

INSPECTION REPORT

RED HILL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Worcester

LEA area: Hereford and Worcester

Unique reference number: 116859

Headteacher: Mrs Jane Long

Reporting inspector: Mr Selwyn Ward

9271

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd May 2003

Inspection number: 247707

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Midhurst Close Worcester
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss P Simpkin
Date of previous inspection:	20 th – 24 th October 1997

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9271	S Ward	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9928	A Dobson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27899	G. Beasley	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English Music Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
10120	P F Crookall	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
32834	G Pinder	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11528	M Wainwright	Team inspector	Science Geography History Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Red Hill is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school for boys and girls aged 4 - 11 years. It is located just outside the city centre. With 308 pupils, the school is larger than average. All of the pupils in Years 3 to 6, and most of those in Years 1 and 2, are taught in mixed-age classes where each class includes pupils across two year groups. Most of the pupils are white and of United Kingdom heritage, with a small number of Asian origin. There are no children at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average, most with moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils who have statements of special educational need is below average. Although pupils cover a wide range of abilities, overall, children's attainment when they join the school is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, and the children are generally from socially advantaged homes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Although there has been underachievement in the school, pupils now attain above average standards by the time they reach the end of Year 6 and this represents satisfactory achievement given that the children were also of above average attainment when they started school. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, and this has led to good recent improvement in standards. Pupils still make uneven progress during their time in school, however, because they are challenged more in their first year in their mixed-age classes than in their second. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is good support for pupils' personal development and pupils are enthusiastic learners. Red Hill is an improving school that now gives a satisfactory education to its pupils. It provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Older pupils do very well in music.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher have resulted in good recent improvement.
- Children enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is very good and they are very keen to learn.
- Boys and girls get on very well with one another and their behaviour is very good.
- Pupils are looked after well.
- Parents are kept well informed and are very supportive of the school and of their children's learning.

What could be improved

- Pupils are capable of achieving higher standards.
- Older pupils do not do as well as younger pupils in the mixed-age classes.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school.
- Not enough use is made of assessment information to raise standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Red Hill CE Primary was last inspected in October 1997. Since that time, standards have improved and the school won a government Achievement Award in 2001 for improvements in its test results. Nevertheless, pupils have not always done as well as they should. Standards have improved over the last year or so. They are now above average, which represents satisfactory achievement. The issues identified in the last inspection report have been satisfactorily tackled, although assessment information is still not used well enough and the monitoring of teaching and learning could be more rigorous. Overall, the progress that has been made represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

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	B	D	E
mathematics	B	C	C	D
science	C	C	C	E

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

Schools are categorised as similar according to the number of children known to be eligible for free school meals. Results in the tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were average overall when compared with schools nationally. Results have fluctuated from year to year, although the trend in results since the last inspection is in line with that seen nationally. Results last year were well below the average for similar schools and indicate that pupils did not achieve as well as they could. This had also been the position in previous years in the Year 2 tests, although results last year were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. Teachers' assessments of science in Year 2 last year were well below average and were among the lowest 5 per cent when compared with similar schools. Although past test results represent significant underachievement, standards seen during the inspection show that recent initiatives taken within the school to improve reading and writing skills, in particular, have been effective, with pupils now generally attaining above average standards by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Given pupils' above average starting point, this represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils do particularly well in music, where standards and achievement are both well above average. The school set ambitious but achievable targets for improved results in English and mathematics in this year's tests. Children in their reception year make satisfactory progress. The overwhelming majority are expected to reach and many exceed the expected standards by the time they join Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and develop a very positive attitude to learning. They are attentive in lessons and settle to work enthusiastically and without fuss. They concentrate hard and are capable of getting a lot done when they are given work that challenges them to do so.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in the playground, around the school and in almost all lessons. There has been one temporary exclusion over the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. Children are polite and considerate, help each other and work very well together. Boys and girls of different abilities get on well together and are all included in the full range of school activities.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above average and pupils get to school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching overall is satisfactory, but there is a higher proportion of good and very good teaching in Years 3 to 6. English and mathematics teaching is satisfactory. Teachers follow the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in that they generally organise lessons with an introduction that explains the learning objectives, individual work or work in small groups, and a whole-class plenary session at the end where the teacher and pupils assess whether the learning objectives have been met. Although this lesson structure is effective in teaching in a wide range of subjects, too often the learning objectives are the same for all pupils, which is frequently inappropriate where the class includes more able older pupils alongside lower attaining younger pupils. In numeracy lessons, pupils do not always get enough opportunity to practise their mental arithmetic. In most cases, teachers plan together well so that pupils in parallel classes (those with similar age children) cover similar work. Pupils are well managed. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations. Pupils know exactly what they are supposed to be doing, and why. They are set demanding deadlines and they get a lot of work done in the time. Where teaching was particularly effective, teachers inspired children by calling on pupils' investigational as well as their analytical skills to make learning fun. Where lessons were less effective, work was insufficiently challenging. The pace of learning was slow. Pupils were given too much time to complete tasks and so they worked with little sense of urgency. Teaching assistants are generally used well to support the learning of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, although sometimes their time is not well used when the teacher is introducing the lesson. Satisfactory use is made of homework to support children's learning although there is some inconsistency in the use made of homework by different teachers. Marking is unsatisfactory. Too often, marking offers pupils a few words of encouragement but insufficient practical advice on what pupils need to do to do better.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is appropriately matched to pupils' needs and is planned across the parallel classes so that the children do similar work. It does not, however, plan sufficiently for pupils to make consistent progress in the mixed-age classes, and pupils generally make better progress in their first year in each mixed-age class than they do in their second. The curriculum is enriched through a very good range of extracurricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and, as a result, they make similar progress to the other pupils. There is very good support for the pupils with statements of special educational need who are helped to take a full part in school activities alongside other pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although some children come from homes where languages other than English are spoken, none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. They neither need nor receive any special provision and they make similar progress to other children.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides well for pupils' personal development, with good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development, and very good provision for their social and cultural development. Music and art and design make a particularly strong contribution to pupils' appreciation of their own cultural heritage and the cultures and traditions of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff are caring and supportive. Children's welfare is looked after well and there are effective procedures for monitoring attendance and very effective systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Although the school collects potentially useful information about how well pupils are doing, not enough use is made of this in planning teaching and learning or in setting appropriate targets for pupils that enable them to build on their skills as they progress through the school.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	The school has developed an effective partnership with parents that contributes very positively to the standards achieved. Parents are given good information about how well their children are doing, and most parents give good support to the school and to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Red Hill has a positive ethos where all are made to feel valued. The headteacher has set a clear educational direction that has helped to eliminate the underachievement in the school. Management is generally effective but staff with management responsibilities are not involved enough in monitoring teaching. The school has benefited from very stable staffing.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive and fulfil their legal duties well. They have a sound understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved and are appropriately involved in setting the school's priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school makes good use of the principles of <i>best value</i> to evaluate what it does well and what could be improved. It has been effective in introducing initiatives over the past year to deal with underachievement. Teaching and learning are satisfactorily monitored, but the school has recognised the need to extend this to ensure more consistently good teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Spending supports the priorities set out in the school development plan. Funding is used for the proper purpose. The buildings appear to have reached the end of their natural life and are in need of major refurbishment or replacement. Teaching and support staff are well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Resources for most subjects are adequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress. • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The children are well behaved. • The school is approachable. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are not enough activities outside lessons. • The school does not work closely enough with parents or keep them well informed about how their children are doing. • Pupils do not get the right amount of homework. • The buildings are of poor quality. • The older pupils in mixed-age classes make less progress than the younger ones.

Around one in four parents returned their questionnaires. Their views were mixed. Inspectors agree with most of the favourable views expressed, although expectations are not consistently high enough and pupils' progress is generally satisfactory. Inspectors agree with parental concerns about the quality of the buildings and with the concerns expressed over the progress of older pupils in mixed-age classes. Inspectors judge that the school is effective in involving parents, and consider that they are kept well informed about how well their children are doing. Inspectors judge the amount of homework to be satisfactory, although it could be used more consistently. Inspectors disagree with parental concerns over the amount of extracurricular activities. Inspectors judged these to be very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The great majority of children start school with above average levels of attainment in all areas of learning except in early writing skills, which are below average. They make good progress in personal, social and emotional development, their writing skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Progress is satisfactory in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, and in their creative and physical development and by the end of the reception year, the great majority attain and many exceed the nationally expected levels in all areas of learning.

2. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2002, results were above the national average in both reading and writing, although when compared with similar schools, results in writing were average and reading results were below average. Test results in mathematics were well above average in comparison with both schools national and with similar schools. Results have been average or below in most previous years, and, given pupils' above average starting point, this shows that there has been underachievement in the school. This is also borne out by the standards indicated from teachers' assessments in science at the end of Year 2 (there is no national test for science in Year 2). These assessments showed standards that were well below average when compared with schools nationally. The assessments placed Red Hill among the lowest five per cent when compared with similar schools.

3. In the national tests taken last year at the end of Year 6, results were average in mathematics and science and below average in English. Results in English and science were well below the average of similar schools and in mathematics they were below the similar schools' average. Again this represents underachievement when compared with how the same pupils did when they were in Year 2. Although the trend in results since the last inspection has broadly matched that seen nationally, results have fluctuated from year to year. Notwithstanding the fact that the school was given a government Achievement Award in 2001, there has been some underachievement in most years in at least one of English, mathematics or science. The school recognises there has been underachievement and the evidence from the inspection indicates that it has been successful over the past year in tackling this. Ambitious but achievable targets were set for improved results in the 2003 Year 6 tests. Through initiatives such as the introduction of a formal reading scheme in the Year 1 and 2, a whole school focus on developing writing and the deployment in Years 3 to 6 of additional classroom support from teaching assistants, standards have risen so that they are now in line with national expectations in English and above average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. This represents satisfactory achievement overall. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

4. All pupils in Years 3 and 4, and in Years 5 and 6, and most of the pupils in Years 1 and 2, are taught in mixed-age classes where two year groups are taught together. Pupils are generally, making better progress in their first year in each of these mixed-age classes than in their second. This is because younger pupils are able to move on to do the same work as their older classmates but they do not have a similar opportunity the following year when they are in the oldest group. This confirms a concern expressed by some parents. In their questionnaire responses, almost nine out of ten parents were happy with the progress their children were making. Although progress is now satisfactory, inspectors judged that pupils could be doing better, particularly if they made more steady progress in every year group. The different rate of progress made by pupils in each of their two years in the mixed-age

classes is particularly noticeable in the case of the most able pupils. They make very rapid progress and achieve particularly well in their first year in each of the mixed-age classes because they are given the opportunity to work with the older pupils. They do not benefit enough from this, however, because they do not get equally challenging work in their second year in each mixed-age class.

5. In information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and physical education, standards throughout the school are in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in music, geography and history, and above average in art and design, and religious education. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in art and design, geography, history and religious education. In music, standards are well above average, largely as a result of the specialist teaching from which pupils benefit in Years 5 and 6. Standards are generally higher than were described in the last inspection.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils because of the good support they receive in class. The present procedures for special educational needs are still very new but already movement up, down and off the special needs list has taken place. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language who are at an early stage of learning English. Those pupils who come from homes where languages other than English are spoken make similar progress to other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils enjoy coming to school, a point confirmed overwhelmingly by parents in answers to their questionnaires. Pupils are proud of their school. In lessons, they settle down very quickly and are keen to learn. Pupils are alert, attentive and enthusiastic about participating. Hands shoot up when questions are asked. When given a task to do, they try their best and stick at it, however older pupils in mixed-age classes are not being challenged enough and consequently are not learning as much as they might. Most pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work and enjoy talking about what they have learnt.

8. Behaviour is very good. Classrooms are orderly and the atmosphere is very conducive to learning. Pupils understand the rules and think they are fair. They take the collection of stickers and commendations for good behaviour seriously. Movement around the school is very orderly. Pupils are very attentive in assemblies and show proper respect during prayers. Behaviour is good in the dining room although the lack of cooked meals inhibits the development of dinner-time as a social occasion where good table manners can be encouraged. Playgrounds are very friendly. Pupils of all ages reported that neither bullying nor racism is a problem in the school. Just one pupil was temporarily excluded in the past year.

9. Relationships are very good with pupils and staff getting on very well with each other. Pupils left the inspectors in no doubt that they value highly both their teachers and their friends at the school. Pupils are polite and courteous. They are very keen to open doors and they make visitors feel very welcome. They collaborate very well together when working in pairs or larger groups. In the reception classes, the children co-operate very well together when working in small groups and when outside at play. They share the space and toys available sensibly, taking turns to have a go with the bikes and balancing equipment.

10. Pupils' personal qualities develop well during their time at the school. Their social skills develop very well. For example, they readily listen to the views of others and follow orderly routines in lessons, putting their hands up to answer questions rather than calling out their answers. They are conscientious when given responsibilities for helping in the school, ranging from class monitor duties to older pupils looking after younger ones at playtime. The

recent *Red Nose Day* allowed older pupils to show initiative in organising fundraising activities such as selling biscuits they had baked and arranging runs around the school. School clubs are very popular and well attended. Homework is taken seriously, although how much pupils get varies considerably from class to class. By the time the pupils are in the older classes, they are developing into interesting and articulate individuals with sensible views.

11. Overall the pupils' very good attitudes to school life and their very good behaviour are providing a very firm foundation for their learning. The pupils are a credit to the school and their parents. Attitudes, behaviour and relationships all show good improvement since the last inspection.

12. The attendance rate for 2001/2 was well above the national average for primary schools and is better than was reported in the last inspection. Punctuality is similarly very good. Registrations are prompt and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Teaching overall is satisfactory, but there is a higher proportion of good and very good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Inspectors observed 61 full, or part lessons. All but four were satisfactory or better, almost three out of five were judged to be good or better, and about one lesson in seven was judged to be very good or excellent. At the last inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, although one lesson in five was considered unsatisfactory and there was a much lower proportion of good or very good lessons. This means there has been good improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Nine out of ten parents expressed the view that their children were expected to work hard and do their best. Although this was certainly a feature of the best teaching, in some lessons teachers' expectations are too low, with many pupils capable of responding to greater challenge.

14. Teaching and learning in the reception classes is satisfactory. Adults work well together as a team and ensure that the day-to-day organisation runs smoothly. They know the children well and this makes sure that they mostly receive the support they need to make satisfactory progress. This is particularly beneficial to the children with special educational needs, whose particular needs are monitored closely by all staff. All adults have a good understanding of the way young children learn and this helps to build very good relationships with the children as soon as they start school. Activities are practical and interesting, and based on the children's personal experience as far as possible. However, some lessons are either too directed or not structured enough. This means that in play activities chosen by the children themselves, there is no direction to learning. In some literacy and numeracy lessons, children complete the same task in the same way despite some more able children being capable of carrying out work at a higher level.

15. English and mathematics are taught satisfactorily and the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* have made a significant contribution to the improvements in learning. Most lessons, including those in other subjects, follow the format recommended in the *Strategies* in that they generally begin with an introduction where the teacher explains the learning objectives, include an opportunity for pupils to carry out individual work or work in small groups, and end with a whole-class *plenary* session where the teacher and pupils together assess whether the learning objectives have been met. Although this is a generally effective way of organising lessons, too often the learning objectives are the same for all pupils. This is frequently inappropriate as most classes include pupils from a very wide range of abilities and experiences. A learning objective appropriate for, for example, a lower attaining Year 3 pupil may not be appropriate for an able Year 4 child. In numeracy lessons, pupils do not always get enough opportunity to practise their mental arithmetic because in

some classes the mental mathematics section planned for in the *National Numeracy Strategy* is not given enough time. The school has this year, for the first time, organised pupils into ability sets for mathematics in Years 5/6. Although the school has yet to formally evaluate the effectiveness of this arrangement, pupils' work suggests that pupils of all abilities have benefitted from this closer match of teaching to their learning needs.

16. In most cases, teachers plan together well so that pupils in parallel classes (those with similar age children) cover similar work. This ensures good equality between the classes. Pupils are well managed and, as a result, they concentrate hard on their work and behaviour is almost invariably good or very good. Questioning is used well and, because pupils are so ready to respond, it often develops into a lively discussion. Most teachers take care to ensure that all pupils are involved, for example by directing questions at pupils who do not volunteer answers.

17. In the most effective lessons, teachers have high expectations. Pupils know exactly what they are supposed to be doing, and why. They are set demanding deadlines and they get a lot of work done in the time. Where teaching was particularly effective, teachers inspired children by calling on pupils' investigational as well as their analytical skills to make learning fun, for example in using historical enquiry skills in Years 5 and 6 to act as archaeologists in looking at pictures of unfamiliar artefacts from the Indus Valley. Very good use is made of some teachers' specialist expertise, with, for example, teachers swapping classes so that music is taught by a music specialist to all three Year 5/6 classes and giving rise to high standards from pupils of all abilities.

18. Where lessons were less effective, work was insufficiently challenging and was not appropriately matched to the different abilities of the pupils in the class. In some lessons, the pace of learning was slow. Pupils were given too much time to complete tasks and so they worked with little sense of urgency. Because they behave so well in lessons, pupils did not get restless when given too long to carry out a task, but they were quite willing to pace themselves and allow untaxing work to fill the time available for it.

19. Teaching assistants are generally used well to support the learning of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. They not only help individual pupils understand what is expected of them, but also ensure that all pupils that have a particular learning need are fully included in the lessons. Those responsible for pupils with statements of special educational need keep daily diaries of the pupils in their care and use these to monitor pupil progress and advise the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teacher. Sometimes, however, teaching assistants' time is not well used when the teacher is introducing the lesson and they are listening passively.

20. Although one in five of the parents who returned their questionnaires expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of homework, inspectors consider that homework is used satisfactorily to support children's learning. There is some inconsistency, however, in the use made of homework by different teachers. Particularly good use is made of homework to support learning in mathematics.

21. Marking is unsatisfactory. The quality varies quite widely between different classes. Too often, marking offers pupils a few words of congratulatory encouragement but gives them insufficient practical advice on what they need to do to do better. Where pupils have individual learning targets, marking seldom refers or relates to these, so pupils are not helped to understand how well they are progressing with the targets set for them.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. The school meets all the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education, and plans well to ensure that there is adequate time allowed to teach the full range of subjects. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when National Curriculum requirements were not being fully met for teaching science, ICT, design technology or geography. The curriculum is now broader, with the arts receiving more attention and this enhances pupils' overall achievements. Displays throughout the school are bright and colourful, including artwork of a good standard, showing pupils developing their artistic talents well.

23. The curriculum for children in the reception classes is satisfactory. There is generally good planning for a wide range of interesting activities. At times, however, these are not structured enough and so the children are not getting the benefit from many activities. The use of the outdoor area has improved well since the previous inspection, and there is a good range of toys and equipment available to develop the children's physical skills and imaginative play. There are good links made between different areas of learning and this makes the learning more meaningful for the children. For example, the children are learning about the life-cycle of the butterfly through listening to stories and poems, and learning songs, which explain the process, and through painting pictures and patterns.

24. Throughout the school, work is planned covering a two-year cycle. This ensures that pupils neither miss out on or duplicate topics when they spend two years in a mixed-age class, but teachers do not adequately target work so that all pupils are working at the most appropriate level. For example, although the school's two-year planning means that pupils in, say, Year 3/4 look at different history topics in each year, they do not necessarily learn and apply more advanced historical skills in Year 4 than in Year 3.

25. The school is now effective in teaching literacy and numeracy from Year 1 onwards. There are some good links made between subjects, and opportunities are taken to develop reading and writing across the curriculum, for example in history, geography and religious education. Numeracy skills are strengthened too, as when artwork supports understanding of repeated patterns, or data handling is explored in the computer suite. However, there is not enough use made of computers in class lessons to support numeracy and literacy in particular. Although good use was made of the computer suite, during the inspection, the classroom computers were rarely seen in use in any lessons and are not, therefore, being used enough to contribute to pupils' achievement.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. These pupils all have individual education plans, shared with parents, that clearly identify strategies to meet their particular needs, especially in literacy and social development. Although fully integrated with classmates, pupils with special educational needs are supported by teaching assistants who help them to progress. In addition, pupils who have borderline needs are identified in classroom files for extra vigilance. In ICT, lessons are made easier for some pupils with special educational needs through the use of a rollerball control to replace the mouse.

27. There is a very good range of extracurricular activities available to pupils at lunchtime and after school. These include French, a gardening club, athletics, football, cricket and golf. Recorder playing is taught in three different ability groups and there is a good range of instrumental tuition. Many of the pupils who learn musical instruments join together to form a very good orchestra playing music to a high standard. The school's very good extracurricular

provision significantly enhances the educational opportunities on offer to the pupils and broadens the opportunities for them to achieve. Gifted and talented pupils, in particular, benefit from the opportunities to develop their sporting and musical talents.

28. Personal, social and health education is not taught as a distinct subject, although its elements, including sex education, drugs awareness and healthy eating are covered through curriculum subjects. Sex education is taught in Years 5 and 6 when the school nurse visits. Drugs awareness draws on the support of the community policeman. *Circle time*, when children discuss feelings and personal problems, is organised in the reception class and is effective in developing self-confidence. Although older pupils do not have this opportunity, relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff are good.

29. There are good links with St Martin's Church. The rector visits to talk to pupils, explaining, for example, the vestments used in church services. Visitors from the church contribute regularly to assemblies. The church itself is used for school services and concerts. Other visitors also enrich the curriculum and contribute positively to pupils' achievement. Pupils were enthralled, for example, when a governor talked to them about her experiences as an evacuee during the Second World War. Links with other institutions are satisfactory. Reception class teachers liaise with four playgroups to smooth entry for the children. There is a pattern of visits by Year 6 pupils to their next school, and teachers from there also visit Red Hill to meet the pupils before transfer. Student teachers and childcare assistants from local colleges work in the school. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to take part in a summer school arranged jointly with a neighbouring primary school.

30. Red Hill provides well for pupils' personal development. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good – a similar judgement to the last inspection. In social and cultural development, provision has improved and is now very good. The good provision for pupils' personal development is reflected in their very positive attitudes to school life and the way they mature while at school.

31. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies are used well to develop spiritual themes from an awareness of faith to the value of self-worth. These are closely linked with Christian teaching and one assembly a week is normally taken by the vicar or one of the church team. Periods of reflection are used to allow pupils to consider meanings and beliefs. Pupils are encouraged to make the most of their skills. For instance, during the inspection, one assembly very successfully illustrated the value of using your brain before acting rashly. Pupils are made aware of the wonder of nature, for example in the different designs of leaves. They are encouraged to appreciate a variety of music and how it can capture different moods and feelings. Pupils are introduced to the way that books can stir emotions. Photographs and displays are used extensively to celebrate individual children's achievement effectively and boost their self-esteem.

32. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils not only learn about moral issues in assemblies and class discussions but also in subject areas as well. Older pupils, for example, have reflected on the impact of war during their study in history of World War 2. Moral dilemmas are confronted well, such as discussing whether it is a good or bad thing to introduce a Western way of life into an underdeveloped country. This was very well illustrated in a Year 5/6 lesson on fair trade and was supported by a very good display on life in Ladakh – a small state in the high Indus valley. Pupils are encouraged to think of others and have produced thoughtful displays on the work of different charities such as *Christian Aid*.

33. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. Class discussions are used very effectively to develop skills in listening to others, taking turns and sitting quietly. Pupils are encouraged to work in groups and to collaborate and help each other. This is particularly effective when pupils work in pairs in the computer suite. The behaviour policy gives the pupils a clear framework as to what is acceptable in normal society. Good behaviour is very positively looked for and recognised through the awarding of stickers. Assemblies and class discussions help to make pupils aware that bullying and racism are wrong and not to be tolerated.

34. Provision for cultural development is very good with pupils being introduced to many aspects of cultural diversity in our society. Music is appreciated in assemblies and through involvement in and performances by the school orchestra. A wide range of art and design is celebrated. Pupils have, for example, painted pictures in the style of Picasso and Warhol. Varied opinions are encouraged by, for instance, having framed pictures next to each other of a Van Gogh and a front cover of The Beano. A high prominence is given to nursery rhymes with many well-loved verses illustrated by numerous displays around the school. The school encourages a love of books and literacy. For instance, displays cover poetry from sound poems to haiku. Other cultures are celebrated. Pupils are made familiar with African art and Ancient Greek pottery. The school makes very good use of artefacts to introduce pupils to other faiths. For example, one classroom has an excellent display of Tibetan prayer mats. The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes both to their positive attitude to learning and to their achievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. Red Hill has good procedures for the care and welfare of its pupils. The school is a friendly, caring community where pupils are valued and respected. Relationships are very good and pupils like and trust their teachers. Supervision is good at all times. Pupils are looked after well in a happy, safe and secure environment. Procedures for child protection are good and have improved since the previous inspection. The person responsible has been fully trained and staff are all aware of the school's procedures. The school has close and effective links with outside agencies where there is a need for liaison over any child protection concerns.

36. Procedures for health and safety are good. There are regular inspections of the premises by a governor, the headteacher and caretaker. These inspections are particularly important given the poor state of some parts of the fabric of the building. Appropriate arrangements are in place to protect pupils from unsuitable material on the internet. There is very good first aid cover, accidents are correctly recorded, fire drills are held termly and all electrical and physical education equipment is regularly checked for safety. An unfenced small shallow pond at the front of the school poses a potential risk. Although not accessible to pupils during the school day, it is close to the area where parents, many with toddlers, wait to pick up their children. Given the size of the pond, the notice stating that *"boating, fishing and swimming are forbidden"* is both insufficient and inappropriate.

37. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Parents understand these procedures well and appreciate the educational importance of good attendance. This ensures a high level of attendance. Registers are well kept and the school pays close attention to pupils with poor attendance, using the services of the education welfare service when necessary.

38. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Discipline has a very low profile as most pupils understand, without regular reminding, that high standards of behaviour are expected at all

times. Good behaviour is positively recognised through the awarding of stickers and commendation certificates. Very good records are kept of all incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including bullying and racism. Parents are informed quickly whenever the school has concerns.

39. Procedures for monitoring personal development are satisfactory. These are generally informal, although some teachers keep their own records. The sections on personal development in the pupils' annual reports are of consistently good quality.

40. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Much information is collected and analysed to help pupils to improve. The procedures are still quite new, however, and not all staff are fully involved. Assessment procedures have been developed best in English and mathematics, where they have been used to set targets. Trials of science assessment sheets are currently taking place with a view to implementation in 2003/4. There is little use of assessment in other subjects to plan teaching and learning. Assessment in non-core subjects is undertaken informally by class teachers. Half-termly planning grids give outlines of expectations for pupils and these form the basis of all assessments made by the teacher. No formal written record, other than the annual, individual pupil reports is kept. The school already has plans to extend assessment procedures in order to better inform planning and progress.

41. Analysis of pupils' performance data, teacher assessments, optional end-of-year tests and pupils' work is taking place and contributing to the setting of individual and group targets. However, these are not consistently used in all classes. Marking is often weak and not linked to targets. In many cases marking is left to the pupils to self-mark with no evidence of checking by the class teacher.

42. The personal targets of pupils with special educational needs are well known to the class teachers and support staff. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that colleagues are familiar with pupils' needs and kept well informed. Pupil profiles include samples of work and detailed records of progress are available for reference. Contributions from other agencies are included and the twice-yearly reviews appropriately involve parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Although the parents attending the meeting held by the Registered Inspector before the inspection were more positive in their views, responses from questionnaires were quite mixed, representing a satisfactory view of the school overall. Parents know their children like school and they find staff approachable. They are happy with the progress their children make and feel that the school has high expectations. They appreciate pupils' good behaviour and are happy with the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors are in broad agreement with most of these views. They found some inconsistency between teachers in their expectations of pupils. Expectations are frequently not high enough for older pupils in the mixed-age classes. Consequently these pupils are not making as much progress as they should be doing during those years.

44. Some parents have concerns about homework. The inspectors found that the provision of homework, although satisfactory, is very variable between teachers and classes. Some pupils have a considerable amount of homework, others of the same age get very little. A significant minority of parents do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors disagree. The provision of school clubs is very good, with a wide range on offer from gardening to orchestra.

45. The quality of information parents receive is good overall. The prospectus is of good quality. It is easy to read, with very clear sections on the school's aims and the school's attitude to discipline and bullying. Newsletters are interesting but too irregular to keep parents fully informed on the life of the school. Some teachers send home termly plans of what is about to be taught, but as this is not consistent throughout the school, some parents are denied the opportunity to be more actively involved in their child's learning.

46. There are good induction procedures for parents of children who join the reception classes. A formal invitation during the first two weeks in September means that they can meet their children's teacher individually. Simple information is collected about what each child likes and dislikes, and about any special educational needs or health requirements. Parents support reception children well at home by hearing them read and contributing to the home/school reading diaries. The twice-weekly reading group activities are well supported by parents and the children are making good progress in their early reading skills as a result.

47. Parents in Years 1 to 6 are kept well informed on their child's progress. The formal parents' meetings in the Autumn and Spring term allow parents to be kept fully up-to-date on how their child is doing. The school's "open door" policy ensures that teachers are available at the end of the school day for any pressing concerns. Reports are of good quality overall and meet statutory requirements. The layout is very clear and informative, giving parents a very detailed analysis of what their child can and cannot do. Guidance, however, on what the child needs to do to improve is often not written precisely enough to involve parents. This is a missed opportunity. Inspectors do not agree with those parents who think they are not kept well informed on their child's progress.

48. The school benefits from a very good level of parental involvement. Parents conscientiously listen to their children read, fill in their reading diaries and, when they get older, their homework diaries. A good number of parents help in the school, both on a regular basis and on occasions when extra help is needed, such as on school trips. This help is valuable and is contributing positively to pupils' learning. Parents have been consulted on their views of the school and on issues regarding internet safety. Governors who are parents play an active part in the running of the school. The Friends' Association is extremely successful in organising social events and fundraising. The good partnership between the school and parents is a strong contributory factor in the pupils' learning. Some parents do not think that the school works closely enough with them. Inspectors disagree.

49. A number of parents raised concerns about the poor state of the buildings and suggested that they were unsuitable for teaching. Inspectors share parents' concerns, as the buildings appear to be in need of major refurbishment or replacement, although, as a result of the efforts of staff, inspectors saw no evidence that pupils' education was being adversely affected by the state of the buildings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. Leadership in the school is good. Red Hill has a positive ethos where all are made to feel valued. Pupils speak, for example, with confidence about their enjoyment of school. The headteacher has recognised that there has been underachievement in the school. She has set a clear educational direction aimed at tackling this underachievement and raising standards. Results from previous years' national tests have been carefully analysed and a number of measures put in place that have begun to improve standards and the progress pupils make. For example, in the Year 2 tests in both 2000 and 2001, reading results were average. Given that pupils are generally of above average ability when they join the school, this indicated that children were not doing as well as they should in reading. As a result, a formal reading scheme was introduced and this has been effective in improving reading

standards. Over the past year, another initiative has sought to raise standards throughout the school in writing.

51. The school is effectively managed. There has been satisfactory monitoring of teaching and learning, improved since the last inspection, which again has helped to raise the quality of education provided. In its planning, the school has recognised the need to further extend this monitoring and ensure that it is made more rigorous to further raise the quality of teaching. Staff with subject co-ordinator responsibilities all do at least a sound job, although, at present, few are actively involved in monitoring teaching in their subject. Members of the senior management team have been involved in monitoring and most have a clear role, for example in overseeing development in Years 1 and 2 or in Years 3 to 6. The deputy headteacher does not, however, currently have a clearly defined role or areas of specific responsibility and this limits her effectiveness.

52. Since the arrival of the current headteacher, a great deal has been achieved to establish good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher is currently the acting special educational needs co-ordinator due to the recent departure of the previous post-holder and pending the arrival of a new co-ordinator in September. The procedures for referral and for assessment and the profiling system in use in the school conform to the new legal requirements. In lessons, the needs of the pupils are carefully considered and small groups, paired or individual teaching is planned where appropriate. Currently most referrals are for literacy needs and only a few have numeracy difficulties identified. Where pupils have pronounced literacy difficulties they are withdrawn for support. Pupils with statements of special educational need are very well supported, mostly with a classroom assistant who remains with them for most of the day. This helps to ensure that they are fully included in school activities and able to take part alongside other pupils.

53. The school has benefited from stable staffing with very few changes of teachers. The teachers and teaching support staff are well matched to the needs of the curriculum, with pupils additionally benefiting from some specialist teaching in music where teachers in Years 5/6 “swap” classes to teach subjects in an area of expertise. Office staff provide efficient support to the school. The low staff turnover means that there are only rare opportunities to test the school’s induction arrangements for supporting new teachers. Nevertheless, the school’s systems appear to be comprehensive, and the temporary part-time teachers have been well supported. There are good performance management systems in place with every teacher having targets agreed, setting pupil, school and subject as well as personal priorities. Two governors and an external assessor set and monitor similar performance management targets for the headteacher.

54. Although resources are adequate, the school buildings appear to have reached the end of their natural life and are in need of major refurbishment or replacement. This was a view expressed strongly by parents, and inspectors agree, although staff have been successful in preventing the state of the buildings from adversely affecting teaching. Nevertheless, some rooms are poor learning environments. Parents report that the upstairs teaching areas, which do not meet disabled access requirements, become too hot in the summer. Certainly the computer suite, in a small upstairs room, becomes uncomfortably hot and sticky, despite the air conditioning, when it accommodates a class of thirty children. The library and school hall, both of which are in need of improvement, both function as thoroughfares, which is unsatisfactory. The school’s heating system is inefficient and expensive to run, although the school has been able to negotiate additional funding for this extra expense from the local education authority. The school benefits from good size playing fields. The reception classes’ outside area is large enough for the children to play in small and large groups and is used effectively as a good learning resource. There are several interesting areas to support the children’s imaginative and independent play including a willow

sculpture, which becomes a den or place to enjoy a picnic, a playhouse and areas to build and draw imaginary worlds. There is no veranda, however, enabling this space to be used other than in good weather.

55. Governors are supportive of the school. They have an effective committee structure that enables them to carry out their legal duties well. They have been particularly focused in recent years on pressing for the major refurbishment or rebuilding of the school but they have not lost sight of the school's other priorities. They have a sound appreciation of the strengths of the school and are not complacent about the areas that need to be improved. Since the last inspection, governors have played a more active role in drawing up and checking on progress on the school development plan. They are now appropriately involved.

56. As at the time of the last inspection, the school development plan – a road map for school improvement – covers only a single year. Although this was criticised in the last inspection report, the school has taken the view that there is little point in making many long-term school planning decisions while uncertainty remains over the replacement of the school's buildings. Inspectors did not identify any areas where the lack of a long-term plan adversely affected standards, although it may be that a longer-term plan may be needed fully to reflect the governors' and staff response to the issues arising from this report. The school's finances are monitored effectively and spending is closely linked to the well chosen priorities identified in the school development plan. Aspects of the school's performance are compared with that of other schools and the school is vigorous in pursuit of value for money when negotiating with the local education authority and contractors. Parents have been consulted through questionnaires, and the Friends' Association is fully involved in decisions over the funds raised through Friends' activities. In this way, the school makes good use of the principles of *best value*.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. Inspectors have identified the following interrelated and overlapping key issues for action. In order to improve the standard of education provided to pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

- (1) Raise pupils' achievement by:
 - improving the consistency of teaching
 - ensuring that pupils build and develop their skills as they progress through the school
 - considering the introduction of separate exercise books for each subject so that pupils can see how they are progressively building on their knowledge and skills as they move through the school
 - better matching work to the different abilities and prior learning of pupils
 - making more effective use of assessment information to set individual learning targets for pupils
 - reviewing the effectiveness of setting in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and considering whether this should be extended to other year groups and subjects(Paragraphs: 4, 7, 14, 15, 18, 43, 61, 64, 70, 73, 80, 83, 84, 92, 96, 99)

- (2) Plan learning in the mixed-age classes so that all pupils make steady progress in both of their years in each class by:
 - better matching work to the different abilities and prior learning of pupils
 - setting different learning objectives for different groups of pupils in the same lessons(Paragraphs: 5, 8, 17, 26, 45, 72, 75, 85)

- (3) Improve the consistency of teaching so that there is more good and very good teaching by:
 - extending the monitoring of teaching and learning, and involving subject co-ordinators more in this monitoring process
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of all pupils
 - making sure that there are enough opportunities to develop mental mathematical skills in numeracy sessions
 - ensuring that homework is used more consistently in all classes
 - improving the quality of marking so that it tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work
 - introducing a consistent policy across the school to inform parents about what is due to be studied in the half-term ahead(Paragraphs: 7, 10, 13-15, 18, 20, 21, 41, 43-45, 51, 61, 64, 73, 75, 80, 83, 86, 87, 93, 98, 112, 113)

- (4) Make more effective use of assessment information to raise pupils' achievement by:
- setting individual learning targets for pupils and sharing these with parents
 - improving the quality of marking so that it tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work
 - extending assessment arrangements to cover all curriculum subjects
- (Paragraphs: 21, 40, 41, 47, 73, 82, 83, 86, 87, 98, 112)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan.

- Continue to press for the major refurbishment or replacement of the school buildings
(Paragraphs: 36, 49, 54, 76, 101)
- Make better use of classroom computers
(Paragraphs: 5, 74, 82, 101, 102)
- Consider fencing the pond to prevent accidents
(Paragraph: 36)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	27	21	4	0	0
Percentage	2	13	44	34	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	308
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	37

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils learning English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	20	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	19	21	22
	Total	37	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (89)	91 (77)	93 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	18
	Girls	19	17	17
	Total	38	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (93)	79 (86)	79 (89)
	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	22	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	18
	Girls	15	17	18
	Total	30	31	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (89)	69 (73)	80 (91)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	18
	Girls	14	17	18
	Total	27	31	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60(77)	69 (82)	80 (82)
	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	244	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	13	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	1	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	40	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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.7
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	145

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	679 108
Total expenditure	632 400
Expenditure per pupil	2 027
Balance brought forward from previous year	20 626
Balance carried forward to next year	36 708

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	308
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	29	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	45	10	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	42	1	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	47	20	2	0
The teaching is good.	46	39	8	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	40	19	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	31	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	43	5	2	5
The school works closely with parents.	27	46	19	5	4
The school is well led and managed.	40	48	2	6	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	40	5	4	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	31	18	25	7

Other issues raised by parents

Many parents raised concerns over the poor state of the buildings.
A number of parents expressed the view that older pupils in mixed-age classes made less progress than younger ones.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

58. The provision for children in the reception classes is satisfactory overall and the children make satisfactory progress. There are currently 40 children who attend full time. Adults work closely together in the two classes and this means they can use each other's expertise and ensures that the children receive equal provision in all areas of learning. This helps them to settle quickly and gain in confidence to join in with activities. The arrangement where children move to different activities during each morning or afternoon session means that they get to know all the adults, and approach any of them confidently for help if needed.

59. Assessments when the children first start school show that the great majority have above average attainment in all areas of learning, except in early writing skills which are below average overall. The information from these baseline assessments is used effectively to organise the children into ability groups for which they follow a good curriculum in all areas of learning. Targets are identified in reading and writing and this is helping to teach individual children the particular skills they need to learn. As a result, standards in reading and writing have improved this year. Parents are invited to contribute to their children's continuing assessments through comments in the home/school reading diaries. At the end of the year, the children take part in literacy and numeracy lessons and this helps them to get used to learning in more formal situations before starting in Year 1. Overall, the children make satisfactory progress and the great majority attain the expected national levels of attainment, by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. A good number exceed these levels.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. Teaching is good and this enables all children to make good gains in their learning. Teachers' high expectations that the children will learn to do things for themselves means that the children take care of their own needs as soon as they start school. When going outside, they are all able to find their own coats and many put them on with little or no help. Planned activities, which take place outside, result in the children learning to get along together well. They play with the equipment sensibly at playtimes and when working in small groups. Self-confidence and self-esteem is further nurtured by the positive approach from all the adults, praising children consistently when they have done something good for them or when they have remembered their manners. Due to the emphasis given to the children developing their skills in this area of learning in all activities, most children exceed the expected standards in this area of learning by the end of their reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

61. The children start school with above average levels of speaking and listening, and reading skills. Teaching is satisfactory and they make sound progress. By the end of their reception year, many exceed the expected standards in these two aspects. The themed areas give suitable opportunities for the children to act out different everyday situations or to retell a familiar story through role-play. Adults support these areas to begin with to give the children ideas and to develop specific vocabulary. Most children are confident speakers as a result. Outside play is particularly effective in developing the children's language when they are given very good opportunities to talk about what they have invented or created and explain what they are doing and why. This focus on imaginary play enables the children to develop good speaking skills through suitable imaginative play activities. The children listen well in all lessons and follow instructions carefully when learning new skills. Some children, who are not challenged appropriately because the work is too easy, do not always listen attentively,

although they keep one ear to the conversation to rejoin when they think it appropriate, or their interest is regained.

62. The children start to develop their early reading skills as soon as they start school. The children handle books with care and enjoy listening to their favourite stories in lessons and assemblies. Particular focus has been given to the teaching of phonics and as a result the children can hear how many sounds there are in words and which are the first, middle and end sounds. They use this information effectively to work out new words with which they are unfamiliar when reading and spelling. When reading, many children are now attempting to read new words independently and no longer rely on adults to tell them the word. A new reading scheme has been introduced this year and this has given the children extra confidence because they are reading about characters with whom they are familiar. Consequently, many children talk about what is happening in the story unprompted. Parents give good support to guided reading and other games activities twice a week and this is beneficial to the children's early reading skills. Higher attaining children read everyone's name on the self-registration board and independently check that the names are the correct way up.

63. The children start school with below average standards in writing and because of the particular focus given to the children's specific writing skills this year, and good teaching in this area of learning, they all make equally good progress and reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year. When writing, the children have a suitable pencil grip and write their names and some simple words for themselves, forming most letters correctly.

Mathematical development

64. Most children start with above average attainment in mathematical development. The teaching is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress, but more able children are not always challenged enough because activities are not always suitably matched to the levels of learning of which they are capable. For example, although many are able to add two numbers together in their heads, because they are on a particular page in the workbooks used, they follow the same work and method as other children in the class. They are not given enough opportunity to say how they worked out a particular sum or solve a particular problem, but are expected to follow the teacher's direction on the process to be used despite their way being just as valid. The organisation of learning enables the children to develop independent learning and helps them to work together in groups to play a range of number and shape games. These are often at the same mathematical level however and do not extend the counting and adding skills of more able children. Because the sessions are organised into two ability levels, each containing three groups, tasks are matched well to the middle abilities. Those children who have some difficulties with their learning are given suitable support to enable them to complete tasks correctly. The children's knowledge and understanding of shape and measures are good. This is because of the good language skills they have which enable them to learn new vocabulary quickly and talk about what they are doing and why.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. ICT skills are developed particularly well, however. This is because the children use the computer suite, which provides good opportunities for them to work on specific skills, and because the computer in the classroom is used to support learning in many planned activities, particularly in the self-initiated play sessions. The activities help the children to develop specific skills as well as giving them the freedom to use their imagination to make their own pictures. The children control the mouse very well. In one very good lesson, they selected different colours from the paint palette to produce colourful and accurate pictures. Self-initiated play sessions

are not always structured enough and the children are not given enough direction in their learning. While this is valuable for developing imaginative play and is an important part of learning, some direction is required to develop specific skills or language more precisely. The timely interaction by adults means that the children make satisfactory progress in these sessions. Teacher led activities are more precisely planned to meet the individual needs of the children and they make good progress in these as a result. Because they work in small groups on particular tasks, the children receive good one-to-one support on their tasks. Questions are focused and probe their understanding so that they are developing a good knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world around them by the end of the reception year.

Physical development

66. The teaching is satisfactory and children make sound progress in this area of learning. They all reach, and some exceed, the expected standard. There is a suitable range of wheeled toys to help them improve and practise their skills of finding space, and regularly planned opportunities to throw, kick and catch a range of balls and beanbags in small groups. This activity helps develop the children's hand and eye co-ordination.

67. Suitable activities are planned to develop the children's writing, cutting and painting skills. The writing table is welcoming and the children use a range of pencils and pens to create their own cards and letters. Cross-curricular links are used effectively to provide a good context for the children's design and make tasks. As a result, they are interested in what they are doing while, at the same time, developing their cutting and sticking skills. Wheels to show the life-cycle of a butterfly were being made during the inspection and the children are very aware of how a split pin allows the movement of the wheel to show the pictures of the different stages of the butterfly's life. The children recall how they attached the hands to their clocks in the same way and showed how they moved around due the way the split pin works. Their model clocks are finished to a good standard and show that they have developed good skills.

Creative development

68. Children start school with above average creative development skills. Teaching is satisfactory and the children make sound progress overall. All meet and many exceed the expected standard by the end of their reception year. The children all know their colours and know that when certain colours are combined which new colour is made. This is because they are provided with good opportunities to explore and use their imagination in a range of art and design activities. Work in sketchbooks shows very good standards in the children's observational drawings. The details on the Great Pond Snails were impressive and reflected the children's interest in the care that they took to make sure that the pattern and shape of the shell was as lifelike as possible. In music activities, children explore musical instruments to find out how to change sounds. Photographs show their intent faces as they listen to their own and each other's simple performances on a range of musical instruments. Role-play is used effectively to develop the children's imaginations both inside and outside the classroom. Adults support this activity to begin with to give the activity some direction.

ENGLISH

69. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. This reflects an improvement on the results in last year's national tests in all years. Standards since the previous inspection have been unacceptably low, especially at the end of Year 2. Despite starting Year 1 with above average attainment in reading and writing, until last year standards have been average in reading and below average in writing at the end of Year 2. This is because the school did not teach pupils the necessary skills to help them work out unfamiliar words for themselves when reading, and did not expect any pupils to attain better than an average level. Recent good improvement in the teaching of phonics has led to good recent progress in pupils' using their skills, knowledge and understanding of how words and letters work to attempt to read and spell unfamiliar words, mostly correctly. Emphasis put on teaching the pupils to join their writing has led to a more fluent handwriting style. The curriculum has been made more interesting and this is motivating the pupils to read and write in a range of different contexts. The improvement in these skills has given pupils greater independence and has speeded up their rate of work. Teachers in Years 3 – 6 can now concentrate on extending these skills and pupils are now making satisfactory progress as a result.

70. Standards seen during the inspection indicate pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This reflects satisfactory achievement. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident speakers and explain clearly what they have done and why. This is due to the use of *WALT (We Are Learning To)*, *WILF (What I am Looking For)* and *TIB (This Is Because)* objectives which focus the pupils' attention on what they are learning and why, although in the mixed-age classes in particular, having a single learning objective for a lesson results in some able older pupils being insufficiently challenged. The pupils listen well during lessons and this means that they develop good knowledge and understanding about the work of various authors. Year 2 pupils talk knowledgeably about the range of books written by David McKee and retell the main points of stories in the correct sequence. These speaking skills are developed well in Years 3 to 6 through a range of interesting activities which encourage pupils to talk about their work. Role-play, drama and debating skills are used effectively before some writing activities to develop the use of interesting vocabulary, to encourage pupils to give reasons for their opinions and to give the finished piece a suitable structure. Pupils work well together in groups in other subjects and this gives them good opportunity to talk about their work and to share ideas.

71. Standards in reading are above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. This reflects satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 since this group of pupils started school. Pupils in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress overall since they took their national tests at the end of Year 2, when their results were average. The school has introduced new plans for the teaching of reading and these are having a beneficial effect on standards in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 1 use a wide range of reading strategies to help them work out unfamiliar words, due to the increased emphasis on teaching phonics skills as soon as they start school. This year group are able to cope better with unfamiliar words as a result. The introduction of a reading scheme means that pupils are familiar with the characters and events and this helps pupils in Year 2 to talk about what is happening in the story more confidently. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 scan ahead when reading to find relevant information when researching a new topic for history or geography, and skim text confidently to locate specific bits of information. Although pupils do not use the library regularly to read a wide range of texts independently, they know how to use the classification system to locate the book they need. Guided reading sessions have been timetabled separate from literacy lessons and this means that pupils in Years 3 to 6 receive good support from the teaching of

specific relevant skills. They are developing better skills as a result, which are reflected in higher than average standards in the work seen in Years 3 to 5.

72. Standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 have been below average for a number of years and this reflects a degree of underachievement. Recent good improvement to the teaching of writing has led to higher attainment and better achievement, and standards seen during the inspection indicate that standards are now above average at the end of Year 2. They are average at the end of Year 6. Role-play is used effectively in Years 1 and 2 to give the pupils' writing structure and to give them confidence to put pencil to paper. For example, the pupils acted out their favourite stories before retelling them in writing for their friends to read. Their riddles challenge their own and others' thinking skills and reflect good levels of skill in reading and writing this year. Pupils all write in simple sentences giving due regard to the correct use of punctuation. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6 due to the interesting contexts in which writing is presented. There is a wide range of different styles, which are presented neatly using the correct punctuation and mostly correct spellings. Teachers' questions encourage pupils to think about the effect their own and others' writing have on people's feelings. When writing about *The School Bully*, pupils are encouraged to consider whether the stories "stir their emotions". Debates, for example, over whether animals should appear in circuses motivate the pupils to write persuasively, putting forward their own point of view backed up with relevant moral reasons.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although there is variation between classes and year groups. Teachers' expertise is not used as effectively in English as in other subjects and this means that in some classes teaching is consistently very good, while in other it is satisfactory. Teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils to structure their writing. Pupils in one class in Years 5/6 used planning boards successfully to write poems in the same style as Roger McGough's *'Sound Collector'*. Their writing includes imagery, metaphors and similes, reflecting high expectations that they will use learning from earlier lessons in their work. Marking is unsatisfactory overall. Some teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and use the information to review and set new targets. This gives pupils a good knowledge of their own work and a secure understanding of what they need to do to improve. This practice is not yet used consistently by all teachers in all classes and therefore is contributing to some inconsistent progress between classes. Expectations are generally higher than at the time of the previous inspection and this is leading to better standards particularly in reading and phonic skills, knowledge and understanding. However, because all teachers do not yet use targets effectively, and these do not extend beyond the average for each year group, expectations are still not high enough in some classes and in particular for the older, more able pupils in the mixed-age classes. Pupils of all abilities, including the more able, in Years 1, 3 and 5 are often making good progress while in Years 4 and 6, they make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and so make similar progress to the other pupils.

74. The curriculum is made interesting and relevant and motivates pupils to concentrate and be fully involved in lessons. Pupils work hard as a result and generally complete the work expected in the time. Computers are used well to support learning in the computer suite but are not used often enough in the classroom to support specific skills linked to learning in lessons. Other subjects make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy, through, for example, opportunities for extended writing in history and geography topic work.

75. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory but with some good features. The co-ordinator has worked closely with the headteacher to analyse test results and teacher assessments in reading and writing and this has led to the identification of appropriate priorities for improvement. Teachers now have a clearer understanding of the skills that pupils need to develop and these are measured closely against targets linked to

national curriculum levels. The monitoring of their implementation remains unsatisfactory, however, mainly because the procedures are new and there has been insufficient time available. Consequently targets are not used consistently in all classes and some have not been reviewed with pupils since being given them in September.

76. There is a good number and interesting range of fiction books to motivate and develop specific reading skills. The range and number of non-fiction books is satisfactory because the school uses the services of the school's library service to supplement the range for particular topics in other subjects. Although the siting of the library – effectively in a corridor connecting two parts of the building – and the recent 'cull' of books means that pupils do not use this area regularly enough for independent research.

MATHEMATICS

77. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve standards that are above average. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained similar standards. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory because pupils are of above average ability when they start in Year 1. There is an emphasis on their understanding and use of number and many are able to deal confidently with numbers up to 100 and some use numbers up to 1000. Pupils cover all strands of the curriculum and are developing their vocabulary well. Simple calculations are carried out satisfactorily and more able pupils add and subtract figures in tens and units, count on and back in tens. They use coins successfully in simple transactions and are taught to develop and compare strategies for calculations. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of shape in two and three dimensions and understand reflective symmetry. They tally and express data in a variety of displays, making particularly good use of computer software. Pupils do not, however, have enough opportunity to develop their investigational skills.

78. The achievement of pupils in Year 6 is good in relation to the average results which the pupils attained in the test they took when they were in Year 2. Progress since the pupils started in Year 1 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a good knowledge of multiplication tables and most are secure in number work. They order 4 digit numbers accurately and understand place value. Most pupils work successfully with fractions and decimals, they measure accurately and calculate areas and perimeters of rectangles and triangles well. Statistical calculations are well used in work on averages. From Year 3, pupils begin to develop problem-solving and investigative skills. They explore number patterns and sequences and learn to solve real-life problems. Several homework topics make good use of investigations.

79. Pupils' attitudes are very good overall. They work well individually and are eager to answer questions. They enjoy using their white boards to display answers in oral and mental activities and enthusiastically erase previous answers in eager anticipation of the next question. Older pupils work collaboratively when required and take turns. They are generally polite in their behaviour with adults and take responsibility for handing out books and equipment when asked. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans and make satisfactory progress. They are well supported by teaching assistants who guide them and ensure that they are included in the main lessons as much as possible.

80. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan their lessons according to the *National Numeracy Strategy* format and pupils are managed well. However, sufficient attention is not always given to ensuring good use of the mental arithmetic session at the start of lessons. The opportunity to arouse pupils' attention and inject pace in mental mathematics is often missed and the impact lost. Good use is made of homework in mathematics to reinforce and develop work in class. Often this

will involve problems or games based on the week's topic. The setting of classes by ability in Years 5 and 6 has been successful in focussing attention on the different ability groups, allowing teachers to plan challenge and pace more accurately. This has contributed to the raising of standards over the past year, so that they are now higher than those indicated in the 2002 Year 6 test results. Similar setting arrangements, however, have yet to be considered in other year groups

81. Numeracy skills are used to support work done across the curriculum in time charts in history, measuring in design and technology, symmetry in art and design and bar charts in science. Good use is made of the resources in ICT where computers are successfully used in the estimation of angles and in work on databases to illustrate results graphically.

82. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knows the subject well. She monitors planning and samples pupils' work to promote teaching and learning. Teachers of parallel classes meet weekly to discuss progress and make plans. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory with common assessment sheets monitored by the subject co-ordinator. The detailed analysis of the results of national tests is carried out and targets are set, but this information is not always used well to inform planning and promote progress. Resources are very good and classroom based, readily available for the pupils to use. Each classroom has a computer with a supply of software. However, on only one occasion during the observation of mathematics lessons was the computer used.

SCIENCE

83. The results of the Year 6 national tests in 2002 were in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher than nationally expected level was above average. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 last year showed standards to be well below average. These results compare unfavourably with the results of pupils in similar schools. They represent a degree of underachievement. Inspection findings show that the standards of pupils at the end of Year 2 are now average. At the end of Year 6 they are now above average, with a high proportion of pupils in Years 5 and 6 working consistently at an above average level. Although achievement at the end of Year 2 is unsatisfactory, the improvement shown in Years 3 to 6, and particularly in Years 5 and 6, results in satisfactory achievement by the time the pupils leave the school. There are, however, inconsistencies in other areas of the school so that whilst younger pupils in mixed-age classes are challenged effectively, the older pupils are not. This is because whilst good assessment information is collected on pupils' attainment, insufficient account is taken of this when planning. Work is planned to provide for the whole class and no targets are set at different levels. Teachers also have different expectations about the appropriate level of challenge for pupils.

84. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils have a thorough understanding of the different elements of the science curriculum. They know that the subject is concerned with investigations and testing their ideas. For example, they make realistic suggestions about how to test different cars to compare how far they will travel. They know how to make the tests fair and make sensible statements to explain their predictions and statements. However, they are insufficiently challenged when recording their work to reinforce their understanding. They are not always required to write and explain their findings. More able pupils are also not challenged further by being set more in-depth tasks or explanations.

85. By the end of Year 6, pupils record their work in a much more ordered way, making it clear that they understand fully. They incorporate diagrams and graphs into their work to help clarify their explanations. Pupils show, for example, very good understanding of different growing conditions affecting plant life. They make sensible deductions about the situation a

plant has grown in from its characteristics of size, colour of leaves and density of growth. Pupils use and understand a wide range of scientific vocabulary.

86. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 classes is now satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, it is good, due chiefly to the consistency of teaching in Years 5 and 6. The school has recognised that previously there have been insufficient opportunities for pupils to carry out practical investigations. This has been rectified and all teachers plan for these activities. However there is inconsistency in the way this is done. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. In that lesson, the pace was very slow. The task set for the pupils did not challenge them and pupils had to wait for some resources, although they were very patient and polite. Throughout the school, pupils are well behaved, listen attentively and participate actively in discussions. All teachers manage these well so that all pupils are encouraged to voice their ideas. Good encouragement is given to the less confident so that all, including those with learning difficulties, take part. When additional adult support is provided in lessons, it is used effectively to support pupils. Some very good teaching of Year 5/6 pupils had them buzzing with enthusiasm as they discussed and measured the characteristics of dandelions. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, in particular, collaborate together very well. In the best lessons, teachers interject but do not intrude on group tasks so that the pupils remain focused and the pace of learning is maintained. Year 6 pupils find the subject interesting, particularly the practical element. Some, however, feel over-managed at times, confident that they could carry out some investigations more independently. In all classes, work is presented neatly and with some pride. Marking acknowledges pupils' efforts and success but rarely provides guidance for improvement and further progress.

87. The school has recognised weaknesses in the subject and has tackled them satisfactorily, for example over extending opportunities for investigational work. This approach has also spread to other subjects such as history and geography. The subject co-ordinator provides a good role model in this. However the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous to bring more consistency. Nor are teachers linking the findings of assessment to how they plan effectively for the range of ability over two years in the mixed-age classes. Resources are adequate but teachers make a lot of effort to provide additional ones. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

88. At the end of the Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment in art and design is above national expectations. This represents very good improvement, with standards now much higher than they were at the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils of all abilities across the school make good progress.

89. A wide range of media and techniques is used besides drawing and painting, including printing, rubbings, finger painting, weaving, collage, tie and dye, fabric painting, sewing, chalk and charcoal. In some classes, studies are made of artists' work as a stimulus for pictures. Older pupils, for example, have emulated the work of Picasso and Klee, producing good quality pictures that show care and accuracy. Over time, large murals and frieze pictures have been made to decorate the assembly hall, and designs for a school sign were made; the best was produced in colourful mosaics and mounted near the entrance.

90. During the inspection few art and design lessons were seen, and it is not therefore possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator introduced new planning and rewrote the art and design policy, consulting with colleagues. She also attended training days which helped to improve standards in the school; focusing particularly on outdoor art and art in the environment. The school held an Art in the Environment Day when a wide range of

work was done. An example was natural objects such as leaves being laid out in patterns and photographed. This special day offered particularly good stimulus to the artistically talented pupils in the school. Resources for teaching art and design are good, and have benefited from additional funding from the Friends of the School.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. At the end of Year 2, attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils develop designs for a model of a room and talk about their ideas. They carefully cut out and join wallpaper and floor coverings to their models and make furniture from a wide variety of scrap materials. At the end of Year 6, attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils describe characteristics of materials in a collection of hats of different types. They research how musical instruments make sounds, and combine different materials for making their own musical instruments. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory as they learn different ways of attaching wheels to models and attempt to solve problems. In a lesson where this was being done, three different approaches were shown. Many pupils attempted to make holes in the box for the axle, but the measuring task was too difficult. There was more success when clothes pegs were stuck on the box to grip the axle. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also now make sound progress. Pupils had designed sandwiches for different purposes such as a picnic, a party or a lunch box. These were made, tasted and evaluated on a data sheet. Good attention was given to food health rules.

92. Although progress in design and technology overall is satisfactory and the planning shows an appropriate range of activities, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' use of tools. Year 6 pupils had to take work to the teacher to be glued with the hot glue gun, and had no experience of using craft knives. Year 1 and 2 pupils were not shown how to reduce the length of their axles (all too long). Also there is insufficient use of ICT for design and research. Teaching is satisfactory overall.

93. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinating teacher has recently taken over this role and has worked hard to make sure that teachers have sufficient resources to teach the subject well. There is a well-stocked central resource cupboard for materials, components and tools. The co-ordinator has no release time for direct monitoring of teaching across the school. In the last inspection, pupils' attainment and progress in design and technology were judged to be unsatisfactory. There has been a satisfactory improvement, because pupils now make sound progress and their attainment is in line with national expectations.

GEOGRAPHY

94. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 6 attainment is above average. Lessons were observed only in Year 5/6, and so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, but pupils' recorded work was studied and inspectors met with pupils in Years 2 and 6 to discuss their work with them. By Year 2, pupils use skills of observation to describe their local area, identifying different types of buildings and their uses. They record information such as from traffic surveys and use this to make comparisons of different types of roads. Pupils know the purpose of maps and have drawn, for example, a map of the Scottish "Island of Struay". They compare this place with their own locality by posing questions to a child who lives there and use geographical vocabulary such as *mainland*. Pupils know what an atlas is but have not used one. There is also a globe in many classrooms but pupils say "*we are not allowed to play with it*".

95. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well. They develop good skills of enquiry because teachers plan to link this effectively to studies of themes and places. When they study mountain environments they find evidence from different sources such as maps and photographs. Pupils learn to draw a cross-section of a hill from the contours on a map. They show understanding of aspects of physical geography by talking about tectonic plates in the formation of the Himalayas. They use geographical vocabulary well, using, for example, terms such as *scree* and *treeline* in diagrams showing scenery and vegetation at different altitudes. Pupils believe it is valuable to learn not only physical geography but also about how other people live. They appreciate their own good fortune when comparing their lives with those of street children in Brazil, for example.

96. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has an overview of planning and has provided guidance for the progression in skills, although because geography work is interspersed with work in other subjects in some pupils' exercise books, children cannot all readily look back to see how their knowledge and skills in the subject are developing. There is a good curriculum supported by good use of investigation and resources such as maps and aerial photographs. When pupils study Ladakh they experience not only physical geography but also links are made with art and design and religion as well as raising pupils' social awareness. Excellent displays such as for Ladakh and St Lucia support learning well. Fieldwork is also an important element of the curriculum with river and coastal studies as well as the local environment. These enhance learning. The inclusion in Years 1 and 2 of Barnaby Bear (a soft toy that accompanies children on their holidays and therefore sends back "reports" from around the world) provides a stimulating focus particularly with the attractive and informative display in the Year 1 class. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

HISTORY

97. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 6, they are above expectations. They have been maintained since the previous inspection. By the time they leave the school, pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 2 make comparisons with the past such as by looking at toys used "then and now". They understand clearly that anything that has already occurred is history. Year 2 pupils have good knowledge of aspects of life early last century, referring to lack of electricity, types of clothing worn and transport used. They refer to how archaeologists find and examine bones. Year 6 pupils extend this considerably by discussing a wide range of artefacts which provide evidence of how earlier civilisations lived. They value learning history and are aware, for example, of the legacy of the Ancient Greeks, referring to *democracy* and *philosophy*. Knowledge of this period of history is very good, and there is evident depth to pupils' studies. Pupils are aware of the lessons that can be learned from history.

98. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers make very good use of resources to engage pupils' interest. An effective lesson in the Year 1 class provided an opportunity for pupils to examine photographs and artefacts whilst the teacher encouraged discussion. Some very good teaching in a Year 3/4 class gave pupils good insight into how people lived during the Second World War. Pupils listened attentively to a visitor relating her experiences as an evacuee. Another class examined closely a range of artefacts, posing and trying to answer questions. The teacher modelled this approach very well, displaying very secure subject knowledge. Consequently pupils are beginning to empathise with how people felt and understand how the war affected their lives. A notable feature of teaching in history is the encouragement of pupils to apply investigational skills to historical sources just as they would in conducting a science investigation. The pupils enjoy this approach. They are keen to contribute. They behave very

well, and they work with considerable enthusiasm. Discussions are managed effectively with teachers ensuring that all pupils participate, including those with learning difficulties. Work in history does not contribute much to the development of pupils' literacy in Years 1 and 2 as these pupils produce very little written work. In classes in Years 3 to 6, however, teachers promote writing skills well. Pupils in Year 3/4 write articles for the "Roman Times". Year 5/6 pupils retell stories of the Ancient Greeks as playscripts and storyboards, for example. They also hypothesise that "*Women were equal with men*" and debate this statement by researching evidence both for and against. Recorded work is usually neat and careful, encouraged by teachers' comments. However this marking rarely contain guidance for future progress.

99. There is good subject leadership. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to continue to extend resources She has provided guidance for progression in skills, although because history work is interspersed with work in other subjects in some of the younger pupils' exercise books, they cannot all readily look back to see how their knowledge and skills in the subject are developing. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to take part in a good range of visits, and visitors are invited, providing good enhancement to the curriculum, as do the interesting displays and timelines in some classrooms. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

100. At the end of Years 2 and 6, the overall standards are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, make sound progress. This is similar to the findings of the last report in respect of Years 3 to 6, but represents an improvement on standards previously reported in Year 2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make use of computers to write short pieces of work. They practise keyboard skills and develop co-ordination in mouse control. They learn to use correct language with understanding. All strands of the National Curriculum are covered and there are strong links with other subjects. Pupils create graphs from data, use a word processor to write poems, illustrate writing with pictures, and draw pictures on the screen. In Years 3 and 4, pupils progress to using different fonts and make posters, linking with work in other subjects, such as with science. Story writing is extended and simulations such as '*Badger Trail*' link with skills in geography, mathematics and science. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use flowcharts to operate a lighthouse and control the sequence of lights in traffic lights. Older pupils use the digital camera to record and input art and design into their slide presentations and other documents.

101. The quality of teaching is good overall, with much that is very good. It is based on secure subject knowledge and good lesson planning. Teachers' expectations are high and they use effective methods to achieve their objectives. All teaching takes place in the newly appointed suite with computers linked by network. This has enough computers to allow pupils to work in pairs sharing a terminal, although the room gets very warm in the course of a lesson, even with the air conditioning running. The network allows the teacher to demonstrate teaching points clearly using a data projector. Classroom based computers were found to be in use in only one observed lesson, so this resource is not being used well.

102. The subject is well managed and led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who supports his colleagues well and monitors the progress of the pupils. The school is well resourced, and the computer suite is available to each class for two periods each week giving the opportunity for the development of skills and promoting links with other curriculum subjects. In addition each classroom has at least one computer available for use. Considerable progress has been made in the limited time that the computer suite has been operating. Assessment

sheets are used to record pupils' progress. In addition, folders of pupils' work have been set up on the network to provide a continuous record of progress.

MUSIC

103. Standards have improved since the last inspection and although they remain in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2, they are well above average by the end of Year 6. This is because of very good teaching for older pupils and the introduction of the orchestra, which provides an excellent opportunity for those pupils who play a musical instrument to perform and develop their talents. For pupils of all abilities, achievement is satisfactory in Year 2 and very good by the end of Year 6.

104. Teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers plan lessons which develop relevant skills and knowledge of the way music works. Activities are suitably practical so pupils are develop good performance and composition skills. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils who might otherwise find it hard to concentrate. They give gentle encouragement and talk to pupils about what they are doing so that they stay fully involved in all the activities. Those pupils who are learning to play a musical instrument are provided with good levels of challenge to enable them, to develop their skills and talent at an appropriate level. In one lesson, for example, they used actual notes to record their composed rhythms, while others in the class used pictures to represent their rhythms. The co-ordinator swaps classes with the other teachers so that she teaches all of the Years 5 and 6 pupils. This gives them excellent specialist input, which enables them to reach high standards in all aspects of the subject. The co-ordinator has very high expectations and gets through a considerable amount in each lesson.

105. Recorder clubs and orchestra give those pupils who choose to take part very good opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument and to perform in front of a range of audiences. Sessions are fun and focus well on developing musical expertise. The orchestra session seen during the inspection was very well attended and included popular tunes such as the theme from *Star Wars*, *Chitty, Chitty, Bang, Bang* and *The Can Can*. Pupils are looking forward to learning the *James Bond* theme next. This choice of interesting music motivates pupils to attend regularly. Careful assessment of how well they play leads to quiet but knowledgeable direction on how they can improve the quality of the notes. As a result, pupils are developing a feel for the rhythms and follow the conductor's lead to finish off each performance together with great precision. Both boys and girls attend music clubs, and they all do as well as each other.

106. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There are detailed plans which precisely outline learning objectives and give good, clear guidance to teachers. This means that those teachers who do not have secure levels of musical expertise are still able to teach the subject satisfactorily. The co-ordinator looks at planning carefully to make sure it matches the needs of individual pupils and develops their skills in a structured way. This enables the co-ordinator to offer advice about the content of some lessons, especially in Years 3 and 4. The planned programme of work is broad and provides well for pupils' spiritual and cultural development through learning songs and listening to music from a wide range of countries and styles. Not much use is currently made of ICT in the subject, and this is an area for development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Standards overall are similar to those expected nationally. However, standards in swimming are high. Almost half of the current Year 6 pupils are competent in the full range of strokes and in water safety techniques. In gymnastics, standards are average throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 perform with confidence and show agility both on the floor and on apparatus. They are well co-ordinated but when they demonstrate balances they lack stillness and definition of shape. This is also the case with Year 6 pupils, who lack quality and refinement in their movements. In games, Year 6 pupils show competence in passing and catching skills. They think about their performance and make observations about how to improve. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They play fairly, collaborate well and show good spirit whilst striving to succeed. When presented with guidance on how to improve their performance, as in cricket bowling skills, they listen and try to emulate correct technique.

108. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan well so that lessons progress. Pupils are 'warmed-up'. They understand the purpose of this and also what happens to their bodies during exercise. Pupils are managed effectively with teachers very aware of the need for safe practice. Pupils reflect this when working, for example in using space well. Resources are not always put to best use so that, in some gymnastics lessons, pupils have to wait a long time for 'their turn'. In the best lessons, they are asked not only to observe their classmates but also to comment about what they like and how they can help others to improve. In all classes, pupils are supported well so that all, including those with learning difficulties, participate fully.

109. There is good provision for the subject, with a wide curriculum and good leadership and management. The co-ordinator provides a good role-model and also many additional extracurricular opportunities, bringing in specialist knowledge where necessary. There are clubs for football, netball, rugby, cricket and golf. An outdoor club provides opportunities for Year 6 pupils to experience activities such as climbing and windsurfing. The various clubs and other extracurricular activities provide good opportunities for those with a particular talent for sport to develop their skills and abilities. There is also a residential visit to mid-Wales. Good use is made of ICT to photograph the development of gymnastics sequences. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. This is reflected when they are heard to say that *"it is good to win but important to take part and enjoy games"*. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

110. Standards of attainment exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at both the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Year 2 pupils know some of the stories of Jesus and can describe in detail some aspects of Judaism, such as the menorah and the seder plate. They have a sensitive understanding of prayer as a way of talking to God. Year 6 pupils can talk clearly about previous work, for example on Buddhism, explaining how prayer flags are used.

111. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress. They work on Old Testament stories such as David and Goliath, and Daniel in the lions' den. Their writing and pictures are valued, and mounted in a class book on religious education. In a New Testament lesson on the parable of the lost sheep, they showed empathy and described being worried, lonely and frightened. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also progress well overall. Teachers' good planning ensures good coverage of the topics in the agreed syllabus. Pupils study Christian charitable organisations. Good resources, a related story, and a very well structured and skilfully taught lesson in one class enabled the pupils to grasp the moral dilemmas about *Fair Trade* for

goods such as coffee, chocolate and tea. They made advertising posters explaining how a fairer amount of the price would go to the producers.

112. The teaching and learning are good. Analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers of parallel classes plan work closely together and cover very similar topics. Work in religious education supports progress in literacy, particularly speaking and listening, and writing. Where this literacy development is good, teachers' marking offers developmental comments, but the quality of marking varies too much between classes. Some marking helps pupils to improve their work but too often marking offers words of positive encouragement but little practical guidance on how to do better.

113. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The locally agreed syllabus and teachers' plans have been in place for some time. The co-ordinator collects and retains class planning, and improvements are made from time to time. She reviews pupils' work but has had no release time for direct monitoring of teaching across the school. There are adequate resources for teaching Christianity, and good resources for teaching Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory.