the school incorporating features such as road signs, trees, the church and steps, making up their own symbols. Pupils with special educational needs explain their maps to staff who interpret their work with helpful comments. Completing a traffic survey reinforces numeracy skills as well as developing understanding traffic calming measures and their need. Pupils identify the busiest roads and interpret bar and tally charts to show the incidence of a number of vehicles. They then use their knowledge to design a traffic calming system for the school. A study of transport on the Isle of Struay develops an understanding of differences between localities and the reasons for those differences.
105. Good research helps pupils in Years 3 to 6 reach nationally expected standards. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 identify an area in India and compare it with Melbourn. However, planning an air route from England to India using an atlas posed problems for several pupils who misunderstood the task. Pupils note differences and similarities in climate, crops, leisure and daily life and are able to extract relevant information from books to do this. All pupils with special educational needs achieve standards in line with their ability because of good support and because teachers give them specific tasks. By the end of Year 6 pupils show good knowledge of maps of different scales and their purposes. They read a four-figure reference grid system. They create their own symbols as well as recognising and understanding established keys. They know the purpose of contour lines and are able to give some reasons for areas of settlements. Pupils show good recall of work on rivers and use subject specific language associated with it. They describe erosion, meanders and flood plains and how all rivers lead to the sea. The standards of some pupils are constrained by the use of commercial materials, for example the water cycle instead of encouragement to record work independently. The good field trips during residential opportunities support attainment well in comparing areas such as Llandudno or Graffham Water with Melbourn.

106. No clear judgement can be made about teaching and learning overall because lessons were only observed for pupils in Years 3 and 4. However, from this and other evidence teaching and learning are likely to be satisfactory. Good opportunities for discussion and well chosen resources contributed positively to a satisfactory Year 3 lesson although not all pupils were on task during group work and many needed assistance with work. Teachers promote the development of numeracy and literacy well but the application of ICT through the use of CD-ROM or the Internet is under-developed. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and creativity were significant factors in the very good lesson that took place in a Year 4 class. He had devised a game using symbols for crops, medicine, money etc. which pupils exchanged with the 'banker.' This developed their knowledge and taught them the need for forward planning and compromise. A real sense of excitement pervaded the classroom with skills of numeracy, debate and negotiation being tested to the full as climatic conditions changed suddenly or the harvest failed. By the end of the lesson boys and girls had not only consolidated and advanced their learning about an area of India but they suggested very thoughtful improvements and additions to the game. Good team work with effective support staff contributed to the success of this lesson.
107. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school and the co-ordinator have largely addressed criticisms raised at the previous inspection. The school now has a scheme of work that meets requirements and teachers plan well together so that, for example, there is parity across parallel classes. The co-ordinator is a subject specialist and makes good use of his knowledge when observing colleagues teach or reviewing their planning or pupils' work. Assessment has improved although it does not yet include assigning levels to pupils' work. Although resources are better, they are only just satisfactory overall because they are only sufficient for the current cycle of work. An area for development is finding ways for pupils to record work. Although history and geography alternate on the timetable and have equal amounts of time, that is not apparent from the scrutiny of exercise books and displays.

## HISTORY

108. Standards at the last inspection were described as satisfactory. Standards and pupils' achievement are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 where attainment is average and good in Years 3 to 6. Attainment in Years 5 and 6 is above average. No written work was observed in Years 1 and 2 but pupils are beginning to recognise differences between past and present by comparing their own toys with those of previous generations. Through observation they have the skills to decide which are 'old' or 'new' by comparing their condition, what materials they are made from, and what makes them work such as clockwork or electric batteries. They are also beginning to understand about sources of information about the past such as their grandparents, museums, antique shops, books and the Internet.
109. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand about features of different periods such as the Tudors and Victorians. They are able to sequence correctly key dates and historic events. They understand reasons for change and key terms such as 'invaders' and 'settlers'. They organise and communicate their ideas very well, using appropriate vocabulary and writing fluently and accurately in topic books. They have the skills to research well from a range of sources, making their own notes and then writing extended reports in their own words. High and average attaining pupils are able to make connections and deductions based on their previous learning, for example about the Victorians, to interpret census information on Melbourn in 1881. They were able to suggest that the absence of some male members of households coincided with the Crimean War.
110. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory, in one lesson, to very good. In Years 1 and 2 teachers used their own toys and those of the pupils to stimulate questions, and to encourage pupils to make observations and to categorise the toys in different ways. Skilful questioning led the pupils to decide how they knew that toys were old or new, and then to consider how they might find out more about the past. In two very good lessons with Years 5 and 6, pupils were challenged to interpret 1881 census information. The lessons were very well planned with tasks appropriate to different levels of attainment. For example, high attaining pupils were expected to make inferences from pages from the original census. Average attaining pupils focused on the records of two particular families, using a typed version of the original manuscript. Lower attaining pupils were provided with a simplified version of the census and were invited to produce a census chart based on their own families. Pupils were also challenged to consider the reliability of evidence. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs, or those speaking English as an additional language, were very well supported by the teacher or learning support assistant. They contributed well to discussion and showed good understanding.

111. In every lesson pupils were very interested and actively involved in investigation and enquiry. In one lesson pupils even expressed disappointment when the lesson ended. Although some younger pupils needed more structure and support to help them talk to one another about their toys, the older pupils sustained concentration, listened very attentively and were able to work independently. When pupils presented their census entries based on their own families, other pupils were able quickly to spot differences with Melbourn in 1881. For example most people who lived in the village were born there or nearby, whereas their own parents came from other parts of Britain, or even other countries.
112. There is good curriculum coverage. Year 1 and 2 classes follow appropriate history topics every other half term; Years 3 to 6 follow term-long topics every other term. Assessment has improved greatly. At the start of each topic pupils and teachers ascertain what the pupils already know and what they hope to find out. Learning is then evaluated and reviewed at the end of the topic. The use of ICT in history is satisfactory, and developing as teachers gain confidence with using the ICT suite. All marking and assessment is related to specific and clearly shared history learning objectives. There is a good range of resources including artefacts, information books and photo-packs. The school also visits local historical sites such as churches and opportunities for historical enquiry are pursued on residential trips.
113. The co-ordinator took on the role in September. He has a clear idea of how the subject can continue to improve. He monitors planning and has observed some teaching in Years 3 to 6.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with the expectation for the age by Years 2 and 6, although this is still a developing subject and pupils' skills are becoming established. This maintains the position at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is also satisfactory, several lessons demonstrating good features such as the good choice of relevant tasks linked to history. The pupils' progress is satisfactory and, with access to the facilities of the ICT suite, pupils are often making good progress during the tasks. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets with support. The school has time-tabled a taught session for each class in the ICT suite, which ensures satisfactory subject coverage and development in skills, and pupils are now familiar with the routines of setting up a computer.
115. In Years 1 - 2, children are gaining new skills and understanding through focused teaching on relevant tasks. For example, they searched a wide selection of books, magazines, catalogues and other advertisements to explore how we find out information about things. Pupils' previous work shows adequate coverage and satisfactory skill in word processing, for example in making class labels for packed lunches, or using the 'shift' key to insert punctuation or brackets. They have produced simple booklets which provided good motivation, with such titles as 'The brand new dog'. They have demonstrated the skills to insert text into speech bubbles. By Year 2, children have satisfactory keyboard and mouse skills. They respond well with mostly good attitudes to the interest of their tasks.
116. In a lesson on simulation in Year 4, the teacher provided a thorough introduction to the initial steps required so that the pupils understood the approach. The pupils worked together well, taking turns and helping each other. They used the mouse neatly, with satisfactory skill, to click on the icons for jump or walk or turn, for example. Most pupils learnt quickly about the steps required, and several understood how to add a number as an estimate for how far the 'animated person' should walk. In a well-managed lesson making productive links between ICT and history, a Year 5/6 teacher brought out differences between using books and the Internet or a CD-ROM, and pupils recognised some of the advantages of searching for information electronically. The teacher provided a good demonstration of the skills and processes required to make a search, preparing pupils well. As a result, most pupils demonstrated satisfactory skills and understanding on how to set up Internet articles and to search for relevant information. The session provided good learning conditions for the pupils and future lessons are planned to extend pupils' independence in making a search. The high attaining pupils have good knowledge and skills. Pupils with special educational needs receive good, close support and made good progress in relation to their targets as a result.
117. Pupils' previous work indicates satisfactory skills and understanding, for example in preparing 'sports relief' posters using word processing or in modelling plans of streets where they lived, making suitable links with geography. Pupils have also produced a well-written newspaper report, placing digital

photographs of '2-goal hero' and 'match saviour' in position. Overall, pupils enjoy their work, and have good interest and attitudes. They co-operate well together. Several pupils tend to poke the keys, rather than use a good key-stroke style. Pupils' understanding and skills meet the expectation of ICT since the teachers' knowledge and confidence is enabling them to tackle worthwhile tasks and to extend their skills.

118. The subject leader provides good direction and support and is working hard to support colleagues to improve their confidence and use of ICT facilities. She has monitored some lessons and given advice on areas to improve. This and the training, which is arranged to continue, are helping to improve teachers' subject knowledge, indicating steady progress since the last inspection. The school is making some worthwhile links between ICT and other subjects but this is a developing aspect and is unsatisfactory overall. The assessment procedures for ICT are satisfactory, and pupils' recorded work has suitable comments and praise. Examples of recorded work show thorough teaching of ICT skills. The school meets statutory requirements for the subject. There have been improvements in the resources. However, at present the number of computers currently in the ICT suite can accommodate only half of a class so that teachers have to plan for alternative tasks for those not at the computers. This has advantages in providing good links between ICT and other subjects but also means that opportunities for pupils to practise their skills are more limited.

## **MUSIC**

119. Standards in music are average by both Years 2 and 6, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in developing their knowledge and skills. In a well-presented lesson in a Year 1/2 class the teacher helped the children to listen to the sounds around them, (though with the windows shut). Pupils identified a range of sounds and listened carefully. This prepared the pupils suitably to listen to contrasting music - the Elephants from The Carnival of Animals for example. Pupils made appropriate interpretations of the music, suggesting descriptive words such as calm, happy or fast, surprising. However, the teacher did not record these words to help pupils reflect on the qualities or differences, and to reinforce their learning. Most pupils have good attitudes and behaviour, which help them to concentrate and to listen appreciatively, although a few pupils act out the sounds.
120. In a lesson in Year 3, pupils were provided with suitable opportunities to play instruments or to act as a conductor. They demonstrated satisfactory skills in bringing other pupils in and in playing the instruments. They were able to develop the rhythm and pulse. While the lesson was carefully developed, there were missed opportunities to explore pupils' responses to the music. In a lesson for pupils in a Year 5/6 class, the teacher was well prepared with a selection of instruments to hand. His positive, interactive style promoted good interest in the pupils. Many explained the meaning of terms such as pitch or timbre, indicating a growing familiarity with musical terms. The introductory activity created a great sense of enjoyment as pupils simulated sounds they might hear in a Victorian factory, varying the pace and volume for different times of day. The main activity built on this well. Pupils chose instruments sensibly to represent likely sounds and recorded their sequences in a table, showing satisfactory skill in using symbols. They improvised their melodic and rhythmic phrases within the group performance. Their playing skills were satisfactory, a few pupils thinking about how to produce an attractive sound. The class teacher's very good control ensured their behaviour and attitudes were very good. His teaching strategies, for example of stopping pupils to share ideas, led to very good learning by the pupils and a high sense of purpose. Their interest and effort in trying to work together in groups led to good experience overall.
121. The subject leader provides good direction and support. The school has previously had several experienced music teachers on the staff and the benefit of their work is continuing in several ways. For example, the school produced 'Oliver' last summer, where all junior classes were involved. A drama club, which is one of the extra-curricular activities, formed the basis for the main actors and the production provided a good focus after the formal testing in the summer term. There is a choir and a few pupils are learning to play instruments such as the guitar, but the facilities of ICT are not yet used effectively for composition or musical appreciation. The school is adequately resourced. There is a clear policy for the subject that gives direction for planning. The school follows national and local guidance in the subject planning, which meets statutory requirements. The pupils benefit from hearing live music, for example when the peripatetic music service play to them for a session of brass, woodwind or strings.





## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

122. Standards in physical education are average by Years 2 and 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Improvement overall since the previous inspection is satisfactory although at that time standards were good at the end of Year 6. The school provides a good range of physical activities, especially for older pupils, which contribute well to pupils' social as well as physical development.
123. By Year 2 pupils are achieving standards that are broadly in line with other pupils of their age. Pupils recognise the physical changes brought about by exercises. They know it is important to warm up 'so you don't hurt your muscles.' In gymnastics movements are refined as pupils practise ways of rocking and their performance improves after observing their peers closely. They use space well and are aware of those around them. In small games situations they show good ball control as they dribble a ball between posts, then stop it before shooting. Behaviour is good and pupils listen well to instructions so time is spent on acquiring skills.
124. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have increasing opportunities to acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding of a broad range of activities. Pupils of all ages throughout the school benefit from swimming in the school's outdoor pool in summer. The oldest pupils also use facilities at the local Village College so that by the end of Year 6 virtually every pupil swims at least 25 metres. In gymnastics pupils perform a variety of jumping actions although standards are sometimes constrained by a lack of clear instructions so some work lacks precision and extension. Year 5 and 6 pupils enjoy the challenge of setting out apparatus as displayed in digital photographs. Relationships are very good so all pupils co-operate well to find the space to move over, under or beside apparatus discovering a number of points of balance. In games, Year 3 pupils throw and catch balls of different shapes with some accuracy but by Year 4 they pass balls at speed and suggest ways of modifying relay games. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 experience a number of sports and are able to transfer skills between them. For example, tactics and skills such as defending and dribbling learnt in football are reinforced during hockey practice. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their skills during the well attended clubs such as dance, circuit training or football. More able pupils represent the school in team games or athletics and pupils with special educational needs are well supported to achieve the best they can.
125. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and good overall for older pupils although there is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching leading to unsatisfactory gains in learning. Most teachers have good subject knowledge which instils confidence in pupils. All teachers manage sometimes large classes well so that lessons are pleasant experiences where boys and girls try hard and do their best. In a very successful gymnastics lesson for the oldest pupils, the teacher's high expectations of behaviour and work were well rewarded. Pupils recognised the strengths and weaknesses in work as peers demonstrated good starting positions before finding symmetrical and asymmetrical points of balance on the floor and apparatus. A parallel lesson was less successful because pupils' movement was hindered by inappropriate kit. In a games lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 learning was good because the lesson was well planned for pupils of differing physical development. In the unsatisfactory lesson insufficient learning took place because the teacher's instructions were unclear, time was not used well and performance was ragged.
126. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has taken over a well-established subject which has sufficient resources, although some will soon need replacing. The use of ICT is at an early stage and the accommodation is adequate. Outdoor provision is good but the hall is small for large classes. Learning opportunities are enriched for pupils, especially the oldest, by good cross-curricular links, such as orienteering, and very good outdoor and adventure activities. These take place during residential trips including to Graffham Water where challenging activities such as cycling and low and high rope work are available. Areas for development, which evidence from the inspection endorses, have been identified as extending dance and improving assessment. While support staff are deployed well in some lessons to support children, a focus on assessment is intended to make good use of their time and knowledge of the pupils.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

127. Provision for religious education is satisfactory. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection when several aspects of the subject were judged to be unsatisfactory. Strong leadership has

ensured that these issues have now been addressed and that religious education is a firmly established area of the curriculum. As a result, standards and pupils' achievements are average by Years 2 and 6.

128. Sufficient time is now given to the subject so that the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are met. This means that pupils benefit from good opportunities to listen to representatives from major world faiths and to visit places of worship. Their knowledge is also extended by exploring and learning from the good range of books and artefacts which the school has acquired. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 recognise that all people mark special occasions but they do not have a clear understanding of those which are primarily Christian because reasons given by teachers are too brief. They have compared similarities and differences between a Hindu and Christian wedding. They are learning respect for places of worship when they visit the local church or look at special books such as the Bible, Torah or Qu'ran.
129. As pupils move through the school they continue to explore similarities and differences between religions. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know the main features of a mosque. They understand the importance of cleanliness when praying and notice that men and women worship separately. Parents and pupils learn together as they visit a Buddhist Centre and take part in simple ceremonies. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 know that all religions have rules. Their own identified Ten Commandments include 'do not drink and drive' and 'never be greedy.' Use of the Internet helps them research major Christian festivals as does good research using books. Many pupils have very limited knowledge of these festivals and the teachers' insecure subject knowledge means that incorrect understanding sometimes goes unchallenged. Pupils of all abilities including those with limited literacy skills are helped to extend their knowledge and understanding by good cross-curricular links. For example, pupils make cards to celebrate the Jewish New Year and eat apples they have dipped in honey. Less able pupils draw and label a Hindu shrine whilst higher attaining pupils write more extensively. All complete spider diagrams to show the Buddhist eight-fold path. However, pupils need more opportunities to record their work.
130. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall although subject knowledge needs strengthening. Teachers have been very successful in teaching pupils to be respectful of religious observance and the values, beliefs and artefacts of others. This is apparent in the behaviour during lessons and collective worship and in the respect shown to the displays throughout the school illustrating religious practices from a number of faiths. Teachers use the pupils' own experiences well to consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding. They help pupils identify special occasions and people in their own life before broadening this into knowledge about major world faiths. Good questioning helps pupils express their thoughts and knowledge. When you pray 'you send a message to God' said one young pupil, whilst his peers said prayers could include 'thank you,' 'I'm sorry' or 'can you help me?' Lessons are made interesting because activities are varied and sufficient resources are used well so that pupils can be independent learners. Teaching and learning were best in the one good lesson seen in Years 5/6 where the teacher brought the lesson alive through encouraging good research in groups. Each group then presented their findings to the class in a variety of ways including mime and drama.
131. Leadership and management of the subject are now good. The co-ordinator has moved the subject on significantly since the previous inspection by conveying some of her own confidence and enthusiasm to staff and being clear about priorities. She has worked well with the advisory service to ensure that teaching and learning are well supported by good quality resources and by better planning to ensure for coverage of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The use of ICT is developing satisfactorily. The curriculum is brought alive by visits and visitors and by the sensitive use of displays. Assessment and planning for pupils of differing abilities have been highlighted as areas for improvement and to that should be added improving teachers' subject knowledge to help ensure that the momentum of improvement is maintained.