

INSPECTION REPORT

**SHENFIELD ST MARY'S CHURCH OF
ENGLAND VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Shenfield, Brentwood

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115161

Headteacher: Mrs J Anne Hutton

Reporting inspector: Mrs Janet Gill
18706

Dates of inspection: 2nd - 3rd July 2003

Inspection number: 247539

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hall Lane Brentwood Essex
Postcode:	CM15 9AL
Telephone number:	(01277) 221249
Fax number:	(01277) 264316
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Paul Charlesworth
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
18706	Mrs Janet Gill	Registered inspector
8991	Mrs Pamela Goldsack	Lay inspector
13754	Mrs Judy Morris	Team inspector
10204	Mr David Vincent	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Bristol
BS8 2BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	8 - 13
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	13
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	14 - 18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shenfield St Mary's CE (VA) Primary School is situated near the town of Brentwood in Essex. As at the time of the last inspection, the school draws pupils from the immediate vicinity which is a very favourable area. Most pupils are from backgrounds where there is a much higher percentage of adults with higher educational qualifications and more children in high social class households than the national average. Attainment on entry is above average. Five pupils (1.4 per cent) are eligible for free school meals, which is well below average. There are 41 pupils (11 per cent) from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and eight per cent (30) speak English as an additional language, but only two of these pupils require additional support for learning to speak English. This is higher than in most schools. There are 14 classes now - Reception to Year 6 with two classes for each year group. The number of pupils on roll – 371 (202 boys and 169 girls), has risen since the last inspection (328). The school is much bigger than most primary schools nationally, and over subscribed. Seven per cent (24) of pupils have been identified with special educational needs, and four of these have a statement for their needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Shenfield St Mary's is a very effective school. Standards are very high by the time the pupils are 11 and they make very good progress. In recognition of high achievement, the school has received the DfES School Achievement Award for the last three years. The outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher, very good teaching, coupled with a commitment to maintain high standards, results in a stimulating learning environment in which pupils have excellent attitudes and behaviour. There are excellent relationships between everyone - pupils, staff, governors and parents and they all work together effectively. A significant strength of the school, is the way every child is fully included in all aspects of school life. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The standards in English, mathematics and science are particularly high, owing to very good teaching in Years 3 – 6 particularly for older pupils, and the excellent use of assessment.
- Leadership and management are very good, with an outstanding contribution from the headteacher. Very good teamwork amongst staff and excellent support from the governors ensure high standards and a strong commitment to continued improvement.
- The imaginative and very rich curriculum, significantly enhanced by extra curricular activities, ensures all pupils, whatever their ability, have excellent access to all aspects of school life.
- The very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and excellent care, are strong contributory factors towards pupils' excellent behaviour, attitudes and relationships.
- The partnership with parents is excellent; this has a significant impact on pupils' achievements.

What could be improved

- There are no features that require significant improvement.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected last in February 1998, Shenfield St Mary's was found to have many strengths. Since then it has made very good progress, maintaining its strengths and successfully tackling the key issues. Very high standards have been maintained in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching has improved and is very good overall. There have been significant improvements in assessment, including rigorous analysis of data and pupil tracking. Its use has been instrumental in addressing the needs of all pupils, which has helped them make very good progress. Provision and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and so has provision and planning for the outdoor curriculum for Reception children. All co-ordinators are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and pupils' progress. The school development plan is an excellent document. It is based on highly efficient consultation procedures in order to set priorities. Procedures for homework are now good and support

learning effectively. The school is very well placed to continue to tackle its priorities and to maintain its high standards and provision.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A*	A*	A*
Mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*
Science	A	A*	A*	A*

Key

very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The 11-year-olds achieved very high standards in the national tests in 2002. They were in the top five per cent nationally in English, mathematics and science. When compared to similar schools (those with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals) standards are equally high. This is because an impressive number of pupils gain the higher Level 5. Challenging targets in English and mathematics were exceeded in 2002 National Curriculum tests. Early indications show that pupils have again exceeded the targets in the 2003 tests, with a higher proportion gaining Level 5. Standards in the 2002 tests for seven-year-olds were above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. Compared to similar schools standards were average in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. Teacher assessment indicated above average standards in science. The school was determined to improve standards of reading and early indications for 2003 show this to be the case.

Children enter the school with above average attainment. A significant number of the Foundation Stage (Reception) children are on course to exceed the early learning goals (national targets for children aged 3 - 6) by the end of the year. The rest are on course to achieve them. Standards have remained consistently high in English, mathematics and science for the 11-year-olds over the last few years. Inspection evidence indicates similar very high standards in all three subjects. Pupils make very good progress overall, which is particularly rapid in the upper school and they achieve highly. This is because of the overall very good teaching and highly inclusive curriculum that ensures everyone is consistently set challenging work. Across the school, pupils who have special educational needs and those from an ethnic minority background progress at the same rate as the rest of their classmates. Higher achieving and gifted and talented pupils also make very good progress, as evident in the very high percentage who achieve Level 5 in the core subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent attitudes – pupils are eager, very keen to do well and very responsive to the high quality teaching and rich curriculum.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour – exemplary with a high level of self-discipline. Year 6 pupils are excellent role models. The school is a friendly, orderly community with a first-rate atmosphere for learning.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Year 6 pupils agree there is no bullying and throughout the school all pupils are very supportive of classmates with specific difficulties or those with different backgrounds. All pupils of the school community work and play together in total harmony.
Attendance	Attendance is good and above the national average. Punctuality is very

	good.
--	-------

All of these factors contribute to the very good achievement and progress which all pupils make.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was judged to be good at the last inspection. It has improved and there is an increased percentage of very good lessons – 42 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This ensures that pupils' progress at all ages is rapid and effective. Overall teaching is good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 there are many very good features in teaching, particularly for older pupils. Throughout the school, reading, writing and number skills are taught very well, and the pupils are adept at using their skills in other subjects. Teachers really know their pupils and set work that is very well matched to their ability. It is because their needs are met so successfully that pupils of all abilities, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, learn so effectively.

Children get a good start to their education in the Reception classes. Their teachers ensure that tasks are pitched at the right level and childrens' progress is carefully tracked. As a result, children are challenged and extended in their work. A very strong emphasis is placed on personal, emotional and social development with very positive effects. Throughout the school, successful teaching is based on very high expectations, excellent relationships and high quality behaviour management. The result is that pupils work very hard, show very good concentration, enjoy being at school, try their best and behave exceptionally well. Teachers are enthusiastic and motivate their pupils, ensure the pace of lessons is brisk, that work is demanding and that pupils are fully engaged and achieve highly.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum offered to pupils is very good. It is rich, varied and enhanced by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities that are provided for all pupils, whatever their ability or interest. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills but not at the expense of the wider curriculum. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and appropriately based on national guidance.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with special educational needs are very effectively supported and have excellent access to the curriculum. They make very good progress and all reach standards that are at least average.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good, although few pupils require help to speak English. Provision is very effective and allows all pupils excellent access to the curriculum. As a result they make equally as good progress as their classmates.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The school's close connection with the church promotes pupils' spiritual development very well and encourages excellent moral and social values. The school makes very good use of the cultural diversity of its families to extend pupils' awareness of multi-ethnic Great Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. The school knows its pupils extremely well and provides excellent support for both personal and academic needs. Assessment procedures are excellent and data analysed and used very effectively.

The excellent links with parents, as well as their involvement and support, have a significant impact on pupils' achievements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher offers outstanding leadership. The deputy and all staff support her exceptionally well. They form a very strong and effective team with a clear focus for continued improvement. They are determined to maintain high standards in all areas of school life.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors fulfil their roles and responsibilities exceptionally well, including monitoring of standards, finance and the curriculum. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school evaluates its performance extremely effectively. It has a clear view of its work and effectively analyses what works and why. It has developed excellent systems for analysing the school's results and using these to set future targets. This has had a significant impact on maintaining high standards.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school's financial resources are extremely well targeted to meet the needs of pupils and staff and to maintain high standards.

The school applies the principles of 'best value' exceptionally well and is careful not to become complacent. It compares itself with others and challenges its own effectiveness. The school is very effective and gives very good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents share excellent views of the school's work. Pupils like school very much and the school's very high expectations for them. Pupils' increasing maturity and responsibility and their exemplary behaviour. The very high quality leadership and management and very good teaching. Excellent home and school partnership and ease they have in approaching the school with questions or a problem. Homework and the interesting range of activities outside of lessons. Information about school activities and how well their child is getting on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents raised no significant concerns.

Inspectors share all of the positive views put forward by the parents. The school provides an outstanding climate for learning and greatly values the input of its parents. This shared commitment between home and school helps to support standards very well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The standards in English, mathematics and science are particularly high, owing to very good teaching in Years 3 – 6 particularly for older pupils, and the excellent use of assessment.

1. The school achieves exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. This is a considerable strength of the school. When the children join the Reception classes at Shenfield St Mary's their attainment is generally above average for their age. When they leave the school aged 11, most of them will have made very good progress and achieved standards that are very high and within the top five per cent nationally. As the pupils move through the school their learning is very rapid. There are a number of reasons for this:-
 - Previous learning experiences are built on and developed in every class, so that progress is consistently good or better.
 - Staff work together in year groups very well, and their teaching has many significant strengths:
 - teachers are experienced, and know how to deliver the National Curriculum and National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively; and
 - teachers know their pupils very well, they challenge and extend the work of higher, average and lower attaining pupils.
 - The pupils' progress and achievements are very effectively tracked and charted at regular intervals. Gaps in learning are quickly identified and support is provided so that the rate of learning does not slacken.
2. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory with good features. It is now a strength, with an increased percentage of good and very good lessons. There is good teaching in the Reception and in Year 1 and 2 classes, which helps the youngest children get such a good start to their education. This gives them a firm foundation for their later learning. In Years 3 to 6, particularly in Year 6, teaching is highly effective. Teachers make high demands of their pupils, getting across difficult and complex ideas very effectively. Good examples of this are quoted in paragraphs six and eight where achievement was very high. Throughout the school pupils are challenged by interesting activities, which motivates them and promotes effective learning. Extremely positive relationships in the classroom contribute significantly to pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and determination to succeed.
3. Extremely effective and detailed analysis, alongside the careful assessment of all pupils' strengths and weaknesses, is used to set targets and plan lessons. In addition the information is used successfully to highlight areas for development throughout the school. Monitoring the performance of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures, boys and girls and pupils of all abilities, ensures all pupils have appropriate provision for their needs. Assessment is now a considerable strength of the school. There is excellent analysis of test questions leading to identification of strengths and weaknesses in elements of subjects. An outstanding example of how this works in practice was the drive to push up standards in reading in Years 1 and 2, when it was identified that they were not as high as other aspects in English. Determination to promote high standards led to helpful strategies, such as a greater emphasis on guided reading. In addition, rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher, English and Infant co-ordinators has taken place. This has had a very good effect – standards have risen. In addition, the teachers know their pupils' capabilities extremely well and they work hard to meet their academic needs. This helps pupils of all abilities to make good progress in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. The rate of progress accelerates through Years 3 to 6 and is very good by the time pupils are in Year 6.
4. Many of the younger children in the Reception classes are on course to exceed their targets in all areas of their learning¹ by the end of the Reception year. The others are on course to achieve them. Good teaching, alongside a secure understanding of the most effective ways that young children

¹ The curriculum for Nursery and Reception aged children.

learn, means that good progress is made by all the children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. It is impressive how well integrated these children are. The emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly strong, as is the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. All of this provides a firm foundation for later learning.

5. The school places a very strong emphasis on reading, writing, speaking and listening and consequently all pupils achieve particularly well in these areas. By the time pupils are seven their standards in English are well above average. Pupils speak confidently to each other and to adults and enjoy talking to the rest of the class and sharing their experiences with visitors. They are articulate and they confidently discussed their recent visit to *Southend* describing similarities and differences with *Shenfield*. Written work is very neatly presented and of good quality, and stories are well structured with a beginning, a middle and an end. Pupils are skilled at using appropriate vocabulary and format, depending on the purpose of their writing. For example, *Instructions for Aliens* are laid out clearly and sequentially and in science, diagrams are correctly and neatly labelled. Pupils read their geography and history worksheets fluently with understanding. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, are supported well by a teaching assistant, who helps them to make good progress.
6. 11-year-olds are very adept at describing the characters in their books and explaining why they behave in a particular way. This is because teachers use very good questioning techniques and imaginative and challenging resources. In one example, using *The HitchHiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by *Douglas Adams*, pupils effectively compared the characters, settings and events from television and book extracts. They organised their work extremely well, giving their reasons very clearly. Pupils read to a very high standard, and worked out the similarities and differences of parallel scenes in the book using their skills of inference and deduction very effectively. Pupils were engrossed in their written work and worked hard. They wrote their answers in complex sentences with very good use of punctuation and spelling strategies, and everyone, including those pupils with special educational needs, produced a very good amount of work, with higher attainers achieving to a particularly high level.
7. Investigation work is properly incorporated into the mathematics programme with a strong emphasis on mathematical patterns; this is a strength and significantly contributes to high standards. Pupils enjoy mental mathematics, and are highly motivated and quick to respond, as in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were extremely accurate in their mental recall of all tables. In mathematics the higher and average attaining seven-year-olds can add and subtract to ten, with a very good degree of accuracy. They are secure in their understanding of numbers, especially place value in numbers up to 100. Imaginative teaching helps pupils learn about right angles. They became *detectives* in their hunt around the room and found very good examples of right angles on tables and books.
8. By the time they are 11, higher attaining pupils successfully add, subtract, multiply and divide when working with bigger numbers up to and including those with six digits. Excellent subject knowledge and challenging teaching in Year 6 helped pupils in an investigation of patterns associated with *Pascal's Triangle*. Work matched extremely well to pupils' attainment meant they all made very good progress in the investigation and appreciation of mathematical pattern.
9. Pupils clearly enjoy science and they are particularly keen and interested in undertaking experiments. Very good cross-curricular links with literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) all contribute to the high level of work seen during the inspection, not only from the higher attaining pupils but from the average and lower attaining pupils as well. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a very good knowledge of the environment, electricity, friction and force and have developed very good investigation skills. During a lesson, they sensibly worked with a partner to discover how people are similar to each other in some ways, but different in others. They made good observations that they shared with the class and their teacher, thus enhancing their speaking and listening skills. Discussions with Year 6 pupils clearly support their high achievements in the subject. Pupils of all abilities know and understand scientific methodology, and understand and use a variety of ways of recording and forming a conclusion consistent with the evidence from their investigations. Pupils are well informed and confident in all aspects of the subject – this is because teachers have very good subject knowledge and cover the work in considerable depth.

10. The skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing and number work are taught very well in literacy and numeracy lessons but also in other subjects. This is a strength and one reason why standards are so high. Pupils are confident at using their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils effectively used a reporting style when writing in *The Egyptian Herald* about the discovery of Tutankamen's tomb, and in Year 5, pupils wrote detailed descriptions about Henry VIII coming to the throne. There were many examples to support numeracy, for example the use of Venn diagrams to classify food in science in Year 1, and pie-charts of different types of houses in Year 4. ICT is also used to extend the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills when they use the Internet for research, word-processing their reports and use spreadsheets and graphs to represent rainfall in London and Bangalore. Pupils work in different groups according to their ability, and teachers are adept at pitching work at the right levels for them. Pupils with special educational needs are given extra support right from the start of their time in school. This enables them to progress at the same rate as their classmates. Progress is always good and frequently better.

Leadership and management are very good, with an outstanding contribution from the headteacher. Very good teamwork amongst staff and excellent support from the governors ensure high standards and a strong commitment to continued improvement.

11. Shenfield St Mary's headteacher is an excellent leader and manager. She has an extremely clear vision of what the school must do to support pupils' academic and personal development and to help them to achieve high standards. She is strongly supported by the deputy, staff and governors, and everyone has a shared vision of the way forward for the school. This shared vision includes a determination that:
- very high standards will be maintained;
 - the pupils will behave well, demonstrating consideration and tolerance for each other and for different points of view; and
 - the school will continue to provide an education of the highest quality so that all its pupils continue to share in every aspect of its day-to-day life.

Shenfield St Mary's school is extremely successful in achieving its goals.

12. The school has an excellent awareness of its overall performance. There are very effective analyses of what works and why, in every aspect of the school's work. It uses this information to inform its future plans. Excellent consultation procedures that involve parents and pupils contribute towards the school's overall direction. The headteacher has developed impressive monitoring systems for performance data and for teaching and learning. These involve the deputy and subject co-ordinators. They have been particularly effective and have had an impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning and upon pupils' achievements, hence standards are high. The co-ordinator's monitoring role has improved well since the previous inspection. Very good teamwork and a commitment to higher standards, and valuing the individual within a caring community, is very much the key to the school's success. Parents are very positive about the school, and consider that it has improved since the last inspection and that the school has achieved a very good balance between high standards, an interesting curriculum and happiness of the children.
13. The many strengths from the previous inspection have not only been maintained but they have significantly improved. The issues identified in the last inspection report have been thoroughly tackled, and very good progress has been made. The monitoring role of the curriculum co-ordinators has been strengthened. Wide consultations about priorities take place which are incorporated into the school development plan, and which are monitored very well. Procedures for homework have improved. Provision for ICT is good and beginning to be used effectively to extend the curriculum. Assessment procedures and their use are now excellent, and the youngest children have a wider curriculum that fully extends their physical development, and there is effective planned use of the outside area².

² During the inspection building work was taking place – this meant that the outside plans were restricted. However, from discussions with staff and scrutiny of planning it is evident that there is good structured outside provision for the Reception children.

14. The role of the governors makes an excellent contribution to the overall effectiveness of the school. They recognise its significant strengths and have an extremely strong commitment to maintain them. There is excellent financial control and administration with rigorous monitoring of the budget and the impact of expenditure. Governors are fully aware of the 'best value' principles, which are always applied before any spending decisions are taken. This is aptly demonstrated with reference in the above paragraph to improving the provision of ICT by developing a computer suite. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are effectively supported; they progress at the same rate as their classmates and achieve very well.

The imaginative and very rich curriculum, significantly enhanced by extra curricular activities, ensure all pupils, whatever their ability have excellent access to all aspects of school life.

15. Shenfield St Mary's aims 'to give access to a curriculum and a range of learning experiences of the highest standard'. In this the headteacher and staff are very successful. The headteacher is instrumental in ensuring that all staff and governors are committed to equality of opportunity in the school community. She promotes an exciting and extremely rich curriculum, significantly enhanced by an extensive range of curricular activities. One of the notable strengths of the school is the way all pupils whatever their background, ability or gender, have excellent equality of access to all aspects of school life. This is because: -
- the curriculum is imaginative and rich, successfully promoting pupils' creativity.
 - subjects are effectively linked to enable pupils to use skills, understanding and knowledge in a variety of situations.
 - learning opportunities, whether they are academic or social, are totally inclusive – all pupils have excellent access and opportunities to achieve their very best.
 - there is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
16. All subjects of the National Curriculum are covered very effectively. Literacy and numeracy receive substantial time each day to very good effect. This is either through the subject time allocation or through promoting them very successfully within other subjects. The school has successfully maintained a very broad, rich and balanced curriculum that is relevant and accessible to all pupils. Teachers are very effective at drawing together separate strands from different subjects to present a coherent learning programme with an emphasis on pupils developing skills and applying them. This helps to ensure that pupils learn to use their skills in an interesting and appropriate context.
17. The cross-curricular links are very strong without any loss of subject individuality. An outstanding example was the collection of design and technology work, which was due to be exhibited at a nearby technology exhibition and supported by local and national businesses. In addition pupils' social development and speaking and listening skills are significantly enhanced, as representatives from each class, Reception to Year 6, accompany their exhibits to discuss the various aspects of their designs with visitors and sponsors. From the range of work it is evident that there is very good progression of skills, and high quality work shows an increasing and complex range of designs. Pupils are able to combine their designing and making skills with very good knowledge of materials and joining procedures, components, such as mechanical and electrical systems and techniques. For example, Year 2 pupils designed *Tiddalik's Well*, in response to the challenge of obtaining water in an Australian desert. They lit the well and water level, using their scientific knowledge on circuits and used their literacy skills to a high standard, by clearly labelling diagrams and re-telling the story of the Australian frog. During the inspection the headteacher and staff were delighted that several of the exhibits, such as the clothes and accessories designed and made from a variety of materials by the Year 6 pupils, won gold awards for the high quality work.
18. The school promotes pupils' creativity very well and values the work produced through the way it is effectively displayed. The quality of artwork throughout the school is very good and displays significantly enhance the environment. Skills are taught well from a young age. For example, Year 1 pupils were encouraged to use their knowledge of colour mixing to produce pictures in the style of *Paul Cezanne*. Pupils in Year 3 produced very good representations of the jugs and dishes made famous by *Clarice Cliffe*, successfully reflecting the bold colours and designs of the 1920s and 1930s. Year 6 pupils created their own imaginative surrealist portraits, based on the work of *Arcimbolda*. In another example, very effective links were made with history, when Year 6 pupils

enjoyed creating collages to depict the moon landing of Neil Armstrong. In addition in this lesson, the social interaction between the pupils as they worked was exemplary and everybody enjoyed the mature discussions that took place.

19. Since the last inspection very good progress has been made to ensure that all aspects of the ICT curriculum are fully in place, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6. ICT across the curriculum has developed well. It is used effectively to support learning in the majority of subjects. Year 5 pupils successfully used ICT to photograph their novelty slippers that they had made in design and technology. To enhance their work they used a variety of styles, fonts and colours in their word processed introduction and enclosed useful information from websites in their work folders. There is scope for this aspect of the curriculum to be extended further, which has been acknowledged by the ICT co-ordinators.
20. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities designed to cater for the full range of pupils' interests and abilities further enriches the curriculum. From a discussion with Year 6 pupils, it is evident they are extremely enthusiastic about the range of activities in the school. They are very keen on the school productions such as *Bugsy Malone*, which they recently took part in, and on sporting and musical events. The school choir won at the *Stratford Festival*. Boys and girls are encouraged to play all sports, take part in productions and learn to play musical instruments.

The very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and excellent care are strong contributory factors towards pupils' excellent behaviour, attitudes and relationships.

21. The school provides very good support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is extremely effective in providing a safe and caring environment, where pupils are valued and along with their parents, are known well by the staff. This area of the school's work was considered good at the last inspection and it has significantly improved. The school is very successful in achieving one of its fundamental aims: "*At St Mary's we aim to provide a safe, secure and caring Christian environment, where every individual is an accepted and respected member of the school community*". Some of the contributory factors of these significant strengths are that:
 - there is a very strong whole school commitment to the well being of all pupils, which contributes towards a happy, purposeful and safe environment;
 - the very positive ethos based on Christian beliefs and values is strongly promoted by the headteacher, staff and governors; and
 - the headteacher and staff have very high expectations of the pupils, both academically and socially.
22. The school provides very good support for pupils' spiritual development. There are very good opportunities for pupils to appreciate their surroundings and explore values and beliefs, including a variety of religious beliefs and values. There are very good reflective Christian assemblies and an effective link with the parish church. Teachers give pupils very good opportunities to understand and explore their feelings and emotions and those of others, for example, when older pupils expressed their thoughts on a variety of books, such as the events in *Anne Frank's Diary* or writing their personal response to the death of a beloved pet. In art and design pupils successfully created an effective scene dominated by struggle and death, when they depicted *Guernica* by *Picasso*. The pupils have a deep respect for themselves and others and know that they can achieve in many aspects of school life. This is because they are within a positive climate where the headteacher and staff believe in them and strongly promote excellence for all. Spirituality and a sense of achievement were found in a number of activities and lessons. For example, the joy expressed when a Year 2 pupil finally managed to move a programmable toy in a mathematics lesson.
23. The headteacher leads the school very effectively in raising and maintaining the self-esteem of all pupils. Provision for social and moral development is excellent. There is a clear moral code, consistently implemented, which means the school is a very friendly, orderly community with a first-rate atmosphere for learning. Pupils' attitudes are excellent, they are very keen to do well and are responsive to the high quality teaching and rich curriculum. The school ethos effectively promotes inclusive values; pupils are given ample opportunities to work and play co-operatively, which they do. Older pupils are enthusiastic and happy to take on responsibilities, for example, they have leadership

roles in the School Council and the progression in responsibilities promotes their social development to a very high degree. School Council pupils even have their own budget of £100 and are accountable for their spending. Their behaviour is exemplary with a high level of self-discipline, respect and tolerance for one another. The Year 6 pupils are excellent role models, they are mature and responsible individuals and feel very well prepared for their next stage in their education.

24. The provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils learn about the world's main faiths and are encouraged to value each other's beliefs, values and cultures through circle time, collective worship and religious education. The music, geography and art and design curriculum's effectively promote both western and non-western cultures. For example, Year 2 pupils contrast Southend with St Lucia, while Year 6 pupils explore living conditions, including different regional foods in India, and how the Adivasi people fight for their rights. Pupils successfully explore other cultural interests through extra-curricular activities, links with industry, dramatic productions, art and design, ICT, mathematics, and writing from different perspectives, such as the ancient Greeks. The school makes very good use of the cultural diversity of its teachers and families to extend pupils' awareness of multi-ethnic Great Britain, particularly during specific Culture Weeks, for example, parents dress in national costume and cook with the children, and a teacher assistant holds Spanish classes. In addition, older pupils start to learn to speak French in class lessons.

The partnership with parents is excellent; this has a significant impact on pupils' achievements.

25. Parents regard the school extremely highly. The partnership between home and school was considered a strength in the previous inspection – it has improved. This is because:
- there are excellent partnerships and relationships between home and school;
 - the quality of information to parents, including reports, is excellent; and
 - parents are made to feel very welcome whether by helping in lessons or on visits.
26. The school recognises the great importance of effective liaison between home and school, and the active role parents can play in their children's education. Parental involvement in the children's learning is excellent and has a significant impact on their attainment and progress. Parents appreciate regular newsletters and outline curriculum plans; they feel very well informed. As well as the web-site to inform them about school events, e-mail links are being established to ensure all parents receive regular information. The school values their views. They are consulted and their views are taken into consideration when drawing up the priorities for the school development plan. The plan is then summarised in a user-friendly booklet for parents.
27. Parents are very supportive, they consider that their children are making very good progress and are very happy with the education and other opportunities provided by the school. They know that the school expects their children to work hard and to achieve their best. Parents value the high standards provided for their children and greatly appreciate the detailed reports. They consider that teachers know the children very well. Reports are of a very high quality and issued in February. This is a very effective system and gives teachers, pupils and parents an opportunity to work on targets for the rest of the academic year. The school operates an 'open door' policy, and parents can meet with the headteacher and teachers to discuss any matters of importance and concern. In this way any problems are sorted out immediately and efficiently.
28. The school makes excellent use of the talents and backgrounds of parents to help support the curriculum and life of the school. For example, parents help in the classroom, assist on the Year 6 residential visit and help to run clubs. The school also makes very good use of the cultural diversity of its families to extend pupils' awareness of multi-ethnic Great Britain. There is a hundred per cent attendance at the Parent consultation evenings, which is appreciated by the headteacher and staff. Parents value being involved in the Friday achievement assemblies; this has a significant impact on the social and moral development of the children, where they have the opportunity to be recognised for both academic and personal achievements. Various fundraising activities are very well supported, the level of parental support has a significant impact on improved facilities and resources offered by the school, and the education provided for pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

29. Shenfield St Mary's School is a very effective school. A strength of the leadership and management of the headteacher is the rigorous way in which she leads the staff and governors in monitoring and evaluating how well the school is working. She uses the findings extremely effectively, taking appropriate action to bring about necessary and sustained improvement. Consequently there are no features that require significant improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

26

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

20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	11	12	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	42	46	12	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	371
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	30

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	29	23	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	29	28
	Girls	23	23	22
	Total	51	52	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (89)	100 (96)	96 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	28
	Girls	22	19	22
	Total	49	47	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (89)	90 (94)	96 (94)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	24	23	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	24	24
	Girls	22	23	23
	Total	46	47	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	98 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	24	24
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	45	46	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (98)	98 (98)	98 (98)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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	277	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	6	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	4	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	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	13	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.69
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	213.5

Financial information

Financial year	2002-2003
	£
Total income	774,911
Total expenditure	774,176
Expenditure per pupil	2,181
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,799
Balance carried forward to next year	26,534

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.7
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	371
Number of questionnaires returned	90

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	48	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	52	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	39	6	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	53	11	2	0
The teaching is good.	52	42	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	57	9	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	40	8	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	33	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	49	10	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	41	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	50	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	36	11	0	2