

# INSPECTION REPORT

## RIPLEY INFANT SCHOOL

Ripley

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112612

Headteacher: Ms C Lodge

Reporting inspector: Mrs L J Traves  
24039

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Inspection number: 247246

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kirk Close Ripley Derbyshire
Postcode:	DE5 3RY
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Eley
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
24039	Mrs L Traves	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
13723	Mrs J Overend	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
30724	Mrs D Hiscock	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
30954	Mr B Ashcroft	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education Religious education Educational inclusion	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Ripley Infant School is situated in the town of Ripley, in Derbyshire. It is about the same size as other schools of this type, with 172 pupils on roll, between the ages of 4 and 7 years. Most pupils come from the mixture of privately owned and local authority housing close to the school. There are more boys than girls. There are more children entitled to free school meals than in most schools (over a quarter) but a lower number (11 per cent) identified as having special educational needs. These are mostly related to learning difficulties. Most pupils are white and few are from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils speaking English as an additional language (1.8 per cent) is a bit higher than in most schools. These pupils speak Russian as their mother tongue. The majority of pupils are taught in single-age classes. There is, however, one class of mixed Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally as expected for pupils of this age. The headteacher is new since the last inspection and has been in post a year.

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

Ripley is an improving school. It is effective in valuing all its pupils and meeting their needs. The majority of pupils achieve average standards in most subjects and make steady progress. There are indications that pupils are on course to reach higher standards in the future in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Although most of the teaching is satisfactory and sometimes better, there is some room for improvement. The headteacher leads and manages the school well. With the support of the staff and governors, she is rapidly moving the school forward. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are strong and effective;
- The school values its pupils and includes them in all it has to offer;
- It provides well for pupils with special educational needs;
- It helps pupils develop good attitudes to school and get on with others;
- Staff and governors are committed and hard working; they give good support to the headteacher in improving the school.

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

- The quality and consistency of teaching;
- Aspects of the provision for pupils in the reception class (The Foundation Stage).

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

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

Improvement since the last inspection in December 1997 has been satisfactory, overall. There have been several changes of headteacher since this time and this has slowed developments. However, since the appointment of the current headteacher, improvement has been rapid. All of the key issues identified last time have now been addressed, either fully or in part. The school recognises, however, that there is still more to do in strengthening teaching and improving pupils' progress. Standards in ICT and history have improved and are now satisfactory. Staff are much more confident in using new technology because of the training they have received. The curriculum has been strengthened, with schemes of work now being in place in all subjects. These are providing good guidance for staff and enabling pupils to build more steadily on their skills from year-to-year. Effective systems for assessing pupils' academic progress have been implemented in English and mathematics and are enabling staff to have a better understanding of the next steps in learning for their pupils. This is helping to bring about improvement in these subjects. Sharper systems are also in place for evaluating the work of the school and deciding on priorities for improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

When compared to all schools, standards were average in reading and writing in the 2002 tests for Year 2 pupils. When compared with similar schools, standards were above average. In mathematics, the picture was not as strong, with results being well below average in relation to all schools and below average compared with similar schools. This was because teaching has not been as strong in the subject. Inspection findings reflect a similar picture in reading and writing and a better one in mathematics. Results are set to improve this year, with more pupils likely to reach the average level (Level 2) in all three subjects. In mathematics, this improvement is likely to be substantial. Better teaching has led to improved progress. In science, teacher assessments show standards to be average, overall. In the majority of other subjects, standards are similar to those found in most schools. In the gymnastics element of physical education (PE), standards are better than those usually seen. It was not possible to judge standards in music overall, as only singing was seen. Standards are average in this element.

When they enter school, the attainment of most pupils is as expected for their age, except in their understanding of number, which is slightly below. They make at least steady progress in all areas of learning to reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year. Their ICT skills develop particularly well.

Standards are rising throughout the school and pupils are now learning at a faster pace, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. The school has worked hard in literacy and numeracy, to improve the learning experiences offered to pupils and to strengthen teaching. The national strategies for both literacy and numeracy are now being used to better effect. In literacy, letter sounds, spelling patterns and handwriting are taught systematically and effectively throughout the school. Pupils' number skills are developing securely and they are more confident at working out problems themselves. As a result, progress is starting to accelerate. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as do those who speak English as an additional language because of the good quality support they receive. The school has set itself appropriately challenging targets for 2003 and 2004 and is working hard to achieve these.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils work hard in most lessons and concentrate well, particularly when the teaching is lively and challenging.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in class and in the playground is good, overall. They work and play together well. Occasionally, a small number lose concentration when the teaching does not hold their attention.
Personal development and	Good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They get on well with their teachers

relationships	and each other. Pupils respond well when given responsibilities and opportunities to work together.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Some pupils miss school in early September because of family holidays.

The school has an effective partnership with parents. It helps them to support their children's learning at home.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 - 2</b>
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

*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.*

Teaching overall is satisfactory. Of the lessons seen, 4 out of 10 were good or better. There were 2 unsatisfactory lessons. This is a slightly different picture to the last inspection, when much of the good teaching was seen in the reception classes. This time, it was spread more evenly across the school. There were also fewer unsatisfactory lessons seen this time. The best teaching was observed in the Year 2 class taught by the deputy head.

In the reception classes, teachers ensure that children make steady progress in all areas of learning. However, not enough opportunities are provided for them to explore and choose activities independently. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are taught well. Teachers and teaching assistants are sensitive to their particular needs and give high quality support, both in class and individually. As a result, they make good progress. In most lessons, pupils are well managed and relationships are good. In response, pupils usually behave well and try hard for their teachers. In the best lessons, teaching is lively, interesting and challenges all pupils. In these lessons, teachers are very clear about what it is they want children to learn and explain this to them well. As a result, pupils 'cotton on' quickly and learning is rapid. In many lessons, teachers use questions well to draw out what the pupils already know and build on this well. Resources are often used creatively, to stimulate interest or to ensure all are involved. Teaching in both literacy and numeracy lessons has improved because of the recent training staff have undertaken. In the less successful lessons, there is a lack of 'sparkle' and the pace is slower. Pupils occasionally 'go off the boil' because the teaching does not catch their interest. In these lessons, teachers' explanations often lack clarity because they are not clear enough themselves about what they are trying to achieve. As a result, pupils become confused and time is wasted as teachers address misunderstandings. Sometimes, the activities pupils are given are not the right ones to reinforce what the teacher wants them to learn and consequently, pupils make slower progress. On a few occasions, the work does not match the pupils' abilities closely enough.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. All subjects receive sufficient attention. The school is working hard to improve and enrich the learning experiences on offer, for example, through visits and visitors. More opportunities are needed in the Foundation Stage for children to learn through play.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' learning needs are identified early. Achievable targets are set for them. They receive good quality support
Provision for pupils with English as an additional	Good. The school is sensitive to their needs and provides appropriate support, which enables them to make good progress.

language	
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Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good in moral and cultural development. Social development is very good and spiritual development is sound. Teachers provide many opportunities for the pupils to work and play together. Good attention is paid to teaching pupils about the diversity of other cultures. Opportunities are sometimes missed to reflect, for example, on the feelings music provokes.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils and values them as individuals. Pupils' academic progress is effectively monitored. There is an effective policy to promote racial harmony.

In the Foundation Stage, more opportunities could be provided for the pupils to work and play independently and make their own choices. The school does not have a policy for identifying and supporting pupils with particular gifts or talents.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher leads and manages the school well. She sets clear direction for its work. She is effectively supported by the deputy and staff in bringing about improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors give strong support. They are closely involved in evaluating the school's performance and making decisions about its future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school effectively identifies the key areas where improvement is needed and takes action to bring this about. Good use is made of the information collected on pupils' progress to make changes to teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of funding to support its priorities, for example, in ICT. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils with special educational needs.

There are sufficient staff to deliver the curriculum. The accommodation and learning resources are good. ICT resources have been improved. Office and site management staff carry out their duties efficiently. The school has sound arrangements for checking that best value is obtained for the money it spends. For example, it compares its performance with others and compares the prices of goods and services.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school;</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard;</li> <li>• Their children make good progress;</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The activities provided outside lessons;</li> <li>• The amount of homework provided;</li> <li>• The information provided for parents;</li> <li>• The way the school works with them.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. The school provides a similar amount of homework and activities outside lessons to most infant schools. The amount of information provided for parents is good. However, the school could seek parents' views more effectively.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school's results in the national tests for 7-year-olds, taken together over the last four years, show that in reading and writing, pupils' attainment has been broadly average. In mathematics, standards have not kept pace with the national trend, being below and more recently, well below average. A dip in results in all three subjects in 2001 was a result of more pupils having special educational needs in that particular class. This dip was reversed in reading and writing in the 2002 tests, with pupils reaching average standards. However, in mathematics, although the number of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) improved, results remained well below average. When compared to similar schools, Ripley fared better in reading and writing, with results being above average. In mathematics, they were below average. Not as many pupils at Ripley achieved the higher level (Level 3) as in schools nationally in reading and mathematics, although in writing more pupils achieved this.
2. When children enter school, their attainments are generally as expected for this age group. The exception to this is in number, where attainment is below average for many. In response, more attention is now being paid to developing this area in the early stages. Assessments completed in the first few weeks of school in both mathematics, reading and writing show that there are few children of higher ability. Pupils make steady progress overall and by the time they enter Year 1, the majority have reached the standards expected in all six areas of learning.
3. Inspection findings show a brighter picture than the test results, with standards set to improve. In the current Year 2 classes, more pupils are on course to reach both the expected and the higher levels in all three subjects. The current Year 1 pupils are on course to reach even higher standards the following year, if their rate of progress is maintained. Improvements in reading, writing and mathematics have been brought about by better support for pupils' learning, an improved curriculum and stronger teaching in some aspects. The school is working hard to eradicate the 'tail' of underachievement, where too many pupils fail to reach average standards or only just reached the lower stages of Level 2, particularly in mathematics and writing. The good assessment arrangements now in place in these subjects are enabling the school to pinpoint more closely those who are struggling and provide them with extra support. Good use is being made of 'catch up' programmes in literacy and adult support is given in class. In writing, a boost has been given to those who the school feels are capable of achieving the higher level. This proved particularly effective last year for a small group of pupils and is being repeated and extended to reading. In mathematics, the national numeracy strategy has now been fully taken on board. Teachers have had extra training and are using the strategy's framework more effectively now to guide their teaching and children's learning. As a result, progress is accelerating. Pupils are benefiting from the daily, structured approach and from the opportunity for more practical, investigative work. In literacy, a phonic teaching programme has been introduced and is boosting progress and daily group reading sessions guided by the teacher are used to better effect. These improvements in teaching need to be taken further to ensure the trend continues. As yet, there is not a consistent picture across all classes and within subjects and in some lessons progress is slower than it could be. Teachers are still 'fine tuning' the new approaches used. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for reading, writing and mathematics and is working diligently towards achieving them.

4. Standards in English are average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make the best progress in the class taught by the deputy head because of consistently good teaching. Progress is steady, rather than sharp in the other classes because teaching is not so consistently effective. However, good progress is now being made in most classes in spelling, handwriting and punctuation because these are taught systematically. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are confident readers who read with expression and growing fluency. Although standards are average in writing, significantly more pupils only just reach the expected level than in reading. One reason for this is that when pupils enter Year 1, they lack independence in writing. Throughout the school, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write at length or to create their own stories and poems. Speaking and listening skills develop steadily throughout the school because pupils are given opportunities to talk in pairs and small groups and to share their ideas.
5. Pupils are now reaching average standards in mathematics. Progress is improving throughout the school, as changes are made to the way mathematics is taught. The daily mental and oral activities at the start of lessons are helping pupils to become more confident and competent with number. Pupils are given good opportunities to solve problems and carry out practical tasks, such as measuring.
6. Standards in science are also average, as at the time of the last inspection. The school has identified that pupils' achievements are weaker in the area of physical processes. Measures have been put in place to address this and are proving effective. More opportunities are now being given for practical and investigative work. Pupils' progress is starting to accelerate, as a result, but this is not yet consistent throughout the school.
7. In ICT and in history, standards are satisfactory. They have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers are now more skilled in teaching ICT, the curriculum has improved and there are more computers available. In history, a new national scheme is providing teachers with good guidance and enabling pupils to build progressively on their skills from year to year, in most aspects. In the majority of other subjects, standards are average. It was not possible to judge standards overall in music only the singing element was being taught during the inspection period. In the gymnastics element of PE, standards in Year 2 are above those normally seen.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities. Their needs are quickly identified and appropriate support is provided to help them achieve the targets set for them. Pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress. Good support and advice from the local education authority is utilised effectively by the school.

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

9. Pupils have good attitudes towards school and behave well, which is a similar picture to the last inspection. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the meeting agreed that their children like school and are eager to talk about their work. This enjoyment of school is underpinned by the good relationships that exist throughout the school and the value staff place on every individual. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. They try hard to please their teachers and the other adults who work with them. Pupils readily volunteer for activities or to answer questions, showing confidence and lots of interest in new experiences. Reception children settle quickly because of the clear routines and high level of care from all staff, which makes them feel secure. Most children work hard and are compliant in lessons and

will stick at their tasks, even when they are less interesting or the pace of the lesson slows.

10. Pupils' behaviour is generally good in classrooms, around the school and in the playground. Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion with the children queuing in very orderly fashion and chatting very amiably with each other. The midday supervisors are friendly and helpful and act as good role models for the children. The children are polite and respectful to staff and to each other. In the playground behaviour is mostly good humoured and pupils play well together, making good use of the playground markings and equipment. Children show respect for conventions in assemblies, joining in every activity with enthusiasm and listening carefully. In the few instances when children do not behave as well, they are managed skilfully by teaching and support staff to minimise the disruption to others. There have been no exclusions in the last twelve months.
11. Relationships between all members of the school community are good. Pupils and staff work together well in a caring atmosphere. This encourages the children to work well with each other. They are given many opportunities to work together and they co-operate and collaborate productively. This was seen in two Year 2 PE lessons, where the children worked together sensibly and safely to get out and put away large apparatus. In a mathematics lesson children worked in pairs, with one child drawing a shape while the other reflected the shape for them using a mirror. Younger children also work well together. For example, in reception, when they use the computers, they share well and help each other. In one lesson a child showed another how to clear the screen when using 'Paintbox'.
12. Children's personal development is good, overall. They cheerfully take on responsibilities and carry them out well, whether feeding the fish in reception, taking the registers, being a class monitor or being a playground friend. Children quickly learn to look after their own needs, for example, fastening their own shoes and coats, from the earliest stages. In the Key Stage 1 classes, pupils are given good opportunities to research for themselves, both from books and the Internet. This develops their skills as independent learners effectively. However, in the reception classes, pupils are sometimes 'over directed' by adults and do not have sufficient opportunities to investigate for themselves.
13. Attendance is satisfactory. The overall attendance figures are near to the national average and most children arrive in school punctually. Lessons get off to a prompt start so no time is wasted. For most children, attendance is supporting their attainment and progress. In September, however, the rate falls significantly due to parents taking children on holiday in term time. These holidays are invariably short, and at present are not damaging to children's progress, but this will need to be monitored.

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

14. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, as it was judged to be at the time of the last inspection. However, there has been an improvement this time in that the amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed is significantly less. A similar proportion of good and very good teaching was seen. However, this was spread more evenly throughout the school, rather than being located mainly in the reception classes, as it was last time. There has been an improvement in the teaching of ICT and teachers' subject knowledge is more robust. However, the picture is not yet a consistent one; across and within year groups and subjects, there are pockets of very good teaching and pockets where teaching is more ordinary and on a very few occasions,

unsatisfactory. The strongest teaching was observed in the Year 2 class taught by the deputy head.

15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, overall. This is not as strong as it was judged to be last time. The staff have worked hard in recent months to implement the relatively new national curriculum arrangements for pupils of this age group. This has been a steep learning curve and staff are still evaluating and developing their practice. As a consequence, they do not always get the balance right between directing the children in activities and allowing them to explore and investigate. However, all adults working with the children set a good example and the teamwork is very strong. Relationships between the adults and children are very positive and, as a result, children feel secure and settled in their environment. Teachers plan a good range of learning experiences in all areas of learning. Children are well supported in all the activities they undertake. Early reading and number skills are taught systematically and this helps children develop confidence. However, too few opportunities are provided for them to choose their own activities and follow their own lines of enquiry. Activities are sometimes over directed by adults and allow too little time for exploration. As a result, children do not always make the progress they could in some areas of learning.
16. In almost all lessons, teachers manage pupils well and as a result, they almost always behave well. Occasionally, when teaching is less exciting and does not hold their interest, one or two pupils go 'off the boil' and lose concentration. Their progress slows, as a result. However, because of pupils' good attitudes to learning, overall, most are usually compliant, even when teaching lacks 'sparkle.' The school's strategies for promoting good behaviour are used consistently by all staff and this encourages pupils to do their best. The majority of pupils concentrate well and are keen to get on with their tasks. Relationships are good between teachers and pupils and this also encourages them to work hard to please their teachers. The majority of lessons are characterised by a good working atmosphere.
17. In the best lessons, teachers' plans are clear and detailed, setting out exactly what they want pupils to learn and how this will be achieved. This information is shared with the pupils in a way that they understand and tasks are explained clearly. For example, in a Year 2 geography lesson, the teacher explained very clearly why the class were looking at postage stamps from around the world and gave step-by-step instructions about how they would carry out the task. As a result, no time was lost and pupils' learned rapidly. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher very carefully checked on what the children already knew about symmetry and took their learning on from this point, adapting her planning appropriately. She used the time at the end of the lesson very effectively to ensure pupils had met the objective of the lesson. At other times, however, teachers do not break the learning into small enough steps and are sometimes unclear as to what they want pupils to achieve. As a result, pupils become confused about what is expected of them and this slows their learning. This was seen in a geography lesson in another Year 2 class, where too many concepts about stamps and currency were introduced. Explanations were unclear and time was wasted, as further explanations had to be given to individual pupils. Some pupils lost interest in the task because of this. On other occasions, teachers stick too rigidly to their plans, even when it is clear that pupils have a good knowledge of the topic being taught. They spend too much time reinforcing previous learning. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of 'pushes and pulls.' The most able pupils, in particular, did not need the amount of reinforcement given and could have been challenged more effectively.
18. In the majority of lessons observed, resources were used effectively to illustrate the concepts being taught and to involve and interest the pupils. For example, in two Year

1 science lessons, the children were enthralled when a bike was produced from the teacher's cupboard to enable them to have first hand experience of how 'pedal power' made the bike move. In response, pupils were very clear, for example, about how the brakes worked to stop the forward momentum. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were thoroughly absorbed and worked together well in pairs as they solved a problem using 'unifix' cubes. In the shared parts of the majority of literacy and numeracy lessons, individual whiteboards and pens are used to good effect to ensure all pupils take part in answering questions and working things out.

19. In the majority of lessons, tasks of different levels of difficulty are offered to pupils of different abilities, or they are provided with adult support. Where these tasks are well matched to pupils' needs, they are absorbed in their work because they have to think hard about what they are doing. On a few occasions, particularly in some of the more ordinary and unsatisfactory lessons, tasks are not so well matched. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson, more able pupils sorted pictures into 'old' and 'new'. They completed in a very short time and the opportunity was not taken to challenge them further. Also, on a few occasions, tasks were too hard for less able pupils to complete without support. This resulted in them 'switching off' and producing very little. This was evident in a Year 1/2 literacy lesson, where more support was needed to enable a small group of pupils to describe a character from a traditional tale.
20. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. Teachers have had recent training in these areas and this is starting to pay off. The strategies needed to read and spell unfamiliar words are taught systematically throughout the school, enabling pupils to build well on their previous learning. Teachers are good at helping children to develop and use number skills with confidence, through the daily oral and mental mathematics sessions. Teachers pay good attention in these lessons to introducing pupils to the correct vocabulary. Occasionally in literacy and numeracy lessons, the tasks given to pupils do not challenge them as effectively as the shared parts of the lesson. They do not always reflect strongly enough what it is teachers want the pupils to learn. The teaching of ICT is at least satisfactory and teachers' confidence and competence has developed well as a result of recent training.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and ensures they make good progress in relation to their abilities. Any pupils needing extra help, including those with English as an additional language, are dealt with sensitively and their progress is regularly monitored. Both teachers and teaching assistants give good support to these pupils. Their individual needs and personal targets are well known to staff and any potential difficulties posed by lesson content or materials are foreseen and tasks or support are adjusted appropriately. Individual education plans are used effectively by teachers and teaching assistants to guide learning for pupils with special educational needs. Those with a statement are particularly well supported towards their targets. This is because teachers ensure that activities are well matched to pupils' needs and anything that presents a barrier to learning is managed well.

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

22. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. Suitable plans are in place for all subjects and those for religious education follow the locally agreed syllabus. The strong lead of the headteacher and good teamwork by staff has ensured the successful updating of many subject policies and schemes of work. These have addressed many of the shortcomings identified at the time of the previous inspection. Planning for lessons is

sound and where the school has adapted and supplemented the national guidance, learning experiences are more relevant to the pupils. In addition, better planned links across subjects are leading to a better rate of achievement than previously because there are more opportunities for pupils to use the skills they have learned in one subject in others.

23. There have been significant improvements in the provision for ICT since the last inspection. This has led directly to standards being raised. The nationally recommended scheme of work has been implemented and is now ensuring that children build on their skills from year to year. This has been supplemented through the use of a commercial scheme to extend the range of learning experiences on offer. In addition, some staff have created good quality resources themselves, as a direct result of the training they have undertaken. For example, good games and activities have been designed to teach pupils how to write simple procedures to programme 'Roamer' (a programmable toy). Resources have been improved. Banks of computers in classrooms, which are linked to each other and to the Internet now enable groups of pupils to use the computers throughout the day, as an integral part of their learning.
24. The curriculum for the children in their reception year is also satisfactory. National guidance has been implemented recently. This is improving teachers' planning and has addressed some of the issues identified during the previous inspection. Some rich and imaginative activities are now provided. Efforts are being made to link areas of learning more closely and to provide more first hand investigation and play. However, staff are still in the process of getting to grips with the practicalities of organisation, to ensure that experiences offered meet the needs of all children more fully. As yet, there is not a strong enough focus on activities that children instigate and follow through themselves. Also, the balance between teacher directed activities and those children have chosen themselves could be improved.
25. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs identified at the last inspection has been maintained. Many of the targets are precise and are checked to measure how much pupils have learned and to set new targets. Very good support is provided for those pupils who have a statement. They benefit from the sensitive input of the adults who work with them while they complete their tasks. For example, in PE, the sensitive guidance of an adult provided a child with equal access to the full range of activities as others. Individual educational plans are used well. Teachers generally plan to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils in most subjects. The few pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress. This is a result of appropriate work programmes being provided and the awareness of all adults who work with them of how best to support them.
26. There is effective provision for pupils to learn the early skills of literacy and numeracy. This is having a positive effect on standards. For example, early numeracy skills are taught effectively now because of better use being made of the national strategy. In literacy, the systematic teaching of letter sounds and blends, handwriting and spelling provides a firm base for future learning.
27. The school is also working hard to enrich and enhance the curriculum in a variety of ways. A sound range of visits, visitors and practical experiences are provided and the school is currently examining ways to extend these. For example, the children have undertaken tree planting with the 'Groundwork Trust' to raise their appreciation of their environment and the care it needs. Christian organisations have taken assemblies. An artist and illustrator, puppeteers and music groups have all visited to help make the learning more interesting and relevant. Sports training coaches have, on occasions, helped the children to develop skills in hockey, cricket and football, through

good use of their specialist knowledge. This has also ensured that the pupils have learned about the links between sport and health. Visits to Sudbury Hall, Carsington reservoir and 'Sherwood Pines' have enhanced their historical and geographical knowledge and also added to their social and cultural experiences. The school provides a sound number of activities outside lessons, including sewing and ICT, which is similar to the majority of infant schools.

28. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. There is an effective policy and clear guidance in place to ensure coverage of all aspects. This is enabling the children to acquire knowledge and skills progressively as they move through the school. The ethos of the school and the good links forged with the local community contribute positively to citizenship education. 'Circle Time' (when children sit and discuss issues pertinent to their lives), is used effectively to promote their moral and social understanding. The school has won a 'Healthy School' award, which has contributed, to pupils' awareness of healthy life styles. The children are also taught about safety in lessons such as PE and in geography, people were interviewed to show how traffic access to the school site affects people's safety and the safety requirements of the nearby building site.
29. The school has made good links with the local community and its partner institutions. For example, a local supermarket has provided a food and a vegetable tasting session to contribute to the healthy eating messages. Local service providers, such as the Fire Service and the police visit regularly, as does the local church minister. The school sets the example to the children of giving back to the community through its charity initiatives, including taking harvest gifts to a local residential home. There are productive links to the junior school and nursery, which contribute to pupils' learning and ensure smooth transition. For example, there has been liaison with the junior school over writing policy and use is made of its field for sports day. Students from local colleges are welcomed for teaching practice and work experience, including pupils from a local school, who have also visited to give musical performances.
30. The provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is judged to be good, overall. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies are well planned and relate to the children's lives. Meaningful experiences and opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their lives. In an assembly on the theme of 'precious things', for example, the children gasped in awe when a child and then the teacher saw themselves in a mirror and realized they were special and precious. As a result, they fully understood the message. Religious education lessons are also being used well to help the children reflect on their own beliefs, feelings and values. However, while opportunities are sometimes taken in other subjects to promote spiritual development this aspect has not been planned for throughout the curriculum. For example, opportunities are missed for pupils to listen to music and reflect on and express what it meant to them.
31. The provision for moral development is good. Pupils receive plenty of guidance on knowing the difference between right and wrong. They have the chance to be involved in their making their own rules and the school has a clear system of rewards and sanctions so they understand what is acceptable behaviour. For example, the reception children have a code of conduct for using the computer, which they have discussed and is displayed clearly by the computer. Many lessons include moral messages. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson in which children looked at old and new things and discovered that old things may still look good if they are looked after properly but new things can look old if they are not cared for. In a Year 2 literacy lesson the children were taught the danger of taking things at face value and the story of Red Riding Hood was used to teach about 'stranger danger'. Personal, social and

health education (PSHE) and Circle Time are used to give opportunities to discuss moral and behaviour issues that affect them. The children also are encouraged to consider the needs of others and what their response could be through charity initiatives, such as 'Red Nose Day.'

32. The provision for social development is very good. It is very well planned for and reinforced throughout the day. Teachers thoughtfully plan many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups, in many different subject areas. An example of this is the response partners in literacy, where children share their ideas with each other. This helps each child improve their own and their partner's work. In lessons such as PE, teachers plan good opportunities for teamwork. For example, they set up the apparatus and work on it together. Geography lessons include trips into the local area to study issues such as traffic congestion and for interviews with local people, which develops their understanding of the community in which they live. On the playground, areas are marked out to include quiet areas and areas for games, and play equipment is provided. This ensures that all children, whatever their interests, have a chance to socialise and develop their skills of co-operating and negotiating with others, in different contexts. At lunchtimes, pupils are encouraged to chat to friends as they share their meal together, which also effectively develops their social skills.
33. The provision for cultural development is good. In geography the children look at their own town of Ripley as part of the comparative study with the fictional Scottish Island of Struay. This deepens their understanding of how peoples' lives are affected by the place where they live and how their needs differ. Traditional tales are studied in literacy and traditional playground games are taught and played. Famous local people are looked at in history such as Barnes Wallace. The 'Footprints Theatre' group has visited the school, as have the 'Pinxton Puppets.' Music groups that have played for the children include a local jazz group. Such opportunities develop the pupils' understanding of their rich cultural heritage. The children also experience a wide range of multicultural activities. Good use has been made of Barnaby Bear to broaden children's knowledge of different holiday destinations. Very good quality displays are used to support their studies, such as 'clothes from around the world' and the celebration of Chinese New Year. These catch pupils' interest and arouse their curiosity. Pupils' understanding of the beliefs and cultures of others is deepened as they study the festivals of other religions such as the Jewish festival of Sukkoth. Musicians, including an African music group and a Caribbean steel drum band, have visited the school to enhance pupils' appreciation of the cultural diversity that exists within their own country.

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

34. The school takes good care of its pupils. Staff provide a supportive environment within which all children are valued and treated as special. Children with special educational needs are well supported in the classroom and their problems are identified early. Their individual education plans are of good quality and are used effectively to support their progress. Reception children are well supported and helped to settle quickly as they enter the school. Children who speak English as an additional language are also well supported through weekly sessions with visiting specialists and through the sensitive approach of their teachers. This ensures they learn well. The parents are happy with the care and support their children receive.
35. A high emphasis is placed on promoting children's health, safety and welfare. Staff are kept aware of child protection issues by the coordinator who renews her training every 2 years to ensure she is up to date and all staff are vigilant. There are sufficient numbers of trained first aiders and accidents are recorded properly. The needs of

children with medical conditions are effectively met. The school grounds and buildings are regularly audited and risk assessments are in place to inform practice. A good feature of the provision is the annual review of statutory health and safety procedures to ensure the guidelines are met. The children are taught about safety at appropriate times in the curriculum and the school promotes healthy lifestyles through some lessons and has won the healthy schools award.

36. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. A close eye is kept on attendance, through the use of computerised records. All instances of children being late are recorded for monitoring purposes. Full attendance each term is rewarded to encourage the children. The school makes good use of the educational welfare officer to follow up any problems.
37. All staff actively promote good behaviour. There is consistent application of the behaviour policy. School rules are discussed with the children so they understand them and they are simply worded so they are easily remembered. These are backed up well with 'I am pleased with you' notes, reward stickers, 'The Golden Book' and 'Golden Child' awards to reward good behaviour. Sanctions include 'I am disappointed' sheets and 'red cards' which the children understand very well. There is an effective policy in place to promote racial harmony and any incidents of harassment and bullying are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. There are good systems in place to monitor incidents of poor behaviour or bullying, including problems that occur at lunchtime. Parents are involved and informed appropriately where there are behaviour concerns. The personal development of children with special educational needs is recorded systematically. There are no formal procedures in place for recording the personal development of the other pupils. However, staff know all the children and their circumstances well and have a good understanding of their individual needs.
38. The school has good arrangements in place for collecting and analysing information about pupils' progress. This is a notable improvement since the last inspection. The school is now able to set targets for groups and individuals based on what they have achieved already and what they are likely to achieve in the future. The close analysis of test results is enabling staff to identify gaps in teaching and learning and address these. Teachers now have detailed information to identify those pupils capable of achieving more, as well as those who may not have achieved as well as expected and provide appropriate support for them. Samples of work are collected and pupil progress is also measured in other subjects. This is helping teachers to have a clearer understanding of what pupils should be achieving at each stage. However, in some lessons, ongoing assessment could be used more productively to ensure that all pupils are correctly challenged.
39. Good account is taken of information to identify and support pupils with special educational needs. Progress is regularly checked against the targets in their individual learning plans. The school does not yet have a policy for the identification and support of gifted and talented pupils. As a result, none have been identified and opportunities are missed to ensure that pupils showing promise in a particular area are encouraged as effectively as they might be.
40. In the Foundation Stage, assessments carried out in the first few weeks of school are used to decide on children's learning needs. An ongoing check is kept on how well they are achieving as they move towards the early learning goals.

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

41. Parents are confident that Ripley Infants is a good school, where their children are happy and are expected to work hard. However, a significant minority of parents feel that the range of activities outside lessons and the arrangements for homework could be improved. A small number of parents feel that the school could work more closely with them and provide them with more information. Inspection evidence shows that the range of outside activities is similar to that found in most infant school. There is also satisfactory use made of homework. The information provided for parents is judged to be good and the school works well with parents, overall. However, consultation with parents has been informal and has not included all parents systematically. This area could be improved.
42. There is good quality information provided for parents. This includes a notice board in the entrance hall and a monthly newsletter, which advises of general information and events. Booklets have been produced so that parents know how they can help their child in each year group. Parents' meetings provide good information about children's progress, as do the end of year reports. These have recently improved, with more detail than in previous years. They give a clear indication of progress and include targets for future development. The school has also run an ICT evening for parents and has arranged a computer course for parents at the junior school. It is already running a literacy course for parents to help them understand what their children will be learning called 'Keeping up with the Kids.' The school has produced its own website which parents can access via home computers which shows a good selection of the children's work. Information provided for parents of children under five is good. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully updated about their child's progress and involved in setting targets for them. Information is very good for parents of children with statements. This includes a daily diary to ensure regular two-way communication.
43. Parents are encouraged to come into school as volunteers. A number of parents regularly help out in school and have a positive impact on learning. For example, in a Year 1/2 design and technology lesson, parents gave effective support to a group of children making models with pivots. In mathematics lessons, parents helped pupils' through asking questions to groups to reinforce their understanding of the concept that had been taught. In science lessons, parents supported children as they carried out investigations in groups, ensuring support for those who needed it most. Parents also regularly help out by listening to children read. Parents support the school in other ways. The 'Friends of Ripley Infants School' have raised money successfully to purchase resources such as the climbing frame for reception pupils. This has had a particular impact on the children's physical development.

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

44. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. She has a clear vision of how she wants the school to be. The headteacher and deputy head have formed an effective partnership, committed to moving the school forward. They are well supported by the governors and staff. The school has been through a period of instability in the years since the last inspection, due to several changes in leadership. This slowed developments in some areas. For example, the National Numeracy Strategy had not been fully implemented and the new curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage had not been taken on board. Some parts of the key issues identified last time had been addressed, but the changes had resulted in slow progress towards some of these. However, the new headteacher has made significant progress in a short space of time.

45. The headteacher has worked with energy and skill to evaluate the work of the school, in order to identify the key areas for improvement. She has had a particular impact on raising teachers' expectations about what pupils are able to achieve. Staff are working diligently as a team and taking greater responsibility for promoting higher standards, throughout the school. They have a better understanding of the levels pupils should be reaching in each year group, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT. The headteacher has ensured that staff have had the necessary training in these subjects to bring their knowledge up to date, further develop their skills and improve their confidence. She has sought the support of the local authority advisers and consultants and used this well. This has proved to be beneficial, for example, in helping teachers use guided reading sessions more effectively and in developing their strategies for teaching numeracy. As a result, pupils' progress is starting to accelerate.
46. A major improvement has been the reorganisation of the Foundation Stage and the implementation of the new arrangements for pupils of this age. The headteacher and Foundation Stage staff have worked extremely hard to provide appropriately for the six areas of learning. They have visited other schools to identify best practice and have received appropriate training. This has resulted in a steep 'learning curve' for all, including governors who have been closely involved in the project. The head and staff are continually evaluating developments and recognise that there is still more to be done to get the balance right. However, they are committed to getting this right because they firmly believe that getting children off to a stronger start will help to drive up standards.
47. Good systems are now in place for comparing the school's performance against that of schools nationally and those with a similar intake. The school is now effectively using the information it collects on pupils' progress to identify gaps in teaching and learning and pinpoint those pupils who need extra support. It is also using the information effectively to set individual and group targets for pupils at Key Stage 1. These measures are accelerating progress.
48. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory, overall, but with strengths in some areas. All co-ordinators give good guidance and support to their colleagues. They now have clear roles and responsibilities, which is an improvement since the last inspection. They are directly involved in checking teachers' planning and children's work. As a result, they are beginning to have a clearer picture of standards in their subjects and have a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses. They have also started to manage their own budgets. There has been good leadership and management of mathematics and English recently, because the headteacher has worked alongside the co-ordinators and assisted them with their monitoring role. This has sharpened their skills, for example, in analysing test data. However, there is still some way to go before the majority have the skills and confidence to check on teaching and identify areas for improvements. The school recognises this to be the next stage in their development and to this end, staff have set appropriate performance management targets related to their co-ordinator roles. ICT is well led and managed because the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how the subject should develop, keeps abreast of the rapidly changing picture and is effectively supported by two colleagues, who share some of the workload. With the support of the headteacher and governors, they have turned the subject round since the last inspection and standards are improving rapidly.
49. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of pupils' progress and targets. She has set up good systems and established a consistent approach across the school, to ensure that needs are identified as early as possible and action taken. She ensures that the correct levels of

support are provided and that parents are closely involved. Pupils' progress is closely monitored. As a result, these pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities.

50. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. They are very committed to the school and have a good knowledge of its strengths and where it needs to improve. They make good use of the high quality information provided for them by the headteacher to help them plan strategically. For example, a thorough analysis of test results has been responsible for governors allocating funds for teaching support assistants and extra resources. In conjunction with the headteacher, they regularly review the school development plan to monitor how well issues for action are being addressed. Governors are currently undertaking a 'self-review' to enable them to further develop their skills for the benefit of the school.
51. The school budget is managed very well, day-to-day, by a member of the school's administration staff. She keeps governors fully informed of the budget position. This enables them to plan wisely. The school faces difficult times in the near future, as a fall in the birth rate in the area will lead to a dip in pupil numbers and a subsequent reduction in funds. Governors have thoughtfully considered all options and have strategies in place to meet any shortfall. Extra grants are used for their specific purposes. For example, funds for special needs pupils are used to provide good quality support. Grants to improve ICT have been used effectively to raise standards. The governing body seeks best value for the money it spends by comparing the prices of goods and services and comparing the school's performance with that of others. However, there is a need for the school to consult more widely with parents, for example, about changes to the curriculum.
52. The accommodation is good and is well maintained. Staff work hard to ensure the environment is bright and stimulating for the pupils, through the good quality displays they create. There are sufficient teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. The school manages the two job shares soundly by ensuring that planning is undertaken jointly and information about pupils is shared. All administration staff are efficient and carry out their roles well, enabling staff to get on with their work with few interruptions.
53. When pupils enter the school, their attainments are as expected for their age, except in number. All pupils make at least steady progress and the majority achieve average standards by the time they leave. It provides well for pupils' personal development. Strong leadership and management are moving the school forward. It is, therefore, judged to give satisfactory value for money.

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

54. In order to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- a) **Improve the quality of teaching by:**

- ensuring greater consistency between classes and within subjects;
- improving the clarity of learning objectives;
- explaining learning objectives and tasks more clearly to pupils;
- ensuring tasks challenge all pupils consistently and effectively;
- ensuring that tasks match the learning objectives more closely;
- sharing existing good practice more widely throughout the school.

(paragraphs: 3, 4, 6, 14-21, 80, 85, 89, 107)

**b) Improve the provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage by:**

- achieving a better balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to learn through play;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to investigate, make choices and follow their own lines of enquiry;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to write independently, in different contexts.

(paragraphs: 12, 15, 24, 46, 57-72, 78)

The headteacher, staff and governors should also consider including the following minor issue in their action plan:

- Formulate a policy and procedures for identifying and supporting gifted and talented pupils.
- Improve consultation with parents.

(paragraphs: 39, 41)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	16	25	2	0	0
Percentage	0	7	35	54	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR– Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	172
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR– Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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	25	43	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	20
	Girls	38	40	40
	Total	56	59	60
Percentage of pupils	School	82 (81)	87 (81)	88 (84)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	21	22
	Girls	39	40	42
	Total	58	61	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (82)	90 (82)	94 (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	167	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded
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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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22:1
Average class size	25

#### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	93

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	401736
Total expenditure	396478
Expenditure per pupil	1951
Balance brought forward from previous year	96
Balance carried forward to next year	5354

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	172
Number of questionnaires returned	36

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	42	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	61	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	33	25	3	8
The teaching is good.	39	58	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	56	22	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	42	6	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	22	47	28	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	31	58	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	58	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	33	25	14	14

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

## **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**

55. Children are admitted into reception in September and January, dependent on their birth date. At the time of the inspection, 38 children were in their second term in school and 30 children (a higher number than usual) were beginning their sixth week in school. When children start reception, their attainment is similar to that expected for four-year-olds, generally, except in mathematical development where their knowledge of number is slightly lower than that of most children their age.
56. Reception children follow the nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum which covers six areas of learning. The plans for teaching have undergone radical change in the past two terms to implement these relatively new curriculum arrangements for pupils of this age. Previously, reception pupils had followed a similar curriculum to the other pupils in the school, with fewer opportunities for learning through play. Staff have worked hard as a team in recent months to change the way they teach and the way pupils learn, to ensure that the demands of the new curriculum are met. The school recognises that there is still more to do to ensure that the youngest children get off to a flying start. For example, the headteacher and staff are aware that more opportunities need to be provided for children to explore and investigate for themselves.
57. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but with some emerging strengths. This is not quite as good as it was judged to be at the time of the last inspection. This is because teachers are not as confident with the new methods and ways of organising activities. As yet, teachers do not always get the balance right between those activities that children choose for themselves and those that are directed by the teacher. On other occasions, opportunities are lost for children to explore and investigate for themselves, because staff direct children's learning too closely. This has an impact on the more able children in particular, who could sometimes learn at a faster rate. On other occasions, younger and less able pupils struggle because too much is expected of them, for example when sitting listening for long periods in literacy and numeracy sessions. A strength of the teaching is the way in which adults work closely together. They pay good attention to creating a secure and happy atmosphere for children, who benefit from close teacher attention when they are introduced to new skills. A high emphasis is placed on children developing personal skills, such as dressing themselves and fastening their own coats. They are encouraged to work and play with each other harmoniously. More opportunities to learn through play and build on the experiences they bring with them from home are starting to be developed. For example, in the 'medical centre', children bring their own experiences into play and use their own experiences of doctors and hospitals to act out the various roles. Such opportunities enrich their speaking and listening skills, as well as their social development. More activities of this type are needed to help pupils' develop their independence as learners.

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

58. Most of the children are on course to achieve the expected standard in this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Most come readily into reception and quickly learn how they are expected to behave and how to get on with each other. A wide range of activities is planned to ensure that they develop positive relationships and gain early self-confidence. Many of the children can take care of their own needs after

a few weeks in school. They manage their coats and bags with reasonable independence and dress themselves with confidence for both outdoor play and PE.

59. Younger children benefit from working with others and from activities such as playing games together with the 'parachute', designed to develop sharing and trust. The secure routines teachers create ensure that children settle well, as they begin to know the pattern of the day. Children are well cared for by the team of adults and this helps them feel happy and secure within the setting. Staff establish a growing sense of belonging to the class and to the school. As children become more familiar and secure, a degree of responsibility is promoted, for example, as children manage their own snack time. Although children are beginning to make decisions about their learning and choose for themselves in their weekly 'plan, do, review' sessions, there are not enough opportunities provided for this sort of involvement at other times.
60. The quality of teaching is sound overall but there are some emerging strengths. For example, staff make good relationships with the children. All adults maintain a sense of calm and order so children feel settled and secure. They value the pupils, who want to please them as a result. Staff explain rules, celebrate delightful moments of news and value each child as an individual. All staff are good role models for their pupils. Those children with special education needs are well supported. Where children have a statement of their additional needs, adults provide very good support so the children achieve very well. They are particularly dedicated to ensuring that these pupils have as much opportunity as others and are included in all that is on offer. However, adults often do too much for children and direct their activities too closely. This limits their independence and some are capable of much more.

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

61. Most children are on course to meet the expected standards for speaking and listening by the time they start Year 1. They make sound progress in their reception year because of sound teaching and an appropriate range of planned experiences. The youngest children are encouraged to listen and are able to sit and concentrate often for rather long periods of time on the carpet. There are many opportunities for rhymes and memory games but there are also some missed opportunities for children to express their thoughts and ideas, particularly in literacy sessions. When adults encourage informal talk and build on children's ideas, a much higher quality of learning takes place and children achieve much more. Most children express themselves reasonably clearly when given the opportunity to explain their work to the class, but are often expected to listen rather than talk.
62. On entry to reception classes, the standard of children's writing is similar to that of most children of the same age. Sound teaching ensures they make steady progress and the majority are on course to just reach the expected standard by the end of their reception year. Teaching emphasises handwriting skills and accurate letter formation. Many children copy the sentence '*I am going to..*' and complete it with their choice of activity with help. There are not enough activities in other areas of the curriculum where children might 'have a go' at writing for themselves. This slows their progress and limits their independence as writers because they become over reliant on copying. Consequently, when they enter Year 1, pupils' writing skills are not as well developed, overall, as those in reading.
63. The teaching of reading is sound. A rigorous focus on the recommended key words list from the national literacy strategy and letter sounds ensures that children get off to a brisk start. Most pupils are on course to meet the expected standards by the end of the reception year. When children have the opportunity to browse and share a wide range of books, they begin to develop their skills quickly. However, in the rush to teach

letters and words, sometimes staff miss opportunities to let children explore books for themselves and share them with others. As a result, the richness of experience that comes from exploring a variety of books is narrowed. This is an issue that has not been fully addressed since the previous inspection. More opportunities for reading instructions, lists and notices could be included in the two planned sessions where children make choices themselves.

### **Mathematical development**

64. Children make satisfactory progress, overall, and good progress in their understanding of number. Most children are on course to meet the expected standards in their mathematical development. This is mainly because of the focused teaching of number work in the daily session of numeracy. Most children show an understanding of numbers to up to 10. Older and more able children understand mathematical terms such as '*one more than*' and '*one less than*' in practical activities. Children demonstrate a sound understanding of shape as they build structures from solid shapes, such as cubes. They use their thinking skills and their knowledge of shape effectively, for example, to adapt their models and make their towers stronger.
65. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the outdoor area to encourage children to see mathematics all around them, particularly on the large playground where they play number games, following the teachers' instructions with great enjoyment. Most lessons contain a good enough range of number activities, many of which are practical. These are usually led by adults, who direct the children's investigations. However, more opportunities could be provided for children to investigate mathematical ideas themselves. In the very few sessions where children are able to do this, they make good progress. This is because they work things out for themselves and follow their own lines of enquiry, making connections as they work. This is an issue that has not been fully addressed since the last inspection.

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

66. The majority of children are on course to meet the expected standards by the end of the reception year. The children are very interested in new experiences. The range of topics across the curriculum ensures that children make sound progress in making sense of the world. They have a growing awareness of the places around the school and a developing sense of the past. Children have made a very good start to their understanding and use of computers. Many of the children, including those with special educational needs, are attracted to the animated images on the screen and as a result, they use the mouse and choose icons with sustained concentration and increasing dexterity.
67. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but much stronger where technology is involved. Teachers use computers effectively to generate delight, skill and concentration. More opportunities for practical, hands-on experiences could be planned in other areas to foster curiosity in the classroom, for example, more frequent use of water and sand. There is also too much adult direction on occasions. The range of resources used in the classroom is good but they are not always used effectively enough to encourage children, for example, to explore scientific ideas. Children's work is displayed very well but more tables and 'corners' could be set up to invite children to examine objects or explore materials.

## Physical development

68. Provision for children's physical development is good and they now have lots of opportunities to run, scramble and climb safely, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Children demonstrate their control, their co-ordination and their increasing awareness of space as they clamber over the new climbing equipment and explore the expanses of the playground. They have a good awareness of space and are very aware of each other as they move, balance and change direction to steer clear of others. Most children are on line to meet the expected standards by the time they leave reception.
69. Sound teaching ensures that children develop their manipulation skills, to enable them to manage their shoe fastenings and the buttons and zips on their coats. Children have good skills in balancing bricks and small equipment and many already show the expected level of hand-eye co-ordination and dexterity when they handle scissors, crayons, glue sticks and small objects such as pin fasteners. Most of these skills are developed through creative activities that link well with other areas of the curriculum. The hanging skeletons children have made from card are a prime example of the many activities that successfully develop children's manual skills.

## Creative development

70. The quality of teaching is sound, overall, with strengths in the way painting and drawing skills are taught. Children make good progress with these skills. Teachers and adults provide a lively range of exciting activities in this element of creative development. Children are given appropriate opportunities to explore different media and techniques, both with an adult and independently. These include paint and model building with boxes. Children use colour and pattern with developing skill and imagination. Many of their drawings are animated and very detailed and represent imaginary and familiar figures such as butterflies, cars and flowers. There are also sound opportunities provided for role play and music.
71. In role play in the 'medical centre' children enjoy checking heartbeats and temperatures and giving medicine. Well planned resources are designed to entice children to take on familiar roles. For example, they put on overalls and rubber gloves when taking on the role of doctor and use the 'stethoscope' appropriately. This creative and purposeful play is helping them to understand elements of their own world and interact with others. Children respond very well to the display of instruments and, on one occasion, were absorbed by the sound of a *rain stick*. Teachers plan singing sessions well, but opportunities to explore pitch, rhythm and the sound patterns are generally reliant on adults and this does somewhat lower the level of achievement.

## ENGLISH

72. Standards in English are average at the end of Key Stage 1. This is not as strong a picture as at the last inspection, when standards were judged to be above average. A period of instability in school leadership and management had resulted in staff not always having access to ongoing literacy training, to enable them to make best use of the national literacy strategy. However, in the past year, the school has sought and used the intensive support of the local education authority literacy consultants to improve staff skills and confidence. This has proved to be beneficial and the impact of better teaching can be seen in the accelerated progress pupils are making throughout the school. More pupils in both the current Years 1 and 2 classes are on course to reach the standards expected in both reading and writing. Significantly more are on

course to reach a solid Level 2, (the average level for pupils of this age) rather than just scraping over the line. No differences were noted between the overall progress made by boys and girls.

73. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their abilities because they are well supported in their learning. Individual work programmes are usually based on clear targets for improvement and are used well by teachers and teaching assistants to guide teaching and learning. The small number of pupils who have English as an additional language are making similar progress to other pupils. This is because their needs were sensitively and effectively met when they were in the early stages of language learning, through carefully designed individual work programmes. It is also a result of the ongoing support that they receive and the way in which all staff anticipate any difficulties that may arise, for example, with comprehension.
74. Good leadership and management on the part of the headteacher and subject co-ordinator are bringing about improvements. They have identified the key areas for improvement and put into place a range of strategies to address these. For example, much closer analysis of pupils' progress has led to the next steps in learning for groups and individuals being identified more precisely. Targets are set for pupils and communicated to them. Although the school recognises that some of this work is still in the early stages, the headteacher and subject co-ordinator are confident that teachers now have a better grasp of what pupils should be achieving. Closer analysis of test and teacher assessment data is enabling the school to pinpoint those pupils who need extra support, or a 'boost' to push them on to the next national curriculum level. 'Catch-up' programmes and 'booster' groups are being used effectively to raise standards for these pupils. For example, a small group of more able writers were targeted for extra support last year and all of these pupils achieved the higher level (Level 3) in the 2002 national tests. Teachers have received intensive training which has improved their skills in delivering group guided reading sessions and making the best use of shared reading and writing time.
75. Standards in speaking and listening are average. Children build steadily on their skills because they are given opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas, for example, in response to the books they are reading. In lessons, such as history, pupils are encouraged to work in groups, using language to negotiate, for example, whether an object is old or new. There are some differences, however, between classes. Occasionally, teachers do not give pupils sufficient time to develop their ideas before they get down to their tasks. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are encouraged to contribute through the sensitive support of the adults who work with them. This develops their self-confidence and ensures they are keen to have a go. All pupils know their thoughts and ideas will be valued. This is evident, for example, in 'circle time' when they talk about issues that may be troubling them.
76. Pupils make steady progress in reading, over time. By Year 2, the majority of pupils are confident readers who are developing fluency and expression. Many predict what might happen next in a story and retell it in their own words. More able pupils are just beginning to 'read between the lines' of a story, for example, to work out what the characters might do next. Most pupils know the difference between story and information books. They use the contents and index pages to find information and the more able know the purpose of a glossary. The school has introduced a new programme for teaching letter sounds and blends in the past year. This is ensuring that these skills are taught effectively and systematically, enabling pupils to build firmly on their previous learning. As a result, there is a real improvement in pupils' ability to read and spell unfamiliar words. Guided group reading sessions are taught regularly and purposefully. In the best of these sessions, teachers explicitly teach pupils a good

range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words and phrases and prompt their understanding of the text through good questioning. Pupils develop their skills of reading with expression, taking good account of punctuation through the good examples that most teachers provide in the shared parts of literacy sessions. They enjoy joining in with traditional tales, such as 'Red Riding Hood'. In one Year 2 lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to take on different roles from this story and read, for example, the words of the wolf with appropriate expression and body language. The pupils loved this activity and soon caught on to changing their voice and tone to fit in with the text. Reading books are sent home regularly and parents are encouraged to add their comments to their child's home-school reading record. This provides a good link between home and school. The school has also run reading courses for parents, to help them to help their children at home.

77. Although standards in writing are average, overall, pupils' progress has not been as sharp as in reading. This is largely because pupils do not have as firm a foundation to build on in writing, when they enter Year 1; many lack independence. Also, teachers throughout the school generally have more confidence in teaching reading. The school has recognised this and has made writing a priority area for development. Recent training has enhanced teachers' skills in demonstrating how to write and in making better links between speaking, reading and writing. In the majority of lessons, teachers are also providing more opportunities for pupils to work out what they want to say and rehearse their ideas through discussion, before they put pen to paper. This is often done through pupils talking to a 'response partner' or capturing their thoughts on a small whiteboard, before sharing them with their classmates. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1/2 lesson, in which pupils were writing statements to describe the characters in traditional tales, for 'pen-portraits.' Talking to their partners really helped them to formulate their ideas, and as a result, they came up with interesting phrases such as, 'he has a terrifying face', when describing the wolf in 'Little Red Riding Hood.' In a Year 1 class, the teacher played the role of the wolf and pupils wrote questions to ask her, to gain information for their writing. Such activities fire the pupils' imaginations and ensure they enjoy their work, as well as developing their skills and accelerating learning. Another recent development is the way in which teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to write in other subject areas. Good examples were seen in science, for example, where pupils had written about the life cycle of a frog, in design and technology, where pupils had evaluated the vehicles they had designed and in geography, where pupils had described life on Struay and compared it with life in Ripley. Handwriting standards are average, with pupils generally forming their letters correctly and presenting their work neatly. This is because handwriting is taught systematically from the earliest stages. There are still areas to be developed in writing. Generally, throughout the school, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write their own stories. They sometimes work on story beginnings and endings, or retell a familiar tale, but there are few examples of them writing imaginatively, developing and sustaining ideas. This holds them back in the national tests. Although teachers are now setting writing targets for groups of pupils, they often focus on punctuation, handwriting and spelling, rather than the content and structure of their work.
78. Good use is made of ICT in English. For example, in most lessons, pupils use appropriate programmes to develop their language skills. Opportunities are provided for pupils to research topics in history using the Internet and to compose e-mails to pupils in other schools. Pupils also use word processing programmes for their writing.

79. Teaching in English is satisfactory, overall, although there were some good lessons observed. The best teaching was seen in the Year 2 class taught by the deputy headteacher. There were examples of good practice seen throughout the school. However there were also inconsistencies observed between classes. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and as a result, pupils are mostly attentive and keen to learn. Most teachers use questioning effectively to draw out previous learning and encourage pupils to extend this. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher challenged pupils to think hard about the characters in the story they were reading, with questions such as, 'What would her body be doing?' and 'Can you say that in a silky voice? What sort of voice is it?' This reinforced their understanding well and kept them interested and involved. In most lessons, shared reading and writing sessions were well planned and taught effectively, with all pupils being involved and challenged appropriately. In the best lessons, teachers were clear about what they wanted pupils to learn and explained this to them well. Tasks were planned which matched the pupils' different abilities and reinforced or extended the main teaching points. In the more ordinary lessons, tasks were not always so well matched to pupils' abilities. On occasions, the more able pupils were not stretched effectively. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson, where these pupils were given a reading task that was well within their capabilities. As a result, they finished their work quickly and talked about other topics for the rest of the lesson. Very occasionally, the less able pupils were given a task that was too hard for them to undertake without support. Sometimes, in these lessons, teachers introduced too many concepts at once, the children became confused and the pace of learning slowed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. Although standards in the most recent tests taken in 2002 were well below the national average and below those of similar schools, inspection evidence indicates that standards are now average. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Recent changes to the curriculum and teaching have brought about the rise in standards. The targets for this year are likely to be met and the higher targets for the following year should also be met. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls throughout the school.
81. A number of factors have contributed to the improvement. The school is now implementing the national numeracy strategy well. Recent professional development for staff has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Curriculum improvements have ensured that more opportunities are now given to pupils for practical and investigative work. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She is effective in guiding staff and has worked hard to identify areas for improvement and take action to raise standards. For example, she monitors teaching to see where improvements can be made. Results of tests are carefully analysed to see where pupils could achieve better. Rigorous assessments identify individual needs and enable appropriate targets to be set for all pupils. Teachers are now more aware of what is required to move the pupils forward through the different levels of the national curriculum.
82. Throughout the school, pupils develop a good knowledge of number. For example, in Year 1, they learn to add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally and begin to try out different ways of calculating. They add numbers by 'counting on' and subtract by 'counting back.' Year 2 pupils are able to break numbers into tens and units in order to make addition simpler. By Year 2, most pupils accurately apply their number skills to money calculations and have a sound knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes.

83. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in developing their number skills in relation to their abilities. This is because teachers plan work at the right level for them and they are given good support from teaching assistants. For example, in a lesson in Year 2 when the lower attaining group were sorting two-dimensional shapes. Their self-esteem was raised because effective support ensured they were able to complete the task. The teaching assistant asked questions such as 'How many sides has a hexagon?' and 'Why does that shape go into that section?' which encouraged pupils to think and consolidate their knowledge. Those with English as an additional language make similar progress to the other pupils. Teachers are aware of their language needs in mathematics and ensure these are addressed, for example, through checking their understanding of key vocabulary.
84. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, but with some emerging strengths. For example, most teachers are using the mental arithmetic part at the beginning of the lesson effectively. These sessions develop pupils' skills with number and also help pupils' develop mental agility. There is good use of resources in some lessons. For example, pupils often use individual whiteboards to record their answers, which engages their attention and ensures all are involved. However, in a few lessons, teachers spend too long questioning pupils individually and this slows the pace. As a result, some pupils tend to 'switch off'. In the best lessons, pupils are taught a wide range of calculation strategies and they are encouraged to explain their answers. For example, when pupils explain, 'I put the largest number in my head first' or 'I split up the tens and units before I add the number', they show that they understand what they are doing. Pupils achieve steadily throughout the school but better progress is made in the Year 2 class that is taught by the deputy headteacher. This is directly linked to the very good teaching they receive in this class. In the lesson seen the pupils were making very good progress developing their knowledge of symmetry. This lesson was planned very effectively and the tasks met the needs of all the pupils. There was a high level of challenge for the higher attaining group when they were working in pairs, drawing reflected shapes along a line of symmetry. The lesson had very good pace. This was not the case in another Year 2 lesson when all the pupils spent too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher explaining the tasks to everyone rather than beginning their own tasks. The time at the end of lessons is not always used well to assess what pupils have learned. For example, teachers do not always question the pupils skilfully to probe their understanding or invite pupils to demonstrate skills in a practical way, such as writing on the whiteboard.
85. Appropriate opportunities are given for the pupils to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in different situations. ICT is used appropriately in most lessons. Pupils use carefully selected programs to help them develop their mathematical skills.

## **SCIENCE**

86. Standards in science are average, as at the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress. In the most recent teacher assessments, pupils achieved less well in the area of physical processes than they did in other areas. The school is taking steps to remedy the situation. Since the previous inspection, the school has increased the amount of practical and investigative work pupils undertake. This is proving beneficial in engaging pupils' interest and deepening their understanding. Events such as 'Science Week' add to the opportunities for 'hands on' investigations. However, the school recognises that there is more to be done to develop this further and has clear plans for improvement.
87. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of scientific facts. For example, Year 2 pupils understand what the terms 'liquid' and 'solid' mean and can explain processes such as melting and freezing. The majority are able to predict with

reasonable accuracy some of the substances which might freeze, giving sensible reasons. They also understand that a frozen substance will melt if it comes into contact with warmth, because they have had direct experience of this. For example, they have observed what happens when they hold frozen peas or touch a piece of chocolate that has just come out of the freezer, with warm hands. Year 1 pupils show an understanding of what makes a 'fair test', as they start their toy buggies from the same place each time, to see how far they will go. They also accurately describe how a force acts on an object to move it and relate this to their own experiences of riding a bike, pushing a pram or kicking a football.

88. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and some good lessons were seen. In most lessons, teachers use resources well to develop pupils' understanding. This was seen in a Year 1 class, where an able pupil grasped the idea of how a moving object could be stopped by braking, through watching a bike wheel spinning and spotting that 'the brake clamps to the wheel!' Pupils understood by seeing it in action. Questioning is also used to good effect in some lessons, to draw out pupils' knowledge. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to become scientists and deepen their understanding through observing, testing, comparing and making predictions. In one Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils thoughtfully considered what might happen if milk was placed in a freezer. Pupils in the same lesson were amazed to find that tomato ketchup remained 'mushy' and did not freeze. However, in some lessons, teachers demonstrate what to do and guide pupils step by step through their experiments rather than letting them investigate for themselves. In a few lessons, the pace is not as sharp as it could be because the teacher's instructions and explanations are not clear enough. Pupils become confused and learning is slowed as a result. On some occasions, the more able pupils could be challenged more effectively. Teachers sometimes stick rigidly to their planning and start all children off on a similar task, even when questioning has revealed that some already have a good knowledge of the topic.
89. There are growing links with literacy. Where these are good, pupils use their writing skills to good effect by recording their findings for themselves. For example, Year 2 pupils had written about the life cycles of frogs, carefully labelling their well produced diagrams. More use could be made of ICT in science to record findings and to handle data.
90. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons. Teaching assistants reinforce their understanding through careful explanation and questioning. When the emphasis is on practical investigation, it particularly benefits these pupils because they often learn best through first hand experience.
91. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a sound grasp on the strengths and weaknesses. A nationally recommended scheme has been adopted and is providing good guidance for staff. The co-ordinator has identified the need to adapt this to meet the needs of the pupils more effectively. However, more needs to be done to iron out the inconsistencies in teaching, if the subject is to improve further.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

92. Standards in art and design are broadly typical of those found in most schools. All pupils, including those with special education needs, make steady progress. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
93. Pupils are given many opportunities to acquire skills, using a range of media, such as paint, crayon, tissue, computer images and clay. In each year group, pupils produce

some good work. They learn to observe carefully and sketch details when they make observational drawings, for example, of fruit and old toys. Year 1 portraits show good attention to proportion and facial features and the finished product is enhanced by the use of wool, felt and tissue paper. Pupils explore pattern, texture colour and line and learn to apply these in a variety of ways.

94. As pupils move through the school, they learn to work in both two and three-dimensions using materials such as clay. Opportunities are given for the pupils to mix their own colours and experiment with thick and thin brushes. These skills are transferred and used imaginatively to print patterns. Pupils study the work of different artists such as William Morris and Jackson Pollock. Computers are used effectively in some classes. A good link with ICT was seen when the pupils in Year 2 were using a computer program to produce images in the style of Piet Mondrian.
95. Only one lesson was observed and this was good. The class teacher had provided a wide range of imaginative resources for the pupils to work with and organised these well. She gave clear explanations and good support to individuals and had high expectations of them. The Year 1 pupils showed maturity in the way they took responsibility for selecting, organising and managing their materials when they were designing pictures using weaving techniques. They showed consideration for each other when they were working in groups to produce their work.
96. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Although the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to monitor teaching, she monitors planning and pupils' work. The school uses the nationally recommended guidelines for teaching the subject and this has been adapted to meet the needs of the school. Art and design makes a contribution to the pupils' personal development. The many examples of their artwork displayed effectively around the school gives them a sense of pride in their achievements.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97. Standards in design and technology are broadly typical of those found in most schools. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in learning how to work with tools, materials and components. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
98. Pupils develop an early understanding of the design process and how to record their ideas. Year 1 pupils, for example, commented that designs needed labels and a list of materials as 'Otherwise you would not know what your model would look like or what you need to make it.'
99. Pupils benefit from being given a range of materials to use and they acquire skills in handling them. They are encouraged to consider their suitability when they are making their models. They become competent in cutting, attaching and decorating paper and card, as well as the techniques of stitching or gluing materials together. Year 1 pupils successfully used sticky tape and glue to fasten, join and secure their models of playground slides.
100. Throughout the school pupils enjoy designing and making and show much interest in what they are asked to do. In a very good lesson in the Year 1/2 class, the Year 2 pupils were successfully following their plans and constructing vehicles made from cardboard boxes, dowelling and cardboard wheels. They knew how to make an axle to make the wheels turn properly. Very good teaching ensured they discussed critically how they could improve their models. As a result, the pupils benefited from each other's ideas.

101. There is a wide range of examples of pupils' work throughout the school, showing that an appropriate range of work is covered. Good cross-curricular links are made between design technology and other subjects. For example, in ICT, the pupils have been designing vehicles using a computer program. In science, pupils have made vehicles using construction kits as part of their topic on forces.
102. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. She has ensured the school uses the nationally recommended guidelines for teaching the subject and has adapted these to meet the needs of the school. However, more effective use could be made of her very good expertise in this area to take the subject further. There is an appropriate range of tools, equipment and materials to support the pupils' learning and these are appropriately managed. There is a need for a greater range of construction kits and the co-ordinator has identified this as a priority for action.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103. Standards in geography are similar to those found in most schools, as at the last inspection. Pupils make steady progress, overall. However, recent developments in the way geography is taught are accelerating progress, particularly for Year 1 pupils and standards are set to rise in the future. More practical experiences are now being provided for pupils. This is a result of good subject leadership and management. The nationally recommended scheme which guides teachers planning and delivery of the curriculum, is being adapted to meet the needs of the pupils and make it more relevant to their particular circumstances. As a result, good use is now being made of the local area as a resource to develop pupils' geographical knowledge and skills.
104. In Year 2, pupils learn about life on the fictional Scottish Island of Struay and compare it with life in Ripley. They have a good understanding of the contrast in landscape and how the physical features of a place affect, for example, jobs and transport. They know that supplies are brought to Struay by boat and that farming and fishing are the main ways of earning a living. Pupils compare the leisure activities they have access to with those available on Struay. Pupils also learn about life in a Mexican village and understand that it is very different from their own. They also develop an understanding of the customs and cultures of people around the world by following the travels of 'Barnaby Bear', a fictional character who has adventures all over the world.
105. Nearer to home, good use is made of the locality around the school to develop pupils' environmental awareness and their mapping skills. Pupils in all classes plot routes around the school, make plans of their classrooms and map their routes between home and school. An analysis of pupils' work shows that these skills develop well over time and this is a strength of the subject. In Year 1, pupils have studied the problems caused by traffic congestion, both in the school car park and in the roads around the school. Traffic surveys have been carried out and delivery workers and visitors to school have been interviewed. This project has really caught the pupils' interest as they learn in a practical 'hands on' way. A new care home is being built adjacent to the school site and good use has been made of this for pupils to learn more about the built environment and how this develops to meet the needs of the community. Workers from the site have visited the school to discuss the project with the pupils and pupils are able to watch the process first hand from their classrooms. There was much excitement and wonder during the inspection as workers started to put the roof on.
106. In the lessons seen, teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. An analysis of pupils' work shows that over time, teaching is satisfactory. The very good lesson seen was well planned and organised. The teacher was very clear about what she

wanted the children to learn and explained the tasks very clearly to them. As a result, pupils were 'on board' with the lesson from the start. Excellent use was made of resources to demonstrate how stamps differ from country to country and how they often depict features such as animal and bird life or important events. The pupils were engrossed in their examination of the stamps and their imaginations were caught by some of the intricate designs. As a result, when they designed their own stamps for Struay, they thought very carefully about which features might be depicted and produced some really good designs. In contrast, the same lesson taught in another class was unsatisfactory. This was largely because the teacher was not clear about what was to be taught. As a result, the lesson was not organised as well as it could have been and the pupils were confused by too many concepts being introduced at once. Opportunities were missed to draw out the reasons why stamps are used and discuss the various designs. As a result, the pupils' own designs were mediocre.

107. The links between geography and other subjects are developing well. Good use is made of ICT to record findings and research topics using the Internet and CD-ROMs. A recent link has been made with a past pupil who has moved to Australia and this is providing a useful way of finding out about life in another country, first hand, through e-mail. Literacy skills are used effectively. For example, pupils developed their speaking and listening skills as they posed questions to the delivery workers and recorded and transcribed their responses. Pupils have also made use of their mathematics skills for collecting data and producing graphs from their traffic survey work. Visitors, such as the African musicians, also help pupils to deepen their understanding of the different cultures and traditions around the world.
108. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She gives good guidance to colleagues in planning their work. She has clear plans for the development of the subject and is keen to build further on the recent successes achieved through a more practical, investigative approach. Although all teachers in a year group follow the same planning, their delivery of lessons is inconsistent. As yet, the co-ordinator has had little opportunity to observe teaching and influence teachers' practice.

## **HISTORY**

109. Standards in history are similar to those found in most schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory. The school has adopted a nationally recommended scheme of work, which is providing good guidance for teachers. It is helping to ensure that pupils build steadily on their skills from year to year. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, which was satisfactory. An analysis of pupils' work shows that the impact of teaching over time is also satisfactory. There are strengths in the way the school teaches about famous people, particularly those who have a local connection, such as Barnes Wallis. A weaker area of teaching is the development of pupils' understanding of the way events relate to each other over time through the use of timelines.
110. In Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the life and work of Florence Nightingale. They understand some of the differences between hospitals now and then. Pupils have researched books, CD-ROMs and the Internet to find out about famous people such as Henry Ford. They know that Barnes Wallis was born in their home town and why he is famous. They also know that people are a valuable historical resource and have interviewed their family members about famous people they remember from their own lifetimes. Year 1 pupils understand the terms 'old' and 'new'. They give sensible reasons for their decisions about which category to place objects. For example, in the lesson observed, they decided that a microwave oven must belong in the 'new' category because there was no electricity in the 'olden days'.

They also decided that the teddy was old because he had an eye missing and his fur was patchy. The teacher made good use of resources to demonstrate that some things may look old, but actually be new and vice versa. Pupils quickly understood this concept because it was well illustrated and explained. The resources caught their interest and focused their attention. The teacher made good use of the discussion to link to the pupils' personal development. She questioned pupils effectively to develop the understanding that if you look after things, they can look new even if they are old. In this lesson, pupils were given good opportunity to work together and discuss their ideas, as they sorted pictures of old and new objects into sets. Pupils carried out this task sensibly. However, for the more able pupils in particular, although the task reinforced their understanding, it did not challenge them as well as it could. Pupils with special educational needs and those of lower ability, however, were well supported by the adults who worked with them. They were enabled to undertake the same work as the other pupils because of this.

111. The work in pupils' books in most classes shows that pupils often carry out the same tasks, irrespective of their abilities. Too few opportunities are provided in some classes for pupils to record their findings in history. This limits the progress of the more able pupils, in particular. A wider range of recording styles could also be used. For example, pupils have few opportunities to use their literacy skills in history to write letters, diary entries and 'eye-witness' accounts. More links could also be made between history and other subjects, such as art and design and design and technology.
112. There is satisfactory management of the subject. The co-ordinator provides sound guidance for colleagues on planning their work and organises resources well so that they are accessible to all. She also collects samples of pupils' work to check on coverage and collates evidence of teachers' assessments to gain a picture of standards in the subject. She is aware of the shortcomings and has firm plans to address these.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

113. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations. All pupils are currently making good progress because of better teaching, a stronger curriculum and improved resources. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory and the subject was identified as a key issue for action. This issue has now been fully addressed, with much being accomplished since the appointment of the new headteacher. She has ensured, in conjunction with the governors, that funds have been used wisely to provide good quality resources and staff training. Pupils are quickly making up previous lost ground and all are on course to reach higher standards in the future.
114. Much of the current success is also down to the co-ordinator, who leads and manages the development of the subject well. She has a good expertise and uses this effectively to provide effective support for staff. She is very well supported by a teaching assistant, who has a high level of expertise, and another colleague. Between them, they give good support and advice to staff. This, in conjunction with training, has increased teachers' confidence. A nationally recommended scheme of work is used as a guide to teachers' planning, supplemented by commercial resources and this ensures that pupils build progressively on their skills from year to year. A good quality assessment programme has also been introduced so that teachers have a clear idea of what pupils have achieved and what they need to learn next. As a result of all these measures, teaching and learning have both improved and standards are set to rise. A strength of the subject is the way that pupils are given opportunities to

cover all the required aspects in sufficient depth and practice and refine their skills through interesting and relevant tasks in different subjects.

115. Pupils now enter Year 1 with good ICT skills and build on these rapidly. They confidently use the mouse to click on and select their choices from a menu. The majority know their way around the computer keyboard well. They work together sensibly in pairs, showing good levels of independence. Typing skills are developing well. Year 1 pupils have used a data handling programme, pitched at just the right level, to collect, store and sort information, for example about the traffic in the roads around the school. This has then been reproduced in the form of pictograms and bar graphs. They have used the digital camera effectively to show developments on the building site next to the school and make a record of parking problems on the car park. In Year 2, pupils are also making rapid progress. They are confident at opening programmes and choosing from menus. Most save and retrieve their work with growing independence. Their word processing skills are developing well and they know how to use the return and shift keys and the space bar appropriately, for example, when writing descriptions in their literacy lessons. All pupils have made good use of the Internet to find out, for example, about famous people in history and to e-mail pupils in other schools. They have also written and followed simple programmes themselves to work a programmable toy. All pupils have also had good opportunities to use 'paint and draw' programmes to create their own pictures in the style of famous artists, such as Mondrian.
116. Very little direct teaching was seen. However, planning is effective and all teachers show good levels of expertise in choosing and setting up relevant and interesting tasks to support learning well. For example, in design and technology, Year 2 pupils had made good use of a graphics programme to design and label their own vehicles. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons. Teaching assistants demonstrate a good understanding of what is to be learned and skilfully guide and encourage the children they work with. ICT is used well to motivate and encourage these pupils. As a result, they develop confidence and are often able to achieve as well as the other pupils within the class. A good example of this was in a Year 1 lesson, where a teaching assistant gave unobtrusive support to a pupil to help him achieve the target set for him, without taking over.
117. The school has done well to bring about such good improvements in the subject in a short time. There is a clear plan with sensible priorities for future development of the subject. This shows a good grasp of what is needed to build on the current strengths and improve further. For example, the school has identified the need to continue to improve resources and provide training for parents, to enable them to keep up with their children and support them effectively. Good links have also been made with the junior school to share expertise and equipment and to develop the curriculum. The school has developed a very informative website and pupils and parents take a great interest in this. It is also proving valuable in making links with schools further afield. Appropriate steps have been taken by the school to safeguard pupils in their use of the Internet and ensure that correct procedures are in place.

## **MUSIC**

118. Standards in singing are broadly in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. This is similar to the last inspection. No other aspects of music were observed during the inspection due to the timetabling arrangements. Therefore, it is not possible to make a judgement on the standards or teaching in other elements. Discussions with pupils indicate that music is taught regularly and they have the opportunity to play a

variety of instruments. Pupils have a sound knowledge of musical terms, such as 'pulse' and 'rhythm.'

119. Teachers' planning shows that all national curriculum requirements are met, throughout the school year. There is evidence that learning experiences are enriched by a variety of visiting musicians. These include a local students' jazz band, a Caribbean steel drum band and a woodwind ensemble. The school has addressed the need to broaden the range of instruments to include some from other cultures. Now there is a good variety of percussion instruments of African and other cultural origins. Pupils have started to use computers in music to compose their own tunes, although this is in the very early stages.
120. There is sound subject leadership and management. The co-ordinator checks teachers planning and gives sound advice and guidance to colleagues. There have been few opportunities for the co-ordinator to assess the quality of teaching or share her expertise more widely throughout the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

121. Standards in PE are in line with those expected nationally and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress. However, the standard is higher in gymnastics and the pupils make good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
122. In the gymnastics' lessons seen in Year 2, the pupils enjoyed the tasks and their attitude to work was very good. Pupils behaved well, took part enthusiastically and followed instructions promptly. They showed good control of their bodies and a good awareness of space, for example, as they stopped and changed direction quickly and precisely without bumping into each other. The good teaching enabled them to refine and develop their sequences of movements. The pupils show maturity and responsibility as they work well in groups to assemble the large apparatus. The work on the apparatus showed good skills as the pupils developed their floor movements on to the apparatus. An imaginative sequence of sliding, rolling, spinning and jumping was developed.
123. Teaching is good in gymnastics and satisfactory in dance. Teachers present themselves as good role models. They are suitably dressed and pay due attention to safe working practices. In gymnastics lessons, instructions are clear and this ensures that the pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Overall, teachers are not so confident in teaching dance. However, they encourage pupils to respond appropriately to the music and express their feelings, moods and ideas. Whilst opportunities are given for the pupils to watch demonstrations by individuals or groups, not enough attention is given to making pupils aware of how they can improve. Opportunities are sometimes missed, in both gymnastics and dance lessons, to make the pupils aware of the effects that exercise has on their bodies. Opportunities are not always given to 'warm up' at the beginning of the lesson and 'cool down' at the end, particularly in dance.
124. The co-ordinator manages the subject effectively. She has put together a scheme of work that helps teachers to plan lessons and ensures that pupils are able to build on their previous learning. She has monitored some teaching and this is helping her to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Resources are of good quality. This ensures that pupils can practice the appropriate skills in all elements of the subject.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
126. Over time pupils learn about different religious faiths and festivals and how beliefs and values guide the life of those who follow them. This makes a sound contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The recent topic about the Chinese New Year has developed Year 2 pupils' knowledge of the lives, cultures and beliefs of the people of that country. These have been contrasted well to those of the Christian faith and how we live in this country. Bright and colourful displays catch pupils' interest and are used effectively to reinforce their understanding of the theme.
127. Although Christian groups come into school to talk to pupils during assembly, opportunities are not taken for other members of the community to come into school to talk to the children during lessons. More opportunities could also be provided for the pupils to visit the places of worship to enable them to develop a clearer understanding of the beliefs and customs of the different religious groups they study.
128. Pupils learn about the life of Jesus and how Christian principles influence others. They know that Jesus' friends were called disciples and that Jesus was a friend to and helped many people. Work completed earlier in the school year indicates a satisfactory knowledge of some of the stories of Jesus and aspects of the Jewish faith. Year 1 pupils learn about the significance for Christians of stories from the Bible and how many have special meanings.
129. Although some good teaching was seen during the inspection, an examination of pupils' work shows that the impact of teaching over time is satisfactory. In a good Year 2 lesson observed, the pupils talked about forgiveness and linked this to the story of the Prodigal Son. The teacher's questioning prompted the pupils to think about trusting God, as Daniel did, and this took their thinking further. As a result, the pupils developed a good understanding of how they would have felt had they been in Daniel's place. However, work in pupils' books shows that often pupils undertake the same tasks, regardless of their abilities. This inhibits the progress of the more able pupils in particular. Sound use is made of ICT in religious education, for example, to research topics and to record work.
130. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors planning and collects samples of pupil's work. She has identified that more effective assessment arrangements need to be developed to ensure that the next steps in learning for groups and individuals can be pinpointed more closely.