

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHIRLEY INFANT SCHOOL**

Green End Road, Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110663

Headteacher: Mrs E A Flowerdew

Reporting inspector: Chrissie Pittman  
18275

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 247025

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Green End Road Cambridge
Postcode:	CB4 1RW
Telephone number:	(01223) 568885
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Grenz
Date of previous inspection:	8 <sup>th</sup> December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18275	Chrissie Pittman	Registered Inspector	Art and design Religious education Under fives	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? How well are the pupils taught?
1166	Rosemary Hussain	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Attitudes, values and personal development
31218	Tom Allen	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Equality of opportunity	
22704	Gary Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
22790	Jane Pinney	Team inspector	English	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 8</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>9 - 11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>11 - 12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>12 - 14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>14 - 15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>15 - 16</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>16 - 17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SPECIFIED FEATURE - INFANT ASSESSMENT UNIT</b>	<b>18 - 20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21 - 25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26 - 36</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Shirley is a three-form entry infant and nursery school with an attached Infant Assessment Unit for language-disordered and EBD pupils. The school is situated on the outskirts of Cambridge and draws most of its pupils from the immediate catchment area, which is a mixture of mostly social housing and some owner-occupied homes. The catchment is in one of the most deprived wards in the county. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, although a large proportion come from backgrounds with social and economic difficulties. The population is mixed. Many pupils are white British; over a quarter are from multi-ethnic backgrounds and one sixth come from the traveller community. The school is about the same size as an average primary school and considerably larger than an average infant school. There are 276 pupils aged from three to seven years in mixed age and ability classes. Most, but not all, children attend the nursery before joining the school. The attainment on entry is very low. Pupil mobility is very high. The percentage of pupils thought to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Around half the pupils have special educational needs (SEN), including statements. This is well above the national average. The percentage whose mother tongue is not English is higher than in most schools.

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

This is a good school. It helps pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. Most make good progress from the time they come to the school to when they leave. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and very positive relationships with each other. The teaching is consistently good, with much that is very good and occasionally excellent. This good teaching is beginning to impact positively on pupils' learning. There are very good arrangements to support all pupils and care for them and the school has a very strong partnership with parents. The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent. The school responds well to the difficult challenges it faces and has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. It is well governed, self-critical and gives good value for money.

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

- The good teaching in the school promotes good achievement. The teaching of English and mathematics are particularly good.
- Pupils are achieving well because they have clear targets set for them. The school's provision for pupils with a special educational need (SEN) is very good.
- The headteacher's leadership is excellent. The school is very well led and managed at all levels, including the involvement of governors, who regularly monitor and support the school.
- Pupils' personal development is very good; they have very good attitudes to their learning and in their personal relationships as a result of the very good provision made by the school for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A very good level of care is provided for all pupils.
- The school works very well in partnership with parents.

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

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science.
- The use of assessment information to change what is being taught next. Whilst this is good in English and mathematics, it is insufficiently developed in Early Years, science and the other curriculum subjects.

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

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

When the school was inspected five years ago inspectors found that, although the quality of education provided and the climate for learning were good, the standards achieved by pupils required improvement. Since then the school has made good improvement in a number of areas, but standards remain well

below the national average and overall improvement is satisfactory. This is largely attributable to the school's very challenging circumstances, such as very low standards on entry to the school, the very high mobility of pupils and the significant proportion with SEN and EAL. Other areas that have been improved are ICT, schemes of work, NOF training for teachers, the reading club, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and teaching in the Foundation Stage. Staff absence in the past has slowed down the pace of progress for pupils in the Foundation Stage, but new staffing is already having a positive impact on their achievement. Although assessment in the core subjects of English and mathematics has been improved significantly, assessment information is still insufficiently used to change what is being taught on a daily basis, particularly in Early Years, science and the foundation subjects. Systems are now tighter and there is more of a focus on raising standards by monitoring teaching and learning and targeting pupils more accurately. However, attainment is still hampered by the arrangement of mixed-age classes where some pupils have just come up from reception while others are just into Year 2. The work is often too difficult for the youngest and fails to challenge the older more able pupils. Besides addressing the key issues from the last inspection the school has also effectively improved its performance in other areas such as pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher has been very effective in raising staff morale and improving the learning ethos. Performance management, child protection and the school improvement plan have all been much improved. She has also greatly improved communication with the parents with termly meetings, a constant presence around the school and an open-door policy. Governors are now more involved in financial planning, supporting the curriculum and knowing the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff development has been much improved and teaching assistants are well trained. Given the excellent quality of its leadership and the commitment of its staff, the school is well placed to develop further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	E	E	E	C
Writing	E	E	E	B
Mathematics	E*	E	E	B

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

Most children when they start school are achieving standards that are very low when compared to those expected for their age. By the time they reach Year 2, pupils who joined the school in the nursery are achieving above the national average. This is very good achievement. When the attainment of all pupils in the group taking the tests is compared with that of pupils in similar primary schools, it is average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Factors such as the school's high proportion of pupils with SEN or EAL, the high mobility of travellers and the children of temporary university students and the inclusion of the children in the Assessment Unit, make comparisons with similar infant schools problematic. None the less, overall achievement throughout the school for all pupils is good although attainment in reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils taking the tests is well below the national average. The high proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school during the year, with the resulting lack of continuity in learning and the combination of Year 1 and 2 pupils in mixed-age classes, have also affected overall standards for all pupils. The school's challenging targets last year were met in writing, surpassed in mathematics and not met in reading. The school has made good improvement in these core areas. This upward trend is largely the result of the successful targeting and monitoring of pupils. Girls perform better than boys in reading and writing. In the other subjects, standards are in line with

expectations in art, music, ICT, physical education and religious education. They are below expectations in science, design and technology, geography and history.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn and eager to take part in all school activities. They show sustained interest in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils respect each other and their teachers; most behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well mannered and show respect for property. There is little evidence of bullying or disruptive behaviour and there were no exclusions in the last year.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is very good. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and older children are given specific responsibilities which they carry out with pride.
Attendance	Attendance is poor. The school has maintained its very good level of support since the last inspection and has improved the monitoring of attendance significantly, though this has yet to reap rewards in increased attendance overall.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, with many examples of very good and excellent teaching. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. There is a positive ethos for learning in all classrooms. The best teaching is in English, mathematics and ICT, in Reception, a Year 1/2 class and the Assessment Unit. Excellent planning produced dynamic and inspiring lessons where pupils' learning was exemplary. Teaching is satisfactory but less effective in some mathematics and religious education lessons in Year 1/2, where work is sometimes not well matched to pupils' capabilities, particularly the more able pupils. The quality of teaching in English is good overall, with some examples of very good lessons. In two lessons the teaching was excellent. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. The work is well planned and lessons move at a brisk pace. Good assessment procedures are used well to establish group targets and to identify pupils for extra support in reading and writing. However, where pupils are taught as one group, for example, at the beginning and end of the literacy lessons, the work is sometimes inappropriate to meet the needs of all the pupils within the group. The quality of teaching in mathematics is mostly good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. It is beginning to raise achievement. Teachers ensure that learning is fun, so pupils are keen and interested in their work. Relationships between pupils and staff and each other are very good and this has a positive effect on the quality of learning seen in all lessons. Good planning and a range of good teaching methods are used to present different challenges. However, expectations of more-able pupils are sometimes too low. The National Literacy Strategy is well implemented in the school and is beginning to make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Basic skills of literacy are well taught and applied across the subjects of the curriculum. The Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented. The majority of pupils learn and practise different strategies to improve both their mental and their general mathematical learning. This successfully reinforces their understanding of what they need to do in lessons. The pace of their learning is beginning to improve throughout the school. The school meets the needs of most pupils well. Very good support is provided for pupils with SEN or EAL and for travellers. The support provided in the Assessment Unit is also very good. The reading club provides good opportunities for identified pupils to acquire adequate reading skills in order to access the whole curriculum.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good overall; the school provides a well balanced and broad curriculum for its pupils. There is an adequate range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with SEN	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is good support given by well-trained teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils with EAL	Good. Pupils with English as an additional language are well targeted and monitored.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. The principles of right and wrong are actively promoted and provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is very good at caring for its pupils. Teachers know the children well and this awareness is used effectively to support their personal development. Good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English have been introduced.

The school has excellent links with the parents. The partnership between the parents and school is very good. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a complaint or problem. Shirley school looks after its pupils very well offering a very good level of care. It is a happy place where pupils feel valued as individuals. Parents at the Ofsted meeting talked appreciatively of the good care and support that the pupils receive at school, which they say is like one large family. Procedures for pupils' assessment are good, with some very good features in English and mathematics. However, ongoing assessment in the Foundation Stage, science and the non-core subjects is not used well to change what is planned and taught next.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She knows what the school does well, where its weaknesses are and how to improve them and has established a good ethos of striving to improve. Senior managers of the school are very well focused on improving standards and supporting all pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governing body is shrewd, effective and well aware of best-value principles. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their statutory duties well. They are very supportive of the school and take an active interest in forward planning and its day-to-day work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Data is used very well to monitor the school's performance. The School Improvement Plan is well thought through. Actions to bring about improvement are planned and implemented without delay. Teaching is monitored very well by the headteacher, although there is insufficient monitoring of teaching, learning and target setting by subject co-ordinators in science and the non-core subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Decisions on spending are linked well to educational priorities. Grants are used effectively for their designated purpose. This ensures that the best use is made of resources.

There is a very good match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum. Additional support staff are deployed very effectively and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They are well trained. The accommodation is good.

## 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>Parents are happy with almost all aspects of the school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The range of activities provided outside lessons.</li></ul>

Inspectors support all the positive views expressed by parents. Although most parents expressed no real concerns about the performance of the school, a few would like to see more activities outside lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Inspectors do not agree this is a necessity but admit that improved provision in this area would enhance the school's very good ethos.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Most children, when they start in the nursery, are attaining standards that are very low. By the time they reach Year 1 they have made good progress in their learning, although their attainment is still well below the expected standard in many areas. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 2, pupils are achieving results that are well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is largely due to a combination of factors such as, the high mobility of travellers and the children of short-term students at Cambridge University, a very high proportion of pupils with SEN or EAL and the Infant Assessment Unit. When results are judged against those in schools in a similar context, achievement is above average in writing and mathematics and average in reading. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels was above the national average in writing, in line in reading and below average in mathematics. However, all the pupils who started in the nursery and had an uninterrupted education achieved the higher Level 3. This is very good achievement considering their very low starting point. The school exceeded its challenging targets in mathematics and met them in writing but not in reading. The school has made a considerable improvement in writing and mathematics since the previous year. This upward trend is largely the result of the successful targeting and monitoring of pupils. The school analyses attainment by gender well. There is little overall difference between the performance of boys and girls in mathematics, although girls perform better in reading and writing. The school is aware that girls perform better than boys in relation to their respective national figures for reading and writing and is implementing initiatives to address this issue.
2. In English currently, standards for seven-year-olds in reading are below average. In speaking, listening and writing they are well below average. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that standards in mathematics are well below the national average by the end of Year 2. In science, teachers' assessments of seven-year-old pupils in 2002 showed that standards were judged to be well below the national average. Overall attainment at the higher level was estimated to be close to the national average. Standards of work seen during the inspection were below average at the end of Year 2. None the less, overall achievement is good in English, mathematics and science. In the current Year 2 over half the pupils have special educational needs.
3. The National Literacy Strategy is well implemented in the school and is making a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The emphasis the school places on reading and the opportunities provided for it is reflected in the pupils' enthusiasm for books. By Year 2, standards in writing are low because the opportunities for extended writing in other subjects are restricted. The Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented within mathematics lessons. The use of numeracy in other lessons has not yet been developed sufficiently. Where it is being used in other lessons there is a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Pupils are beginning to apply different techniques to solve mathematical problems effectively. The pace of their learning is beginning to improve throughout the school. By the time they leave school most are developing sound numeracy skills.
4. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. For example, by Year 2 pupils know how to control a computer by following a series of commands. They are able to log on to the Internet and retrieve information. Although some use is made of computers to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, ICT has yet to make a significant impact on pupils' learning in most subjects.
5. Standards are in line with national expectations in all other subjects except design and technology, geography and history, where they are below.

6. Pupils with SEN make good progress in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills to achieve the targets on their Individual Education Plans (IEP). Progress towards meeting these detailed targets is accurately measured. However, more-able pupils are not always as sufficiently well challenged and sometimes do not achieve their full potential.
7. Since the last inspection there has been very good improvement in music. Standards have declined in design and technology, geography and physical education. Standards in the rest of the subjects have been maintained.

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

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Most look forward to coming to school and are happy. This was confirmed by nearly all the parents who responded to the questionnaire. In lessons most pupils are very enthusiastic learners who listen and respond well and are very keen to participate. In a Year 1 and 2 literacy lesson they listened attentively when given instructions for their written work and wanted to start immediately in their enthusiasm to do well.
9. Standards of behaviour in lessons are very good. Pupils are polite and very eager to talk to visitors. The staff have high expectations and, although there are some pupils with challenging behaviour, this is well managed in a quiet, understated way so that the pace of lessons is not interrupted. Most pupils settle to work quickly at the beginning of lessons and concentrate well on their individual or group tasks without direct supervision. They show appreciation for each other's achievements, as was seen in a reading club when others in the group reached their targets. Staff encourage waving rather than clapping so that they do not disturb others in lessons nearby. There were many examples of pupils following this thoughtful approach and consideration for others, such as the way they moved around the school in a very quiet and orderly fashion, showing respect for the school rules. Pupils' behaviour around the school and at lunchtimes is good. They play happily together in the three age-related playgrounds and most are aware of the needs of those around them. Their behaviour in whole-school situations such as assemblies is very good. They walk quietly into the hall and listen attentively. Most pupils were eager to talk to inspectors and delighted in sharing their experiences. Any instances of bullying that take place are dealt with quickly and effectively and parents feel confident in the school's procedures for dealing with this. There were no exclusions during the last year. Pupils with special educational needs share the positive attitudes and reflect the good behaviour evident amongst all pupils. Through their specialist support they are able to engage in all subjects and to work with other pupils when necessary. Effective strategies ensure that they enjoy learning and are well motivated to make progress.
10. Relationships are very good. Most pupils relate very well to their teachers and to each other. Racial harmony is good. Most pupils, from the youngest in the nursery, enjoy being given responsibilities and carry them out earnestly. Responsibilities increase as pupils move through the school and they are encouraged to experiment and guide their own learning in some lessons; for instance, in a Year 1 and 2 ICT lesson in which pupils produced labels for a display. They used their knowledge and increased confidence to explore several alternatives without direct supervision. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour continue to be strengths of the school, as noted in the last inspection and this has a positive effect on their learning.
11. Attendance is poor in comparison with that in other primary schools (There is no comparison with infant schools). Unauthorised absence is above the national average. There are, however, several extenuating circumstances. The attendance of the majority of pupils is at least satisfactory and several have 100 per cent attendance. The school prides itself on its inclusivity and has a high proportion of children from ethnic minorities and travelling families. Some of these children take extended leave to visit their country of origin and some travellers who at present do not have a permanent base in Cambridge are away for long periods. There are also absences in term time because of family holidays, despite the school's efforts to deter these. Punctuality at the start of the school day is good for the majority, but a few pupils are often late. Lessons start on time. The school has considerably improved its registration procedures since the last inspection and the

two administration assistants responsible for monitoring and recording absences using the computerised system have been instrumental in this improvement. Recent records show that some pupils have considerably improved their attendance this year with support from the school and the Educational Welfare Service (EWS).

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

12. The teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching in most of the lessons seen was good, very good or excellent. A few lessons were satisfactory. This is a considerable improvement on the quality of teaching observed at the time of the previous inspection, when one third of the teaching was satisfactory and there were some unsatisfactory lessons.
13. Teaching is excellent or very good in a significant number of lessons in the school, most notably in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics, ICT and SEN. Teaching is satisfactory in some Year 1/2 lessons in religious education, physical education and mathematics, where more-able pupils are sometimes not always challenged enough. There are certain features that are common to many of the very good lessons and they provide clues to ways in which the satisfactory lessons could be improved. The start of the most successful lessons is particularly significant. The beginning of the lesson is usually brisk, lively and challenging; it immediately makes pupils think. In English, where many of these lessons are found, there is always a demanding 'mental starter' to engage pupils in thinking about the objectives of the lesson. The teacher is indicating, from the outset, that he or she expects pupils to work hard but also that there is enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from such learning.
14. Teachers' high expectations, obvious from the start, are maintained as lessons continue. In an excellent ICT lesson for the reception pupils nearly all learnt the importance of sequencing correctly to achieve the objective. A great sense of fun was inspired by the teacher and the lesson encapsulated a real love of learning among the pupils. All the pupils, regardless of ability, achieved the objective.
15. Once teachers have gained pupils' full attention they keep up the momentum, often with a series of short, focused tasks, so that there is no opportunity for pupils' concentration to flag. This was demonstrated in a very good art lesson with Year 1/2 where pupils were encouraged to take their learning one step further and explain how the colours they painted were reflections of their mood. Usually there is little need for obvious management of pupils; behaviour is very good and there are excellent relationships, based on mutual respect, between pupils and teachers. When necessary, however, teachers are quick to notice and deal with any straying of attention or lack of effort. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make and say that the teachers do well to help them become mature and responsible. Although the whole curriculum is planned to match the needs of all year groups, the mixed age and ability classes make it difficult for teachers to monitor and adapt their daily planning to take account of all pupils' progress and capabilities to change what is taught lesson by lesson.
16. Lessons usually provide a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils have the confidence to try things out, attempting an ambitious answer or putting forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both the teacher and fellow pupils will be sensitive and supportive. The teachers also use resources very effectively in their lessons. This is best illustrated in the nursery. Here the planning encompasses all the areas of learning and the work children have to do is disguised effectively as 'having fun'. The activities are interesting and the children are totally captivated. All areas of the nursery are well used; resources are inventive and make the pupils' learning more meaningful. However, assessment is underdeveloped and needs to constantly re-evaluate what has or has not been learned in order to identify potential weaknesses early.
17. Teachers meet the needs of pupils with SEN and EAL with good support and with tasks matched appropriately to their needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) has a very good understanding of special needs within the school and liaises well with teachers and support

staff. Class teachers take account of pupils' individual education plans when planning work for the class. Teaching in withdrawal groups is good. The reading club provides opportunities for identified pupils to acquire adequate reading skills in order to access the whole curriculum. Learning-support assistants work well with class teachers and provide good support for pupils. Support for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good and all pupils with SEN are well integrated into the school community.

18. The very good teaching results in good learning and achievement that is usually above average considering the starting point and challenging circumstances of most of the children. Most pupils join the school with very low levels of attainment; if they stay till Year 2 they leave with results that are usually above average. This is good achievement.

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

19. The overall quality of the curriculum is good with some very good features. This is due to the enrichment activities provided within the school through visits and visitors, the strong links established with the community and the effective strategies for numeracy and literacy. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when the quality of the curriculum at Key Stage 1 lacked balance in the time spent on various subjects, planning was good and extra-curricular activities were limited. These have now been addressed well with the exception of extra-curricular activities, which remains a developing area. The two-year programme of learning enables teachers to plan work together so those pupils in mixed-age classes receive the same curriculum. However, conversely, progress is hampered by the arrangement of mixed-age classes where some pupils have just come up from reception and do not share the maturity of others who are in Year 2. The work is often too difficult for the youngest and fails to challenge the older more-able pupils. Progression over time is also restricted by parts of the programme being taught at an introductory stage for the incoming group over the two-year cycle. There is very high pupil mobility in the school, but this is being addressed well with the school's effective new assessment programme, which immediately identifies gaps in the pupils' learning so that a supportive curriculum programme may be established to bridge any shortcomings.
20. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is appropriate and prepares pupils for Year 1. There is good provision of the full range of activities for young children. The carefully planned and organised curriculum is taught in a lively and interesting way. It provides all pupils, including those with special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and travellers' children, with relevant opportunities for learning. It is structured creatively to enable children, whatever their ability, to make good progress overall, but in particular in their communication and reading skills and mathematical, personal, social and emotional development. Their knowledge and understanding of the world also receives an appropriate focus; for example, their study of artefacts in the Victorian kitchen, which interested and intrigued the pupils and prompted much creative thought and discussion.
21. The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 is good with some very good features, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT, and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education. It is broad, rich and well balanced. The school has been careful in ensuring that steps are taken in lessons to develop the skills of enquiry as well as knowledge, as was observed in both science and history lessons.
22. The school's strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy are good. Teachers group the pupils according to their ability within the classes. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well promoted across the curriculum. They listen attentively to questions and are beginning to respond more confidently. Pupils' reading skills are being well developed. The introduction of the reading programme in the morning is having a positive impact on raising standards in this area. It is well thought out, well organised and a strength of the school. Writing is not as well developed as it could be and the current organisation of mixed age and ability groups is not conducive to developing this area. Pupils' numeracy skills are developing well in subjects such as science.

The curriculum for information and communication technology is very good and is being used successfully in areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics. In a Year 1/2 lesson pupils were using it competently to reinforce their problem-solving skills when dealing with money. Cross-curricular links are planned for and developing well.

23. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and results in them having more independence, self-confidence and self-esteem. Strong emphasis has been placed on developing pupils' awareness of others and nurturing their concerns and values to support each other. They are given opportunities to take responsibility, such as returning registers, tidying up and supporting each other in different activities. Drugs awareness and sex education are covered in the health curriculum and effectively taught as a normal part of lessons.
24. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, the school acknowledges that this is an area requiring further development and is considering introducing a recorder club and establishing a choir as an introduction to improving this area. The school uses visits to enhance the curriculum, such as the Ely Cathedral dance presentation. It also encourages visitors to the school, which support the Creative Arts week and citizenship, and the local police officer supports community links.
25. The school fully supports inclusion and works hard to ensure the full integration of all pupils. The inclusivity is of high quality and pupils feel secure within its close and caring environment. Pupils are welcomed, treated as individuals and all given the opportunity to grow, flourish and learn from its diverse community. They love school and feel it is a safe and happy place to be. The school staff, the many and varied visits and visitors who support the school, enrich pupils' academic and social development. They are greatly appreciated by the pupils and parents, and extend and enrich their learning. The provision for pupils with SEN or EAL is very good. There are comprehensive arrangements for their identification and support. A detailed register of special educational needs is kept by the co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) and appropriate individual educational plans (IEPs) are provided for pupils, following consultations with teachers and parents. The provision of additional support for pupils with statements of educational need is of good quality. The school also provides a full range of programmes to support pupils who may need some specific extra support. These include the Early Literacy Strategy and reading recovery groups. A particular feature of the school's provision is the very good links that are maintained with outside agencies. For example, expert support is currently being given by two literacy support teachers, provided by the local authority, who are working with selected pupils to improve their co-ordination. The positive atmosphere of the school promotes the effective inclusion of pupils with SEN or EAL and travellers, into every aspect of its life.
26. The school's overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and there have been a number of initiatives introduced since the last inspection. The school is a caring and socially integrated community in which each individual pupil is valued. Celebration family assemblies every Thursday provide the opportunity for each pupil to be recognised for achievement.
27. Spiritual provision is good. It is promoted through daily assemblies, religious education and personal, social and health education. In assemblies and religious education pupils are given opportunities to explore the diversity of other cultures, to compare approaches to religious festivals and to explore their feelings for others and themselves. In a family assembly during the inspection the theme was "birth" in relation to Christmas and the present day. A mother was invited to attend with her new baby and pupils enthusiastically asked questions about the baby. The focus through this questioning was love for the baby and the importance of the family. The baby's brother and sister, pupils at the school, also took part, emphasising her place within the family. In this and other assemblies pupils enjoyed singing hymns and most took seriously the opportunities for quiet reflection on the topic for the day. Instances of teachers developing a sense of spirituality were seen in lessons; for example, in a literacy lesson when pupils were enchanted by the puppet used to great effect by the teacher and in the imaginary games encouraged by the teacher in a reception class. Parents praise the values of caring and sharing



promoted by the school and the creation of a family atmosphere, which is inclusive and celebrates the diverse range of pupil backgrounds.

28. There is very good provision for pupils' moral development. Adults set a good example for pupils. Teachers impart high expectations of behaviour and communicate a strong sense of right and wrong through the reinforcement of school values and rules. These are based on respect and concern for others, appreciation of all members of school and society and fostering a sense of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-awareness. Each class also makes its own rules to help the pupils work better together. Pupils are very aware of the school rules and on occasions were seen reminding each other rather than just relying on the teacher to keep order; for example, when waiting in the lunch queue, or walking to assembly. A good rewards system promotes positive values; caring, kindness, respect and doing the right things. Moral themes such as being sensitive to others and listening to and understanding others' views are appropriately discussed in circle time.
29. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. They are often asked to work collaboratively in pairs or in groups. There is a good deal of emphasis in assemblies and circle time on the importance of becoming valued members of the school and local community through social maturity. The headteacher runs a social skills group each week for specially selected pupils to encourage greater social awareness. Pupils are given various responsibilities and were seen to carry these out earnestly. The ethos of the school encourages older pupils to help the younger ones whenever they can and to share pride in their own and others' achievements. The Speaking and Listening project within the early years encourages pupils to develop these skills, which enhance their social maturity. The inclusive nature of the school fosters tolerance of people from all backgrounds and makes pupils more aware of the range of groups that contribute to society as a whole.
30. Cultural provision is very good. The school organises an annual Arts Week which is greatly appreciated by pupils and parents. It covers a wide range of the creative arts, including drama, music and art, and last year's event was so memorable that a number of pupils questioned said it was the best thing about being a pupil at the school. As a result of work done during the week pupils were selected as the only infant-school children to take part in the Jubilee celebrations at Ely Cathedral. Pupils also visit several local venues such as museums, theatres and concerts. Art exhibitions around the school celebrate and inform the pupils' work and pupils were keen to discuss these. One display in particular showing items from a Victorian household aroused much debate as pupils walked past. An exhibition of pupils' art was also held at Wolfson College, Cambridge. The multicultural aspect of society is well reinforced by celebrations of festivals such as Diwali, Eid, Christmas and Easter and traveller children are encouraged to share their experiences with others. School productions tackle a variety of topics such as anti-bullying plays, sharing plays, Rapper dancing, modern dancing and recycling. This helps to widen the pupils' experience of their cultural heritage.

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

31. Shirley Infant School looks after its pupils very well, offering a very good level of care. It is a happy school where pupils feel valued as individuals. There is an ethos of care and consideration and teachers and staff know the pupils well and are committed to their wellbeing. Parents talk appreciatively of the good care and support that the pupils receive at school, which is like one large family. Most children settle in very happily and they quickly become familiar with established routines, which help them to feel secure. School staff attend inter-agency meetings each week to ensure that the needs of more vulnerable pupils are adequately met. Child-protection procedures are thorough. They adhere to the local authority guidelines and teachers are instructed on following these through.
32. The school expects pupils to behave well and has an effective and consistently applied policy, which includes clear anti-bullying strategies, which produces good results. Pupils with poor behaviour are monitored thoroughly through the report card system and the headteacher works

closely with parents to encourage consistent support at home and at school. Exclusion is not an issue as the headteacher sees it as a last resort. The school has always worked hard to avoid exclusion and has been successful in this objective. Extra effort and good behaviour are rewarded and celebrated at special assemblies each week. The good level of supervision at lunchtimes promotes good behaviour in the playground and several staff are qualified in first aid should accidents occur. Parents appreciate the efforts of the school to promote good behaviour.

33. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good. Teachers know the pupils well and there is a constant sharing of information both formally and informally. Personal development is promoted through a good Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum, which is appropriate to the pupils' maturity and understanding. The added responsibilities given to pupils as they progress through the school acknowledge their growing maturity and encourage them to develop an increasing awareness of the needs of others. The school places a high priority on increasing pupils' self-esteem and confidence in the caring family atmosphere and family assemblies contribute to this.
34. Monitoring of attendance is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The school evaluates data from the computerised registration system on a weekly basis, identifying any patterns of absence and causes for concern for further close monitoring. This is backed up with good liaison with the Education Welfare Officer. Parents are contacted at an early stage so they too can give their support. Absences are rigorously followed up.
35. Support for pupils joining the school and for those moving on to junior schools is very good. Most pupils join from the nursery, which establishes very good contact with the family and parents and children have opportunities to visit beforehand. There are good links with a local junior school, with reciprocal visits and curriculum links.
36. Health and safety procedures follow the local authority guidelines and risk assessment is carried out regularly. Governors are informed at their meetings of any incidents relating to health and safety. There were no issues of concern raised during this inspection.
37. Procedures for assessment are good overall, with some very good features and have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Careful note is made of what the children can do when they start school in their personal, social and emotional development and in their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers use this information well to plan work which builds on specific skills and helps children make good progress in these areas of learning. Teachers and support staff in classes in Years 1 and 2 monitor progress closely in English and mathematics through daily assessments and this helps them to plan to extend skills, knowledge and understanding further. The daily assessments in the Foundation Stage, science and the non-core subjects, however, are not as well developed to inform future planning and teaching. In English and mathematics procedures are very good. Very careful assessments are made to develop pupils' skills in reading and writing and give very clear information about how each child in the school is doing. Assessments take place on a regular basis and attainment is measured closely against school benchmark statements, pupils' targets and National Curriculum levels. Systems are manageable and effective. Every pupil is carefully tracked and targets are set using baseline information and other tests, including National Standard Assessment Tests at the end of Year 2.
38. Assessment procedures for English and mathematics are used effectively within the organised Year 1/2 classes. The school tracks pupils as they progress through the school to measure the accuracy and realisation of targets. The analysis of data from the end of Year 2 assessment tests gives a positive indication of the individual, group and class progress in these subjects. Teachers look closely at pupils' work and operate a variety of assessment tests within classes and within year groups. Spelling and phonics are tested weekly and the information observed is used to re-group pupils on a fortnightly basis. Very specific assessment is used in the reading club and pupils graduate from there when they have achieved the school benchmark. In Year 1, pupils in the ELS are assessed through testing in November and May. Work in the core areas is well differentiated. However this is not always the case in the non-core areas.

39. There is very good use of assessment procedures to identify pupils with SEN and EAL. The data obtained is used very well to provide well-targeted support for pupils with learning needs, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy and, in a number of cases, for behaviour difficulties. The special needs co-ordinator maintains a comprehensive register of pupils with SEN and the school meets well the requirements outlined in pupils' statements of educational need. It has appropriately adopted the new requirements of the Revised Code of Practice for special needs.

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

40. The school has continued to work very hard since the last inspection to foster a strong partnership with parents in a caring, family-orientated community. This is recognised by the parents themselves and greatly appreciated. The school works very closely with parents. In the questionnaire parents responded very positively about most aspects of the school. They nearly all said their children like school, are making good progress and are helped to mature, and that behaviour and teaching are good. All said they felt comfortable about approaching the school. The area that a very few were unsure about was the range of extra-curricular activities available. Inspectors support the parents' positive views. The clubs and activities available are appropriate for this age group.
41. The school's links with parents are very good. The headteacher, office staff and class teachers meet informally with parents each day and parents are encouraged to make contact early if there are problems. The home-school diaries are also a useful means of daily contact. In talks with inspectors during the inspection, groups of parents were very happy with the opportunities to talk with staff and very much value the open-door policy. Parents of pupils with SEN are effectively involved. They are consulted before pupils are placed on the special-needs register and the procedure is explained to them. They are then kept fully informed of their children's progress and receive copies of individual education plans. The strong links with parents begin with a home visit by the school and a meeting for new parents followed by regular opportunities to attend assemblies and school productions. During the inspection over 20 parents attended the family assembly and they clearly enjoyed the opportunity to take part and to join in the celebration of their children's achievements. In turn the pupils whose parents attended showed sheer delight when they entered the hall and saw them.
42. The quality of information provided for parents is good. They receive regular newsletters and are given information on literacy and numeracy. The prospectus and the governors' annual report are informative. The information for parents on their children's progress is for the most part very good. Parents are sent information about their children's targets, given comprehensive feedback on baseline assessment and invited to consultation meetings with the teachers each term. Reports, however, though detailed and containing comments personal to the individual, tell parents what pupils know and can do but not how they can improve.
43. Parents' involvement in the school is very good. There are many volunteers, parents and grandparents, who regularly work in classes and accompany school trips. Attendance at parents' consultation evenings and school events is very good. Parents who are governors are enthusiastic supporters of the school's ethos of inclusivity and consider this one of its greatest strengths. The Parents' Association has developed in strength and purpose since the last inspection and has recently contributed £10,000 to build the outdoor play and learning area. All parents sign a home-school agreement when their child starts school. Most parents support their children's work at home very well. The overall effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good and this strength is of great benefit to all the pupils.

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

44. The feature that stands out in the leadership of the school is the complete absence of complacency in all areas of its work. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Parents say that the headteacher is never satisfied and is always seeking to improve the school; this is

certainly true. She is respected by her staff and trusted by the pupils. This is one of the main reasons for the school's increasingly good reputation in the community. Prior to her appointment two years ago the school had had three headteachers in the previous three years.

45. The staff work well together. They believe that they are very well supported by senior colleagues in their efforts to raise standards. Monitoring reports show that the school is self-critical and evaluative of its practices. There are many examples of this approach in action. Each year there are SATs' reviews where co-ordinators are held accountable for examination results in their subjects. In areas where there have been relatively less successful results, such as reading in Year 2, the school is quick to take action.
46. The management of special educational needs within the school is very good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and procedures are well organised and very efficiently applied. All teachers have been made fully aware of the new Code of Practice and support staff are very well trained and effectively briefed. There is very close liaison between all staff to ensure that the programme of work is delivered well. There is accurate identification of pupils' needs and the monitoring of progress is regularly carried out. The co-ordinator receives very good support from the link governor, who has been actively involved in acquiring grant funding for SEN pupils, so that, for example, the school is able to employ a speech therapist to assist those pupils with language difficulties. Professional contacts with outside agencies are constructive and very helpful. The additional funding for pupils with special educational needs is very well targeted.
47. Effective monitoring is clearly defined by the headteacher and governors. It is aimed at helping the school to be clear about how well the teachers teach and how well the pupils are learning. However, although co-ordinators monitor teaching well in English and mathematics, this has only just started to be extended to science and the non-core subjects. There is a good balance of expertise amongst the staff and their very good subject knowledge enables them to review the impact each subject is having on pupils' achievements and progress. Curriculum co-ordinators produce 'position statements', which are then put into the school's improvement and management plan, so that priorities can be established over the long and short term. A thorough review of the school's curriculum planning has led to improvements in standards in ICT and music. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have undertaken a school-wide evaluation, with a focus on improvement. This has given a clear educational direction to the work of the school. It welcomes external assessment of its work and performance. Recently it has achieved an international school award and a "seed challenge" award for outdoor curriculum provision.
48. The governors are knowledgeable, experienced and very committed to the needs of the school and its pupils. With the help of regular reports from the headteacher they monitor the school's strengths and weaknesses very well. This gives them a clear insight into the work being done and the progress that the pupils are making. The resources of the school are satisfactory. They are well used and easily accessible. In particular, ICT resources have been improved so that all the pupils have regular access to computers and new technologies such as the Internet. The headteacher and governors staff the school well, including a generous supply of teacher assistants in order to meet the needs of all pupils. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is excellent.
49. Financial planning is very good and the budget is used very well. The school's strategic improvement plan is well set out. It identifies the right priorities, which are arrived at through careful audits, reviews and effective monitoring. Targets for improvement are clearly costed so that governors and staff are able to judge their effectiveness. The targeting of funds to areas where there is the most need of improvement has been very effective, ensuring that the budget is used efficiently.
50. The impact of the leadership and management is a school where, regardless of its very challenging circumstances, the highest standards are sought for all pupils according to their capability. Most achieve well and make good progress from a very low starting point. Their personal development is very good. This is an effective school and provides good value for money.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and senior management team should:

(i) **Raise standards of attainment in core subjects by:**

- devising a system for grouping pupils and the work they are expected to do that takes more account of their ages and capabilities;
- further targeting more-able pupils' to improve their performance to higher levels in National Curriculum tests; and
- ensuring that teachers' planning takes sufficient account of the different ages and levels of attainment within the class, particularly in the foundation subjects.

*(Paragraphs: 15, 19, 38, 63, 77, 86, 87, 94, 105)*

(ii) **Improve the way assessment is consistently used to guide curriculum planning in the Foundation Stage, science and the non-core subjects by:**

- improving procedures for assessing pupils' work, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in lesson plenaries, to ensure that potential weaknesses are identified early;
- ensuring that assessment is used to inform teachers' daily lesson plans to change if necessary what is taught lesson by lesson, term by term; and
- devising a manageable and practical system of assessment for each subject to enable teachers to constantly evaluate what has been learned and improve pupils' progress.

*(Paragraphs: 16, 37, 38, 47, 63, 88, 92, 107, 120)*

## INFANT ASSESSMENT UNIT

51. The Infant Assessment Unit provides mainly for pupils with speech and language difficulties, as at the time of the previous inspection. At the time of the current inspection a small number of pupils have a diagnosis of autism and others have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The very good qualities of teaching, pupils' progress and leadership noted at the time of the previous inspection are still evident.
52. At the previous inspection the quality of teaching was consistently high and pupils made good or very good progress in their development. The leadership was very good and the curriculum planning was of a high quality. Pupils' work was based on the National Curriculum, with appropriate modifications and very well formulated individual education plans. Marking and assessment were of high quality and analysed well as a basis for future plans. Pupils received very good support and there was efficient liaison with the relevant external agencies.
53. The quality of teaching is still very good and the teaching of literacy, numeracy and communication skills is excellent. All sessions are very carefully planned to give pupils a clear understanding of what they are to learn. They have excellent opportunities to review and reinforce what has been learnt during and at the end of lessons. They use work mats to check that they have covered each type of work during the week. The pupils' individual education plan targets are displayed in the class and followed up well. Work is set at appropriate levels and individual tasks are adjusted to take account of pupils' current skills and knowledge. For example, higher-attaining pupils calculate the cost of a number of items and work out the total cost, while lower-attaining pupils develop their understanding of amounts by comparing two sets of coins to decide which includes 'more' and which 'less'.
54. Adults use very clear language to give information to pupils and to ask well-focused questions. There is adequate repetition to ensure understanding without a loss of interest or pace. Lessons include creative activities and interesting resources. For instance, when pupils are learning story

writing, the story is illustrated well through small toys and through role play where pupils wear headbands with attached animal pictures. The teaching of language, reading and writing is skilfully combined.

55. Language work is very well suited to the pupils' needs and is planned with support from the speech and language therapist. In all sessions target words and concepts are carefully chosen to match the pupils' abilities and the curriculum. Pupils are challenged to think and work out their own answers but also receive high-quality support as necessary. For example, when writing pupils are expected to spell fluently the key words that they have learnt, but are given support to spell others. Ideas and words are illustrated effectively through signs, symbols, pictures and real articles, as appropriate. The use of cards that have words, letters or sentences written on them, combined with pictures and symbols, further helps understanding.
56. The pace of lessons is very good. It is brisk, but pupils are given good time to respond. Each pupil is chased up to ensure that they have worked and behaved to the best of their ability. All learning opportunities are seized. Snack times and waiting for the transport at the end of the school day are used well for personal and social, as well as learning, experiences. For example, at the end of one day pupils enjoyed hearing a favourite story as they waited.
57. Relationships are very good. Adults and pupils share much fun, but discipline is very firm. Pupils heed suggestions that a younger pupil needs to be treated differently. The careful use of class rules and behaviour programmes helps the pupils to understand and respond positively. The process starts with firm but kind reminders and continues with structured approaches involving the awarding of numbers, followed by certificates and messages home, as appropriate. Adults know the pupils well and readjust to suit their personalities and needs. For example, a pupil who has had difficulties in the playground is given advice and suggestions about how to improve matters. The teacher and assistants give much praise and usually include very specific guidance about what the pupil has done to receive it. The teacher and learning-support assistants work as a strong and effective team. The high-quality support, teaching skills and commitment provided by the assistants make an impressive contribution to the high standards of the teaching.
58. The pupils start from a very low base on their entry to school. They are all working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum, but make very good progress. There are a few instances, for example in writing, when higher-attaining pupils produce work that is in line with expectations for their age. All pupils improve their ability and motivation to communicate and some make very good progress in improving the clarity and content of their language. For example, following a lesson on the Victorians, pupils discuss amongst themselves whether items are 'old' or 'new' and whether a fan would make you 'cool'. Basic skills, such as reading, spelling, counting and simple calculations, are helped by the many opportunities for practice, and pupils develop steadily but well. Their progress is far better than expected.
59. Pupils are proud of their achievements and keen to show their knowledge. They are interested in what they are learning. They respond well to the high-quality teaching and are usually co-operative and motivated to succeed. Very occasionally, pupils are restless and over-excited. However, firm handling brings them quickly back on track. Very occasionally, pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties related to their communication difficulties need additional attention to help them cope with their feelings. Pupils respect the adults and listen to advice. They are confident, especially within the unit, and efficient when they help others. They work hard to gain rewards and praise. Pupils enjoy the opportunities for fun and are learning to understand the points of view of other children. By the nature of the pupils' difficulties, the development of understanding of others and the acquisition of skills in all subjects are slow processes that require a high level of support.
60. The curriculum is planned appropriately. Schemes of work and weekly/daily plans are developed through year-group planning, with teaching that takes into account the pupils' current levels of performance. Individual education plans are very well focused on the needs of individual pupils and are a useful basis for reviews of their progress. The pupils' programmes for language and communication skills, literacy and numeracy are intensive and promote their learning. Pupils also

have a rich range of appropriate experiences in the other subjects of the National Curriculum. For example, they investigate changes when they make bread into toast, they draw maps of the school and they learn about the past through their studies of the Victorians. Pupils use computers to prepare labels and have good opportunities to join in physical activities.

61. Leadership and management are very good. There is a very clear vision for the work of the unit and the team works together effectively on behalf of the pupils. All aspects of the unit's work are exceptionally well organised. All records are up to date and appropriate for their purpose. All staff follow rigorously the unit's daily routines. There is a strong emphasis on the children's needs and on approaches that are suitable for pupils with speech and language difficulties, autism and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils benefit from the school's strengths in promoting their personal and social development and positive behaviour. Resources are very well suited to help pupils' learning. There is a broad range that includes some developed for a specific purpose. Unit staff work in very positive collaboration with staff from other agencies. They take good advantage of advice. Links are built with teachers in mainstream classes to enhance the pupils' experiences in mainstream and help them to prepare for the future



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	5	10	32	4	0	0	0
Percentage	9.8	19.6	62.7	7.8	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	222
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		69

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	21	70

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	33

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	32	29	61

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	20	25
	Girls	18	24	23
	Total	34	44	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56 (64)	72 (77)	79 (80)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	23	23
	Girls	19	22	22
	Total	34	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56 (71)	74 (81)	74 (88)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	146	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	16	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.7
Average class size	27.8

### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	343

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	652586
Total expenditure	639789
Expenditure per pupil	2734
Balance brought forward from previous year	79411
Balance carried forward to next year	92208

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	274
Number of questionnaires returned	97

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	22	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	27	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	33	0	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	35	5	0	5
The teaching is good.	77	22	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	29	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	22	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	26	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	61	34	1	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	72	25	2	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	27	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	42	5	4	19

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

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

62. The school has successfully maintained the good standards of provision found at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is good overall and the teachers and support staff work closely together as a team. Children are made to feel secure and happy and they settle well into school routines and make good progress in their learning.
63. The teaching is good overall and occasionally very good or excellent. There is a clear link between the activities the teachers plan and what the children learn. Explanations are careful and well paced and teachers make sure that all children are involved in discussions and activities. Teachers have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and a good understanding of how each of the Stepping Stones leads to the Early Learning Goals. However, assessment procedures are underdeveloped. There are simple, formal records of children's progress over time, but they are not consistently measured against the Stepping Stones in the six areas of learning to ensure that lesson preparation is well matched to children's capability and that children are making adequate progress on a daily basis.
64. The accommodation is used effectively to enable children to move freely and have access to a range of interesting and challenging activities. Most, but not all, children have pre-school experience in the nursery. This helps them settle quickly into the reception class and the teacher effectively builds on previous learning. Children join in enthusiastically with the rest of the school for assembly and other school activities. Good liaison between the teacher and support staff ensures success in planning for these children.
65. Most children when they start school are achieving standards that are very low. By the time they reach Year 1 their attainment is still well below the expected standard in most cases, but they have made good progress from their starting point.

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

66. When children first come to the nursery their personal, social and emotional development is very poor. They feel insecure, find it hard to leave their parents and show little or no curiosity about their new surroundings. By the time they enter the reception class they still are showing little curiosity but are leaving their parents with more confidence and are beginning to feel safe and secure at school. They are also beginning to realise that other children have needs, although this is still well below expectations for children of this age. By the time they enter Year 1 most children still do not meet expectations in their personal and social development, although they make good progress in a number of areas. There is not a high level of involvement with others and many still do not have a positive self-image, but they can dress independently, explore their own environment, initiate interactions with other people and begin to take control of themselves. The majority are sensitive to the needs of others and know the difference between right and wrong. Teachers ensure that there are good levels of support for the activities set during the day to develop co-operation. Children are increasingly prepared to take turns and to share resources. Friendships are quickly developing and most children are happy and secure in the school environment. Teaching is very good overall. For example, in a very good ICT lesson pupils made good progress, considering others, following instructions and working confidently with adults.

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

67. Children make good progress and some are in line to achieve the expected levels in language and literacy by the end of the Foundation Stage. By the time they are in Year 1, children say 'please' and 'thank you' and take part in conversations with each other. They cannot make up their own

stories and rhymes. Most are still reluctant to explore the meaning of new words but are happy to talk in a school situation to people that they do not know. Speaking and listening skills are very poor when children first come to the nursery and they do not speak clearly with confidence and control until they are well into the reception class. Here they develop well and most can express themselves clearly, using simple sentences by the time they leave. On joining the reception class, most cannot use language confidently in a variety of situations or experiment with a variety of mark making. By the time they enter compulsory education, most listen attentively and talk about their own experiences with an increasing vocabulary, although the majority still cannot make up their own stories. They clearly enjoy books, understanding how they work. Many associate sounds with letters, but very few recognise simple words. Teaching is good. It is well planned to introduce children to the significance of letter sounds, so that by the time they leave the reception class most are able to identify the initial sounds in rhyming words. All children understand that writing conveys meaning. When they first come to the nursery they know that books and the computer carry information, but very few can retrieve any of it. By the time they leave reception most understand the use of words to convey meaning but are unaware of the different purposes of writing, although they are beginning to use it as a means of communicating. Good planning is evident in the progress children quickly make. In a good literacy lesson they learn to put two letters together and distinguish sounds.

### **Mathematical development**

68. Attainment in the mathematical area of learning is below average. However, children achieve better in this area of learning, due to well planned, appropriate activities which hold their interest and enable them to make good progress. Resources are used well to allow plenty of practical mathematical experience. In lessons the teacher demonstrates high expectations of work and behaviour. The teaching of numeracy is good. On entry to the school most children are not even at the stage where they show interest in numbers or counting. They cannot compare two groups of objects to say whether they are the same number and few show any interest in shapes. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children can recognise and count numbers to ten and confidently use language such as 'big' or 'little'. Higher-attaining children are secure in their understanding of 'long', 'short' and 'small' and use their knowledge correctly. Some are able to make arrangements with objects and show an awareness of similarities in shapes. Only a few can sort, match, order and sequence, although most are familiar with counting rhymes and songs. Teaching in both the nursery and the reception classes is good. Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers use questioning very successfully to encourage pupil participation and understanding.

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

69. When they join the school, most children can investigate and play with construction blocks. They do not explore objects, show curiosity or show an interest in ICT. It is very difficult to get them to talk about significant things that have happened to them or express any feeling about personal events like the birth of a sister or brother. Speaking and listening are poor and many children have little to say about anything when they first come to the school. By the time they start in the reception class they are beginning to show curiosity and interest, particularly in ICT, and realise that tools can be used for a purpose. They still do not comment on the obvious differences between living things or ask questions about how things work. A few know some features of the locality, but the majority have not mastered the skills of cutting, joining, folding or building. None the less they make progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and the indications are that, by the time they are ready to start Year 1, most will have achieved the Early Learning Goal to use computers to support their learning. However, they stop short of achieving the Early Learning Goals in all other aspects of this area of learning. Teaching is good. In a lesson on pushing and pulling to make things change speed and direction teachers used questioning effectively to promote speaking and listening skills and involved pupils in a demonstration to encourage interest and enthusiasm. To promote children's understanding of the world around them effectively, teachers prepare interesting and motivating activities. Because the lessons are 'fun', children want to learn.



## **Physical development**

70. This is an area of learning where nearly all children reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they move to Year 1. The outdoor play area is used well, although physical skills are more successfully developed during sessions in the hall. The teacher's use of time and her management of the children are good. Children manage to find spaces well and listen and respond quickly to instructions. Most can experiment with different ways of moving. In a physical education lesson, the teacher's praise and encouragement resulted in positive improvement. In the classroom children use and manipulate construction and play equipment with growing confidence and dexterity. They are provided with a good range of resources and plenty of opportunity to develop their skills. Fine motor skills are well developed. However, when they first come to the school only a very few are confident at climbing, balancing, or using scissors. They usually need help with dressing or hygiene. Good pencil control is developing in their attempts at writing. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are in line with expectations. The teacher and her support staff manage young children very well and show an awareness of safety. The quality of teaching is good.

## **Creative development**

71. When joining the nursery class, most children enjoy the tactile nature of activities, although very few can complete tasks without help. A minority use imagination in play with others when they go into the reception class. When they leave the reception class, most children show an increasing ability to use imagination in activities and represent ideas in a variety of ways. The majority cannot use a wide range of materials to express feelings and ideas, but they readily explore colour, sound and texture in two dimensions. There are good activities to develop children's confidence. Teachers' records show that children are achieving just below the expected level in artistic development. The majority can make a considered choice of colours and mix paints effectively to acquire the correct shade. For example, they have enjoyed creating 3D work in pencil and collage depicting the story of Hansel and Gretel. Some children demonstrate good modelling skills. The provision of good resources allows children the opportunity for a wide range of experiences. For example, the role-play area enhances learning most effectively by providing children with a good forum to engage in imaginative play. In music, children enjoy singing in a range of songs from memory and express and communicate their feelings with a range of musical sounds. Teaching is good in this area of learning.

## **ENGLISH**

72. Standards are well below average in speaking and listening and below average in reading. However, language skills for many pupils are very low when they start school and all pupils, including those with special educational needs or EAL and those from traveller families, achieve well against their starting point as a consequence of good teaching. Attainment is adversely affected by the high mobility of pupils, but school systems indicate that those pupils who have been at the school since the nursery exceed the expected standards. In the current Year 2 over half the pupils have special educational needs.
73. At age seven, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well below average. Many pupils do not listen carefully or give inappropriate answers. Most pupils demonstrate only a limited vocabulary when attempting to communicate their thoughts and feelings. For example, a pupil who was asked to explain what is meant by 'a point of view' merely replied, 'Frog'. The school places a high priority on the development of speaking and listening and skills are developed well. Most pupils make good progress in language skills that are generally very weak on entry to the nursery. Pupils benefit from frequent planned opportunities for speaking and listening during the Literacy Hour and across the curriculum, although there are infrequent planned opportunities for drama. In lessons, teachers take every opportunity to widen pupils' vocabulary and extend their understanding of the use of language. Pupils' speaking skills are effectively developed as the teacher asks questions that can be answered in different ways. Technical language is used where appropriate and is always explained, ensuring that all pupils understand. Teachers also provide good role models in their own use of language to pupils.

74. In reading, standards are below average, but pupils achieve very well against their starting points. They read with developing accuracy. They are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to help them read unfamiliar words. Higher-achieving pupils confidently explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction and understand the purpose of contents and index pages. Most pupils, however, are unable to interpret a story in detail and do not give their own thoughts and opinions about the characters. All pupils are making very good progress due to the success of initiatives introduced as a result of the school's focus on improving skills. For example, their learning is considerably enhanced through the school reading club, which provides well-structured support for the development of reading skills. The club is organised by well trained and highly-committed teaching assistants, who make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Recently the school has embarked on a reading-recovery programme for pupils in Year 1, which is already having a very positive impact on progress. In order to address the imbalance of standards achieved between girls and boys, the school has recently purchased more non-fiction books, which are preferred by boys.
75. In writing, standards are well below expectations, although all pupils make good progress from their starting points. Higher-achieving pupils write legibly and spell a range of familiar words accurately. They are beginning to add descriptive words to improve their writing. A few are beginning to use punctuation accurately; for example, when they wrote a series of questions to ask Tidalik, each one correctly punctuated at the end with a question mark. Most pupils write simple words independently, but spelling is weak and punctuation is not usually used correctly. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and provide them with regular opportunities to develop their handwriting and spelling. Good assessment procedures are used well to establish group targets and to identify pupils for extra support in writing.
76. The high quality of teaching identified at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. It is mostly good and sometimes very good. In two lessons the teaching was excellent. A particular strength is the management of the pupils, which is very good. Very good relationships have been established, so that pupils have very good attitudes to the subject. They are keen to give of their best and work hard on given tasks. Teachers have high expectations and engage pupils' interest by setting a brisk pace and providing appropriately challenging work. Pupils with SEN or EAL and those from travelling families, make similar progress to other pupils, due to well-targeted support from teaching assistants, enabling them to take a full part in lessons. Across the school, teaching assistants are very well trained and briefed and they make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Almost all pupils work hard in their independent sessions during the Literacy Hour, which contributes positively to their social development. They co-operate and support each other well, frequently working in pairs, with higher-achieving pupils sensitively assisting lower-achieving pupils.
77. In all lessons, learning intentions are made clear to the pupils, so that they know what is expected of them and can judge for themselves whether they have achieved the learning objective by the end of the lesson. Resources are well organised and used most effectively to capture the pupils' interest and extend their understanding. This was the case when pupils were totally involved as they attempted to formulate questions to ask the toy duck-billed platypus. Where teaching is excellent, the teacher transmits her own enthusiasm for the subject and pupils sit enthralled as she tells them a story. All the teachers have good subject knowledge and for the most part plan their lessons effectively, providing good opportunities for pupils to build on their skills, based on their assessments of what they already know. However, the mixed age range in the class adds to the wide range of abilities. Where pupils are taught as one group, for example, at the beginning and end of the literacy lessons, the work is sometimes inappropriate to meet the needs of all the pupils within the group.
78. Teachers use marking effectively so that it tells individual pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. There is a limited use of information and communication technology to enhance learning, as when pupils write imaginary postcards from a tropical island. However, computers are not used well for drafting or redrafting writing. Pupils use their speaking

and listening skills well in subjects other than English and there are sufficient opportunities for reading. However, there are only limited opportunities for writing across the curriculum.

79. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership for the subject and is clearly focused on driving standards up. Useful evaluation data has been collected about the subject's strengths and weaknesses. The English co-ordinator has used this and information gained from efficient monitoring, to identify areas for development and to implement changes that are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Information about the attainment of pupils in reading and writing is collected frequently, in addition to samples of their work. These are used well to set class and group targets for pupils and predictions are made about likely levels of attainment by the end of Year 2. There are good resources, with an attractive and well-stocked library to enhance learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, although their attainment is well below the national average. This represents a similar picture to that of the previous inspection. The reason offered in the previous report was the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs within the group. This is still a critical factor, but the situation now is further exacerbated by the large percentage of pupils with English as an additional language and the high mobility of traveller children. However, as stated, this affects attainment in relation to the national average and not the progress the pupils make, which is good. The school's strategy for numeracy is effective and, together with good, very good and sometimes excellent teaching has succeeded in raising achievement. Higher-attaining pupils also make good progress and all the pupils who achieved Level 3 in last year's tests (SAT's) were all pupils who started at the nursery and remained in the school throughout their infant schooling. Pupils with SEN or EAL and traveller children, are very well supported in lessons, which helps them to learn and practise different strategies to improve both their mental and general mathematical learning. This successfully reinforces the understanding of what they need to do in lessons. This and the use of practical resources help them to understand what happens when numbers are added together, and contribute significantly to their achievement.
81. Standards in numeracy are well below average for most pupils, although the more able pupils attain higher. Girls perform slightly better than boys, but direct questioning by teachers is helping to redress this situation. They target questions to all groups and as a result there was no real evidence during the inspection to suggest any major differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
82. Progress in numeracy is good. Pupils build on previous learning well and use this knowledge to solve simple problems in number and money. In their mental activities, pupils count on and back in ones, twos, fives and tens. The more able pupils can answer questions, such as "What will come after?" and "What am I counting in? One, three, five or seven?" By the end of Year 2 most pupils are able to sequence coins. They put objects in order of size and use language such as "circle", "square", "rectangle", "triangle", "pentagon" and "hexagon". Most pupils are able to identify the properties of the different shapes in terms of the number of sides and angles. When sequencing objects, almost all pupils use mathematical vocabulary, such as "biggest", "longest", "medium-sized" and "smallest". They understand the meaning of doubling and halving.
83. Teaching and learning are at least good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Lessons are characterised by high levels of concentration and positive pupil attitudes. Teachers use very effective questioning techniques and ensure, often through direct questioning, that all pupils respond. A notable feature of the questioning is the fact that all the pupils respond confidently and are unafraid of offering incorrect answers. Teachers promote the basic skills of speaking and listening well, although writing is not as well developed. They plan together effectively and ensure that tasks are well matched to the needs of individual pupils. They ensure that learning is fun so that pupils are keen and interested in their work. Relationships between pupils and staff, and between pupils, are very good and have a positive effect on the quality of

learning seen in all lessons. Pupils behave well in lessons and treat equipment and each other with respect. Teachers have high expectations and this leads to high productivity from pupils, depending upon their ability. Good use is made of assessment to adjust future planning and to ensure that accurate targets are set for further improvement. The use of homework is satisfactory. Pupils work well in small groups, in pairs and independently on the tasks set and this promotes their moral and social development and supports inclusivity very well.

84. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator monitors the subject's performance closely and this has led to the progress pupils make. The accurate analysis of the national tests (SAT's) and other tests which are set regularly has led to well-supported learning programmes. There is a broad and balanced curriculum that covers all aspects of the subject well. Resources are good overall and there was evidence of ICT being used to support learning. The subject co-ordinator has drawn up a very comprehensive plan to support improvement in her subject. The governor for numeracy understands the school well and is committed to supporting the school to raise standards and reinforce the current upward trend.

## SCIENCE

85. The quality of pupils' work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are below expectations. They have declined since the last inspection, but significant improvements have been made in how the subject is now taught. There is significant variation in attainment between pupils of different backgrounds, especially resulting from the high mobility of pupils. Pupils with SEN achieve standards that are appropriate to their level of prior attainment. All pupils, including those with SEN and those with EAL, make good progress because of the good quality of support they receive. However, there is insufficient recognition of the range of levels of attainment within classes, partly due to the mixed age arrangement.
86. Pupils at the end of Year 2 are becoming familiar with the experimental and investigative approach to science. They are starting to develop the skills of scientific enquiry, observing carefully, making predictions, testing and recording their results. For example, they investigate changes in bread resulting from the application of heat and water, freezing and rolling. They experiment with different materials to discover which is the most suitable for making garden chairs. They learn about different materials' ability to absorb liquids and discuss waterproofing. In their study of magnets they list substances which are magnetic and those which are not. A scrutiny of their work shows that their knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties are sound. Their study of light sources is well linked to electricity and the construction of simple circuits. However, attainment is hampered by the arrangement in mixed-age classes where some pupils have just left reception while others are just into Year 2. The work is therefore too difficult for the youngest pupils and fails to challenge the more-able pupils. Progression over time is restricted because of the two-year rolling programme which results in parts of the programme of study being taught at an introductory stage for a proportion of the pupils over the two-year cycle.
87. The quality of teaching and learning, including that for pupils with SEN or EAL, is good overall. However, teachers' planning and a scrutiny of pupils' earlier work reveal that there are some weaknesses in current practices that limit the progress that pupils make. For example, plans do not take sufficient account of the different ages and levels of attainment within the class, with the work sometimes too difficult for lower-attaining pupils. As a result, adults have to spend more time supporting pupils so that they complete their work and less on challenging the more-able pupils. Resources are always well prepared in advance so that the pupils proceed with the work unhindered. Teachers have a secure and confident subject knowledge, which is used well to extend pupils' thinking. They provide clear instructions so that pupils know what they were supposed to learn, which enables them to make good progress. An investigative approach in lessons adds to interest and excitement in finding out. Questions are used effectively and carefully targeted to check and extend pupils' learning and to make them think for themselves. Pupils are well managed and as a result they behave exceptionally well and show very positive attitudes to learning. They work well together in groups, helping one another and showing real enjoyment in their lessons.

88. The subject is well managed. Assessment procedures have been introduced for investigative science but have not yet been set up for the other areas of study. The science club provides enhancement for the subject and also establishes a useful link with the local junior school. There are however areas for improvement. Standards are not high enough by the end of Year 2 and insufficient use is made of assessment, other than for investigative science. The co-ordinator does not monitor teaching sufficiently to share good practice. The use of big books such as 'The Human Body' in science teaching is making a contribution to the development of literacy skills.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

89. Overall, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations at the age of seven and they are making satisfactory progress. From the time pupils start school they are encouraged to experiment with paint and colour, to explore pattern, to work from observation and imagination and to respond to examples of art in the world around them. Nursery children have created a Humpty Dumpty collage, enjoyed finger painting and printed shapes with cotton reels. Reception children have enjoyed creating self-portraits in pastels and rolled conkers and leaves in shades of yellow, brown and orange. They have also drawn from observation and weaved paper to produce effective colour combinations. The pictures were lively and showed their enthusiasm for the project.
90. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment, especially in drawing and sketching, is at the expected level. This competence in using dry media, pencils, charcoal etc stands them in good stead when they leave for the junior school. Pupils' attainment in other aspects, such as painting, shows an average range of skill and understanding. There is sound development of practical skills in some classes, although this depends largely on the subject expertise of the teacher; for example, in using a computer software program or making a collage of the island of Mauritius and 'touchy-feely' books about the animals found on the island. The oldest pupils in Year 2 have learnt to use a larger range of materials and show increasing control of tools. Pupils with SEN and those with EAL make appropriate progress overall and transfer the skills they acquire to other subjects. Pupils in the Assessment Unit have experimented successfully with pastels, printing and collage. Their drawings of different types of fruit are vibrant and colourful.
91. Pupils enjoy their art work and are enthusiastic about the practical nature of the tasks. Attitudes are very good. Most pupils demonstrate concentration, collaboration and respect for the work of others. They work as individuals and most can also co-operate well in groups when required to do so. Behaviour in lessons is always good and often very good.
92. The quality of teaching is good. Most teachers have a good understanding of the subject, although some lack confidence in certain areas of learning and need more training in how to teach art skills. Where teachers' planning is good, it gives details of learning objectives and careful attention to the development of skills and techniques. In a very good lesson in Years 1/2, the teacher's good planning and use of time and resources enthused pupils to stay with the task of mixing two colours to produce a secondary colour. It also encouraged many to challenge their original ideas and come up with various interpretations on the theme. Teachers are responsible for their own assessment but, most are not assessing and recording pupils' individual progress in art regularly enough. Although good learning is taking place there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching, assessment and the standards being achieved. Examples of good learning and progress include a clear development in pupils' observational skills and in their understanding of artistic elements. The use of information and communication technology for graphic work is underdeveloped throughout the school.
93. The subject co-ordinator is committed to reviewing the scheme of work and plans the art curriculum well. However, there is no whole-school overview to monitor pupils' progress and consequently assessment does not adequately inform curriculum planning. Standards appear to have declined since the last inspection, but this is not strictly true because the school population is now starting at a much lower level and is making good progress in relation to prior attainment. Improvement is therefore satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

94. No lessons were observed during the inspection as the subject is alternated with art. Judgements are therefore based on a scrutiny of work, discussion with staff and pupils and an examination of planning documents and work on display. The standard of work seen is below national expectations. This is partly due to the arrangement of the classes, the large numbers of pupils with SEN and the high mobility of pupils through the school.

95. The work seen shows that pupils' skills in designing, making and evaluating are developing satisfactorily. All areas of the curriculum are covered, but opportunities in food technology are limited. The principles of planning, designing, making and evaluating are applied throughout
96. Pupils have designed and made a wide range of puppets with moving parts, using a variety of materials including paper plates, cardboard cylinders, bottles and textiles. Some pupils voluntarily made additional puppets at home with the help of their family and brought them in to school. In their designing and making of stained-glass windows they reflected on the wonder and beauty of light and colour, which contributed to their spiritual development. Their model of 'Our Purple Planet' provided opportunities to reconstruct an imaginary landscape composed of a wide range of shapes and colours. Their numeracy skills were used in naming all the 2D and 3D shapes incorporated. Some 3D work produced during the Creative Arts Week was displayed in Ely Cathedral for the Queen's jubilee celebrations. In food technology pupils melted chocolate, moulded it, designed packing and prepared it for distribution on Mothers' Day. After completing their work, pupils were appropriately encouraged to evaluate their efforts. In making products they are introduced to a range of tools including scissors, cutters and hammers, which they learn to handle with care.
97. No judgements are made about teaching since no lessons were observed during the inspection. In discussion with pupils it is clear that they have a positive attitude to the subject and enjoy their lessons.
98. The subject leader has developed an action plan with appropriate priorities. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. A new scheme of work has been adopted and planning includes links with literacy, numeracy and the use of computers. Monitoring is carried out through planning and a scrutiny of pupils' work and plans are in hand to start the monitoring of teaching. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped and work is not well matched to the pupils' ages and capabilities. There are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to study food technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

99. No lessons were seen as the school is at present teaching history. However, a scrutiny of work, interviews with the co-ordinator and planning documents indicate that, although standards are below expectations by the end of Year 2, achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards have fallen since the previous inspection because the school's situation now cannot be compared to that at the time of the previous inspection. As well as the significant number of pupils with SEN identified in the previous report there are also a large number of pupils with EAL, as well as the assessment unit and the high mobility of travellers' children, to account for the decline.
100. In Year 2, fieldwork is an important element and provides 'hands on' experiences, promoting asking and answering questions and carrying out investigations. The development of skills begins at the Foundation Stage, using ideas to develop geography through outdoor play. Geography is undergoing a substantial development, establishing links with a school in a rural area in order to compare and contrast 'a real place'. The promotion of speaking and listening skills, and the cross-curricular link with history, indicate that literacy is also being developed. Planning shows that pupils take part in a range of activities and that all required areas of learning are covered. Teachers use a variety of approaches to provide a rich and interesting curriculum; for example, Barnaby Bear, fieldwork, map work and an environmental project. The ICT co-ordinator is working with the geography co-ordinator to set up links with schools in contrasting localities through the Internet.
101. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The scheme of work offers good guidance to teachers to ensure continuity and progression in the teaching of geographical skills and pupils' knowledge of how people affect their environment and is helping to raise standards.

## **HISTORY**

102. Standards are below expectations and have declined since the last inspection. However, all pupils, including those with SEN or EAL, make good progress from their starting point and the school is making satisfactory improvement. Boys and girls perform at similar levels. Highly imaginative teaching is responsible for pupils' good achievement. Teachers bring learning to life through practical activities, which fire pupils' interest and motivate them. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and development of key skills. They handle and study a very wide range of historical artefacts, which gives them very good opportunities to find out and consider what life was like for people in the past. The school has constructed a Victorian kitchen using genuine Victorian artefacts displayed in a very realistic context. In a good lesson in the reception class pupils compare photographs of a Victorian kitchen with that constructed in the school. They observe such objects as the range, iron, carpet beater, washboard, bucket, tongs and warming pan. The discussion that takes place as a result brings their learning to life. The teacher tells them little initially and allows them to describe the characteristics of the artefacts, what they are used for and why? Many pupils sequence the time chronologically and all understand that this is now and in our kitchen we have this, but 'a long time ago' it was like this. They excitingly respond to questioning about how long it took to cook the food and do the washing and the ironing and how hard the work was. They were emphatic that after a hard day's work they could not watch television or use a microwave to cook a meal.
103. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers use artefacts very well to give pupils 'hands on' experience. This, together with teachers' ingenuity and charisma, make history lessons fun and meaningful. As a result, pupils have a very positive attitude towards their history lessons and concentrate very well throughout. They listen carefully in class and enthusiastically respond to questions asked. In every lesson, enthusiastic teachers fired pupils' imagination and led them to recount their experiences and display their knowledge with animation. Teachers have high expectations. Relationships are very good and this is reflected in good behaviour in all lessons.
104. The subject is led and managed effectively. Planning is good. Teachers plan across the year groups to ensure equality of opportunity and activities are carefully linked to the scheme of work. The co-ordinator monitors the planning very carefully but does not monitor teaching, learning and standards sufficiently. The overall picture is one of a subject that is improving and making a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

105. The standard of work seen is in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and similar to that seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils confidently use the mouse to move the arrow across the screen, select icons and position the cursor in the required position. They highlight and drag with competence and use the keyboard to produce script. In a good lesson in Year 1/2, pupils used the program Textease to vary the size of print, select different fonts and use colour to produce labels for their Victorian project. They successfully printed their labels and evaluated the finished product. Younger pupils know that many mechanical devices such as record players, traffic lights and CD players respond to commands and programme the floor turtle to perform operations. Older pupils explain happenings and determine the correct sequence of events. Throughout the school, pupils develop an appropriate vocabulary and talk about computer hardware and operations using relevant technical vocabulary such as 'mouse', 'select', 'icon' and 'cursor' with accuracy. Most pupils in Year 2 show familiarity with the keyboard functions, such as the 'return key' for a new line and 'caps lock' for a capital letter when word-processing simple sentences. The large number of pupils both leaving and joining the school during the year, with the resulting lack of continuity in learning and the combination of pupils from Years 1 and 2 in mixed-age classes, have affected overall standards for all pupils, including those with SEN and those with EAL.
106. The quality of teaching ranges from good to excellent and is good overall. All staff, including teacher assistants, are competent with and knowledgeable about the basic skills of ICT. They



give good support to all pupils according to their needs. Lessons are well planned so that skills develop progressively. Clear explanations and demonstrations of how to use the different parts of the program enable pupils to develop confidence. Emphasis on the use of appropriate vocabulary helps to consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. Ongoing assessment ensures that the pupils fully understand before moving on to the next stage of learning. The teachers' enthusiasm and the very good relationships between pupils and between them and staff result in pupils enjoying their lessons. They are highly motivated and have positive attitudes towards learning. Working in pairs, pupils learn to share ideas and help each other to use the computer. Pupils with SEN and those with EAL are fully involved.

107. The subject is well managed and all members of staff are enthusiastic and share a commitment to further develop the role of ICT in the curriculum. They have worked hard to improve their own competence and understanding of the use of computers and are passing on their enthusiasm to the pupils. This is raising standards throughout the school. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, and offers advice and support to colleagues in planning and teaching, but has yet to monitor teaching and learning in order to identify precisely where support is required and to share good practice. Procedures for assessment have yet to be developed and used to guide planning.
108. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection. A new computer suite has been established with a sufficient number of machines to allow each class to work in pairs and in addition each classroom has a computer for individual work during lessons. Software to support pupils' learning in other subjects is increasing, although it is still underdeveloped. Although some use is made of computers to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, ICT has yet to make a significant impact on pupils' learning in most other subjects.

## **MUSIC**

109. Standards have been significantly improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' performing skills are above average and their appraising skills are developing satisfactorily. Pupils are well targeted and are making good progress. Higher attainers and pupils with SEN or EAL achieve well.
110. Standards in singing are good and pupils perform confidently and enthusiastically. Pupils sing in tune and keep rhythms precise and together when singing in assembly.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of musical elements. The lessons observed had a very practical 'hands on' approach which pupils enjoyed immensely. In a good lesson in Year 1/2 pupils sang and clapped the pulse of 'Hickory, Dickory Dock'. They are beginning to understand that rhythm is different to pulse. As the lesson developed pupils began to understand the meaning and significance of rhythm by breaking up words into syllables. This was reinforced when the teacher introduced a poem and pupils were able to break the long words up into syllables. During the lesson one group clapped the beat whilst another clapped the rhythm or pattern. Even the youngest children were able to clap in tune and by following a pattern on the white board using mathematical shapes they were able to follow simple rhythmic patterns in turn.
112. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has focused on identifying staff that are confident and offers good support to others. She has ensured that there are enough good-quality instruments to deliver the subject appropriately. She has not had the opportunity to monitor the teaching and learning directly, but this is an area, which is being addressed. Pupils are given many opportunities to experience a wide variety of music. There are a good number of musical activities for them to take part in outside lessons and these make a good contribution to their learning in the subject. Pupils have good opportunities to listen to music from different countries, such as The Steel Band and this helps their growing awareness of cultures other than their own and supports the overall inclusion within the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

113. Standards throughout the school are in line with expectations. Although it was not possible to see all aspects of the curriculum, teachers' planning indicates that the full physical education curriculum is well taught to all pupils and they are acquiring a good range of physical skills. Pupils, including those who have SEN, achieve well and make good progress compared to their previous learning. By the end of Year 2, pupils perform a sequence of movements, replicating the actions of their partner during a dance lesson. They carry out appropriate warm-up and cool-down exercises during each lesson. There is a clear emphasis on safety, which is thoroughly discussed and explained at the beginning of each lesson and pupils show respect for apparatus and equipment. They follow routines without prompting; for example, in finding adequate space for movement at all times throughout the lesson. They evaluate their performance and make good efforts to improve. In games practice they follow instructions for holding a ball and rolling it accurately in the direction intended. They move safely around the room, changing direction at different speeds. When using apparatus the pupils follow agreed procedures for handling equipment safely.
114. The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are very well planned and the objectives are clearly explained. The class assesses whether the aims are achieved at the end of the lesson. The teacher demonstrates good practice as well as selecting good performance by individual pupils to demonstrate to the class and enable others to improve. The enthusiasm of the teacher and the praise and encouragement given to the pupils ensure enjoyment in the lessons. Pupils try hard. They are enthusiastic and careful in the activities they undertake. Teachers intervene appropriately to emphasise key skills and often effectively demonstrate what they want pupils to do.
115. The co-ordination of the subject is good. Improvements since the last inspection include updating of the scheme of work, an increase in resources and professional training for staff. Monitoring of learning is good and takes place through planning and discussion with staff. The monitoring of teaching is underdeveloped.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

116. Evidence obtained by lesson observations, pupils' work and discussion with pupils shows that, by the age of seven, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations and they are making good progress according to the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and improvement is satisfactory.
117. Year 2 pupils understand the significance of special events, such as Christmas and Easter. They know some of the Old Testament stories and that other religions have festival times too. Some higher achievers are able to explain why Hindus decorate their palms with 'Mendhi' patterns at the time of the festival of Divali. Assemblies give good opportunities for pupils to think and reflect on Christian beliefs and to relate these to their own faith. Pupils are encouraged to be accepting of differences and to care for one another throughout the school, both within and outside formal lessons. They have good opportunities to hear about faiths other than Christianity. Their personal, social, cultural and spiritual development is enriched by their work in religious education. The additional support given effectively to pupils with SEN or EAL allows them to be fully involved in lessons, enabling them to make good progress.
118. Most pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons. Although some younger pupils in Year 1 are still developing their speaking and listening skills, they are keen to answer questions and listen to other pupils' contributions. They enjoy being actively involved in paired or small group discussion. Displays around the school reflect good work.
119. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. Teachers prepare clear lesson plans. They generally have good subject knowledge, as in Year 1/2 and make good use of other teachers' personal expertise. In the best lessons there is a good

pace to learning through skilled questioning. This questioning prompts pupils to think about ideas and give opinions, as in a good Year 1/2 lesson.

120. The subject is well planned. However, the co-ordinator does not have time to monitor teaching and there are no formal assessment procedures to adequately evaluate pupils' progress.