

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST PAUL'S WALDEN
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Whitwell, Nr Hitchin

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117144

Headteacher: Mrs Alex Evans

Reporting inspector: Mr George Crowther
18814

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th May 2003

Inspection number: 247729

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bendish Lane
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Herts.

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Anne Reid

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
George Crowther <i>Registered inspector</i> 18814	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Science Art and design Design and technology Music Educational inclusion, including race equality	What sort of school is it? The schools results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Vivienne Phillips <i>Lay inspector</i> 9053		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?
Rosemarie Sadler <i>Team inspector</i> 32383	Mathematics Geography History Physical education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
Anna Sketchley <i>Team inspector</i> 27225	English Information and communication technology Religious education Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Paul's Walden is a small, community primary school for boys and girls who are 4-11 years old. It has 79 pupils organised in four classes. The school is situated in the village of Whitwell about six miles south of Hitchin. Almost all of the pupils live in the village, or nearby villages, but a few travel from further a field, owing to parental choice. The school serves families whose social circumstances are generally more favourable than the national picture, and very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is about average, though there is a wide range of ability within each small age group that varies from year to year. Thirteen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties, but no child has a statement to outline particularly challenging needs. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is below average. All pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and none is learning English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection, the class for Year 3 and 4 pupils was being taught by a temporary teacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Paul's Walden is an improving school. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes of leadership and staff, making it difficult to sustain a consistently good quality of teaching and learning. The good leadership of the current headteacher, however, is ensuring that priorities for improvement are pursued more rigorously. Across the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, with good achievement in Years 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. Standards at the end of Year 6 fluctuate considerably from year to year, depending on the proportion of higher-attaining or lower-attaining pupils in the year group. Attainment in the current Year 6 is above average overall because there are very few pupils who are not reaching the expected standards. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. Governors and parents are very supportive and appreciate the fact that the school is now on a more even keel. However, staff and governors recognise that more needs to be done to improve pupils' achievements. The school provides sound value from the funding it receives, and its current effectiveness is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are above national expectations.
- Strengths in the quality of teaching and learning enabled pupils to make good progress in over half of the lessons seen.
- The school creates an environment in which pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning.
- The headteacher and governors are leading the school effectively through a period of considerable change.
- Very positive and productive links with parents make an effective contribution to children's learning.

What could be improved

- During Years 1 to 4, pupils do not make enough progress in developing their writing skills.
- In too many lessons, work is not matched well enough to pupils' existing attainment, so pupils of different abilities are not challenged appropriately.
- There were weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some of the lessons seen.
- Not enough information is gathered about strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning so that areas for improvement can be identified and tackled.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected, in October 1997, St Paul's Walden was judged to be a caring school with a positive ethos where pupils reached satisfactory standards. Since then, the rate of improvement has been satisfactory. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated, but those at the end of Year 2 have improved significantly. Current standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are above national expectations. The school has dealt with most of the points for improvement identified at the last inspection. There are no longer health and safety issues, and governors carry out regular checks. The recommended amount of teaching time is provided. More staff are involved in the management of the school, and a senior staff team shares key responsibilities. Although subject co-ordinators are more involved in managing curriculum development, staff changes have meant that some are new to their roles and do not yet have a clear view of priorities for improvement. Curriculum requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education are now met, and pupils' achievements in both subjects are satisfactory. In some lessons and subjects, the higher-attaining pupils are still not challenged sufficiently. The school is aware of areas for further improvement, and has a sound capacity to raise standards further.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	C	A	C	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	A	B	C	
science	D	B	C	D	

When children start school, their overall attainment is normally about average, though some year groups have higher attainment, for example the current Year 3. During the Foundation Stage (reception), children's achievements are satisfactory in most areas of learning, and good for their personal and social development. By the time they enter Year 1, almost all of them reach the Early Learning Goals (the standards expected nationally at that age) and a few exceed them.

Throughout the rest of the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, and good in English, mathematics and science during Years 5 and 6. Achievement during Years 3 and 4 is currently a weakness, owing to a number of changes of teacher. Results of national assessments fluctuate considerably. For example, in 2001, results were well above the national average for pupils at the end

of both Years 2 and 6, and the school gained an Achievement Award for improved results. In 2002, however, whilst the Year 2 results were in the top five per cent of school nationally, the Year 6 results were average. Such fluctuations, and discrepancies between results in different subjects, are due to the small number of pupils who take the tests. The result of just one pupil has a significant impact on the overall performance, and hence on comparisons with the national picture. Data comparing pupils' results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 and their subsequent performance at the end of Year 6 show that the great majority make at least the expected gains in learning. Over recent years, the trend of improvement in the school's results at the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the national rise. Schools set targets for the proportion of Year 6 pupils they think should reach the nationally expected standard, Level 4. In 2002, the school did not reach challenging targets for English and mathematics.

Pupils' work shows that attainment in the current Year 2 is above national expectations in English and mathematics, and close to national expectations in science. In the current Year 6, attainment is above expectations in all three subjects because almost all the pupils are reaching the expected standard. There are weaknesses in pupils' achievements in writing during Years 1 to 4. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are good. In all other subjects, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they reach the expected standards by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils derive a very high level of enjoyment from coming to school. They try their best in lessons, pay attention, contribute their ideas and concentrate on their work. This provides a very good basis for learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The children behave very well in lessons and around the school, even when they are not closely supervised by adults. They are polite and helpful, and know how they should behave. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very warm and positive, which supports learning well. Pupils are given a number of responsibilities, for example as school council members, and they carry these out sensibly.
Attendance	Excellent.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good features, and is consistently good in Years 5 and 6. It is about the same quality as at the last inspection. A number of recent staff changes, and a temporary teacher in one class, have made it difficult for the school to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching. All teachers plan lessons carefully and use a range of effective methods and strategies to help pupils learn. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good, so pupils happily do what is asked of them and receive a good deal of helpful support. Teachers work particularly well with the whole class, explaining new work carefully and posing questions that

involve pupils in their learning. In most of the lessons observed, pupils enjoyed the activities, worked well and made at least satisfactory gains in learning. In some lessons, individual and group work is less successful because the tasks are not well matched to pupils' ability and interests. Where teaching was good or better, expectations of what pupils could achieve were high and the teacher had expertise in the subject. Extra pace and challenge in the activities ensured that the pupils made rapid progress. The pupils responded very positively and put a lot of effort into their work. In the few lessons where there were weaknesses, the pace of learning was too slow, the teacher's subject expertise was weak, and tasks did not fully challenge the pupils, particularly the higher attainers. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. The quality of teaching for English and mathematics is satisfactory, and the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good. Teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils satisfactorily.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned to cover all the recommended areas of learning. The curriculum for the infants and juniors is broad, contains all the subjects required by the National Curriculum, and is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, including educational visits. Work in English and mathematics is well organised. In other subjects, there are inconsistencies in the work provided for each class. Provision for ICT has weaknesses because skills are not used and developed enough as part of work in other subjects. The organisation of the school day does not make the best use of the time available for teaching and learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The few pupils who have special educational needs are well supported in lessons so that they make good progress towards the targets that have been set for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Staff know individual pupils very well, provide good informal support for their personal development, and organise special lessons to promote social skills. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good, and is satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good care and support for its pupils, through a range of effective procedures.
Assessment	Satisfactory. The school is gathering increasing amounts of information about pupils' attainment and progress. Some of this is used well to identify general areas for improvement, but information about individual pupils is not yet used well enough to match work to their needs. There is little assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The school has very close and positive links with parents. It encourages them to be involved in school activities, to take an active interest in their children's work and to support learning at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership which, following a period of considerable change, is ensuring that the school has a clear agenda for improvement. The very good school development plan should help staff and governors to improve a number of aspects of the school work. All the teachers have management responsibilities and, whilst they carry out many of these effectively, some staff are fairly newly appointed and still learning their roles. Weaknesses in management contribute to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.
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Aspect	Comment
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors have an astute understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for improvement. They are well organised, bring considerable expertise to their role, and have effective ways of evaluating what is happening in school. They fulfill their responsibilities effectively and play a full part in planning the way forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has some systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' progress. However, evaluation is not systematic, and so some weaknesses have not been identified clearly enough. Staff and governors pay good attention to the principles of best value, comparing standards at St Paul's Walden with similar schools and seeking the views of parents about the school's effectiveness.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and management are good. The school makes good use of its funding, and plans ahead methodically.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed. Teachers, classroom assistants and other staff are a committed, closely-knit team. The building provides adequate facilities inside, but some areas are cluttered. The grounds are extensive and provide good opportunities for learning. Resources are satisfactory for most subjects.

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 enjoy going to school and make good progress. ▪ The school is well led and managed. ▪ Teaching is good. ▪ Staff are approachable if parents have concerns. ▪ The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. ▪ Behaviour is good, and the school helps children to become mature and responsible. ▪ The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons. 	<p>Some parents feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ work is not always matched well enough to their children's needs; ▪ homework in Years 5 and 6 is inconsistent and not rigorous enough; ▪ the school does not work closely enough with them.

Just less than a half of the parents returned the questionnaire, and 17 attended the meeting. Most of these parents are pleased with all aspects of the school's work, and inspectors' judgements largely support parents' positive views. However, inspectors judge that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory rather than good. Some parents are right to feel that work is not always well matched to children's needs. Homework in years 5 and 6 is fairly consistent, but is not always set and marked in a way that encourages pupils to value its importance. The inspection found no evidence either to agree or disagree with the view expressed by some parents that the school does not work closely with them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

*(Pupils' **attainment** is what they know, understand and can do at a particular point in time e.g. at the end of Year 6. Pupils' **achievements** are how well they do in relation to their prior attainment. Therefore, a child starting school with low attainment may make good progress and achieve well but still not reach the nationally expected standard of attainment by the end of Year 6.)*

Overall, pupils' achievements are **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are above national expectations.
- Pupils make good progress during Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology and religious education have improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress.

Areas for development

- Improve pupils' achievements in writing during Years 1 to 4
- Improve the achievements of the older, higher-attaining pupils and the younger, lower-attaining pupils
- Improve pupils' achievements during Years 3 and 4

1. The standard of work produced by pupils in the current Year 6 is above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have varied over the past few years. For example, in 2001 the results were well above average, but in 2002 they were average. This is to be expected where a small group of pupils is tested, because the result of just one pupil has a significant impact on the overall performance, and hence on comparisons with the national picture. Information comparing the pupils' results in the tests at the end of Year 2 with their subsequent performance at the end of Year 6 is more reliable. This shows that pupils' achievements during Years 3 to 6 have been at least satisfactory over the past few years, and good in 2001.

2. In English, the speaking and listening skills of the current Year 6 pupils are well above the expected standard. Pupils listen actively to adults and each other, making sensible points and asking thoughtful questions. Pupils read to a high standard, with fluency, expression and enjoyment. Their writing skills are not as strong as other areas, but pupils use complex sentences and a wide vocabulary to produce a good range of work, including reports, formal letters, poems, play scripts, instructions, descriptions and stories. In mathematics, pupils have good skills in working with numbers, such as multiplying by 40 by doubling a number, doubling again and then multiplying by 10, or converting percentages to fractions and decimals. In science, all the pupils know how to plan an experiment and can explain what they are hoping to find out. Many of the pupils draw conclusions and evaluate their methods at a level above that expected for Year 6.

3. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 owes much to the good progress they make during Years 5 and 6. In this class, the quality of teaching is consistently good, and sometimes very good, because the teacher sets a demanding pace and expects the pupils to work hard. For example, during the inspection, good lessons were seen in which pupils: listened to a story written from one character's point of view and then wrote their own accounts from a contrasting point of view; explored various ways of multiplying by a two-digit number; and evaluated their science experiments to discover ways

in which they could have been more accurate. The pupils' very good attitudes to learning are also a very important factor in supporting their achievements. They enjoy their lessons, want to learn, and make a good effort with all the tasks they are given.

4. At the last inspection, pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE) were unsatisfactory. The school was not teaching all elements of the required curricula. Since then, resources for ICT have improved, the curriculum is much better, and pupils are reaching the expected standards. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils now use spread sheets to display results in science, and the internet for research in history and geography. In RE, the school now bases pupils' work on the locally Agreed Syllabus, and they are reaching the standards it expects. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 consider moral principles through thinking about rules for family life, and they study the special books of different world religions. Years 5 and 6 reflect on what they are and are not proud of about themselves, and they think about rules by exploring the ten commandments. Pupils now achieve satisfactorily in all subjects.

5. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average. Teachers make sure that these pupils are fully involved, and they make good progress in most lessons. Tasks are usually appropriate to their needs but, when they are required to do the same work as other pupils, they are generally well supported by the teacher or well-trained classroom assistant. For example, in a literacy lesson for older pupils, those with special educational needs were very well supported. During the first part of the lesson, when all other pupils were looking for several features in a challenging text, the teacher put the pupils with special needs in pairs and supported them in their learning by giving them just one feature to look for. This was written on a card as a reminder throughout the task. When all the pupils began to write independently, the teacher sat with those with special needs' and assisted them with their task. This type of careful support helps pupils with special educational needs to do well.

6. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in most aspects of English and standards in Year 6 are above national expectations. During Years 1 to 4, however, progress in writing is a weakness. The school pays considerable attention to the formal aspects of writing and this ensures that, at an early age, pupils' spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and handwriting are good. There are too few opportunities, however, for pupils in Years 1 to 4 to use well known stories and poems as models for their own independent and original work. Pupils spend too much time completing exercises and worksheets rather than practising their skills by writing for a variety of different purposes and audiences. As a result, pupils are not using and developing their skills through their own writing.

7. In English and mathematics, in some classes, teachers organise the work for the two years groups, rather than based on pupils' existing skills, regardless of age. In other subjects, all pupils in a class are generally given the same work. In some cases, the work is well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils but, on the evidence of pupils' past work, the older, higher-attaining pupils and the younger, lower-attaining pupils are not always challenged appropriately. For example, in science, the skills of the higher-attaining pupils are not developed sufficiently by some of the tasks they are given. In a number of subjects, the recorded work of the younger, lower-attaining pupils shows that they have been unable to complete tasks successfully. Whilst pupils' achievements in all subjects are satisfactory, not enough attention is being given to developing pupils' skills from their current starting point. This weakness was identified at the last inspection and not enough attention has been given to dealing with it.

8. At the time of the inspection, the achievements of pupils in Years 3 and 4 were the weakest in the school and barely satisfactory. These pupils reached high standards in their national tests at the end of Year 2 and, whilst they have made progress since then, they have not improved as much as would be expected. The principal reason for this is a number of changes of teacher during the last two years. Pupils' past work for this year shows that the good standards seen in other classes have not been

sustained consistently in this class. The temporary teacher who took the class during the inspection did a good job, in difficult circumstances. Nonetheless, the standard of teaching and learning observed in the Year 3 and 4 class was not as good as elsewhere. The school plans to appoint a permanent teacher in the near future.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Overall, standards are **very good**.

Strengths

- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to learning.
- Pupils behave very well.
- Pupils get on very well with each other, with no sign of prejudice.
- Attendance is first rate.

9. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development were good at the time of the last inspection and have improved well because of more consistent attention to pupils' behaviour and independence. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the school's attractive setting and happy atmosphere where they "know everyone by name and it feels like a big family". They are very eager to learn and would like even more chances to find out things for themselves, having enjoyed homework research tasks, which are "really good fun". Pupils of all ages take a very keen interest in work that gives them the chance to be actively involved in what they are asked to do. For example, a group of the youngest children had a wonderful time learning how to paint raindrops on umbrellas, practising dropping paint from large brushes with a flourish. Pupils are very receptive to the information they are given and very keen to answer questions, as well as to share their ideas. For example, in a science lesson for Years 3 and 4, pupils were asked to think about variation in people and were very quick to suggest specific differences, with an unexpected reference to DNA and genes as the building bricks of life. Pupils show very great goodwill and patience even when lessons do not go quite as planned or offer little that is new to them. Successful links between home and school ensure that pupils' attendance is excellent, they have a very strong interest in learning and are very clear about how they should behave. This ensures a very positive working atmosphere in classrooms and very firm foundation for learning.

10. As parents indicated, standards of behaviour are high because of an effective code of conduct that children helped to devise. Pupils behave very well in lessons, even when they are given work that is not quite right for the next steps they need to take with their learning. In most settings, behaviour is exemplary, but when teaching has weaknesses, pupils cannot always resist the temptation to chatter or fidget, in spite of basic willingness to have a go with what they are asked to do. Pupils are extremely polite, in response to the positive way they are treated and the school's expectations. Not only were inspectors invited by groups to sit with them at lunchtime, but the children took turns to join in lively conversations in a very mature way. They play together very happily with no sign of anyone being left out or bullied in any way. High standards of behaviour ensure that children are ready to make the most of the opportunities the school offers them.

11. Relationships within the school are very good because of its very clear expectations of consideration for others. Pupils say, "When we fall out with each other, it only lasts five minutes and is really only odd bits of moodiness," because, "We are really very friendly and can sort things out ourselves". The school has a strong sense of community within which staff, pupils and parents treat each other with warmth and respect, regardless of differences in opinion and personal circumstances. Pupils work together very well and are quick to help each other, as seen in a Year 2 mathematics group when individuals drew numbered cards from a pack and had to work out their correct order. They did not rush the child with least confidence but were ready to say, "That's right," when he tentatively held out his card. Pupils thoroughly enjoy being given responsibilities such as putting out or clearing away resources. Year 6 pupils are proud of their contribution to the school council and love

helping the youngest children with reading, as well as helping them settle in during their first week at school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is consistently good in Years 5 and 6.
- Very good relationships between pupils and teachers support learning well.
- The teaching of basic skills, such as reading, is effective.
- Teachers use an effective range of methods and strategies to help pupils learn.
- Pupils try hard with their work in lessons and get a good amount done.
- Classroom assistants support pupils' learning well.

Areas for development

- Ensure that work is appropriately challenging for all pupils
- Improve the use of regular assessment of pupils' work, including marking
- Strengthen teachers' expertise in some subjects
- Improve arrangements for homework in Years 5 and 6

12. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Teaching was at least good in 17 of the 28 lessons observed, and very good in three. In Years 5 and 6, the teaching was always at least good and occasionally very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory in two lessons, both in Years 3 and 4. A number of recent changes of teachers, including a temporary teacher in Years 3 and 4, have made it difficult for the school to ensure the overall standard and consistency of teaching. In English, science and RE, the quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good, but evidence from pupils' past work showed that the standard has been satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching is about the same as reported at the last inspection, but the teaching of ICT and RE has improved.

13. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 has pace and challenge, which helps the pupils to make good progress in lessons. For example, in a very good English lesson, the introduction explored how pupils could link clauses to make sentences that would enliven their writing. The teacher's clear explanation, her skilled questioning, and a quick series of tasks to check pupils' understanding, all helped to ensure that they gained a lot from a fairly brief session. A rapid mental mathematics session introduced the idea of doubling a number, and doubling again, instead of multiplying by 4. This was quickly extended to ways of multiplying by 40. Teaching ensures that the pupils are firmly focused on the learning for the lesson through explanations of the content and purpose at the beginning, and provision of timely reminders. Group and individual activities are well organised and well supported by both the teacher and classroom assistant to ensure that all pupils make good progress. For example, a practical science lesson investigating electrical circuits gave the pupils enough freedom to explore their own hypotheses, but made sure that the key learning points were grasped by all. Effective planning and the teacher's good expertise in most subjects underpin the good learning in this class.

14. Teachers and classroom assistants know individual children well, and have built very good relationships with them, which support learning in lessons effectively. For example, the adults in the reception class work productively with the children because they know the children's strengths and the things they find difficult. In a mathematics lesson for Years 1 and 2, the thoughtful support of the

teacher and the classroom assistant, with lots of praise for those working hard, helped all the pupils to make good progress in understanding how to order numbers to 100. Adults know when individual children need help, so that those with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Pupils tackle their work confidently because they receive good support for their learning. The good relationships teachers have with their pupils also ensure that misbehaviour is rare.

15. In literacy and numeracy, basic skills are taught well. Numeracy lessons begin with counting and calculating activities, which the pupils enjoy, such as the when Year 5 and 6 pupils explored various ways of expressing proportions as fractions, decimals and percentages. Teachers begin these sessions with fairly simple tasks and then increase the challenge, which keeps the children on their toes. In literacy lessons, teachers introduce new work methodically, whether learning letter sounds, for the youngest pupils, or identifying cultural references in a story set in another country, for the oldest pupils. As a result, pupils' knowledge of language grows steadily, and skills such as spelling and handwriting are taught well. Regular reading at home boosts pupils' progress in this vital skill, so standards are better than expected in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' good basic skills support their learning well in all subjects.

16. Teachers use a good range of methods and strategies to promote pupils' learning. They work effectively with the whole class. For example, in an English lesson for Years 3 and 4, the teacher read *The great mouse plot* by Roald Dahl very enthusiastically, pausing to ask questions about the meaning of words and phrases. The story really caught the pupils' interest, and skilled questioning deepened their understanding of the text. A music lesson for Years 1 and 2 had a good range of whole-class activities, which helped all the pupils to make good progress in understanding that sounds can be represented by symbols. Most lessons also involve some group or individual work and, whilst this is usually well organised, the tasks are not always at the right level to ensure that pupils take the next step in their learning. Good practical activities in science were seen, such as when Years 1 and 2 discovered 'minibeasts' in the pond water and soil that the teacher had brought from her house. The pupils' high level of interest in this lesson and the effort they put into their work are typical of the very good attitudes to learning that most pupils possess. The good range of teaching methods makes the pupils keen to learn.

17. Pupils try hard with their work in lessons and usually get a good amount done. They show a good level of interest in all lessons and a high degree of interest in many. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils were trying to find out whether changing parts of an electrical circuit affects the brightness of the bulb. They worked very productively in twos and threes, testing various hypotheses. They were fully focused on their work, eager to talk about it, and recorded their findings carefully. Throughout a literacy lesson, Year 1 and 2 pupils listened very well and sustained their concentration. They completed spelling tasks, sounds work, shared reading with an adult, and a writing task. They were very keen to learn and tried their best with all the activities. Throughout the school, the pupils' good learning skills are a significant factor in supporting their progress.

18. In most of the lessons observed, the work was well matched to the needs of the pupils, whatever their abilities. In some lessons, however, whilst the whole-class work was appropriate, the tasks given to individuals or groups of pupils were not challenging enough. For example, in a mathematics lesson, higher-attaining Year 2 pupils were not extended because all Year 2 pupils were given the same work. After a good opening literacy session, the comprehension work given to Year 3 and 4 pupils was uninspiring and did not challenge them. Lack of challenge was one of the reasons for the unsatisfactory teaching seen in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' past work shows that, in subjects other than English and mathematics, all pupils in a class are generally given the same work. Considering the wide range of age and ability in each of the classes, teachers are not giving enough thought to how they can make the work sufficiently challenging for the older, higher-attaining pupils, and not too challenging for

the younger, lower attainers. For example, in science, expectations of what the higher attainers might write for their conclusions are not high enough, whilst the recording expected of the lower attainers is too demanding.

19. Weaknesses in the use of regular assessment are linked to the issue of challenge. The school has systems in place to assess the attainment and progress of pupils so that teachers know what level of work they need to do next. Teachers are not making best use of the information gathered, combined with their day-to-day, informal assessments of pupils' attainment, to ensure that work is appropriately challenging. In subjects other than English and mathematics, the regular assessment of pupils' skills is not as strong. In these subjects, pupils generally complete the same work, so the steady development of each child's skills is not given enough emphasis. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work varies too much. All work is marked regularly, often including praise. The best marking, however, indicates whether the intended learning has been achieved and suggests what needs to be done to improve.

20. As might be expected in a small school, it is difficult for a team of teachers to have expertise in all subjects. Whilst teachers at St Paul's have good expertise in some subjects, and satisfactory expertise overall, there are weaknesses. For example, few teachers have expertise in music, and lack of expertise in this subject was a reason for one of the unsatisfactory lessons seen. In ICT, teachers are growing in confidence, but some still do not have the level of skills needed for the subject. Some parents feel that the pattern of homework in Years 5 and 6 is not rigorous enough. They would welcome higher expectations about its standard and completion. Year 6 pupils said they felt more could be asked of them because it would help to prepare them for secondary school.

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

Overall, the curriculum is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- English and mathematics are well planned and organized.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The school meets pupils' special educational needs well.
- Links with the local community are good.

Areas for development

- In subjects other than English and mathematics, improve the consistency of work provided for pupils.
- Continue to improve provision for ICT, particularly in other subjects.
- Provide wider opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- Review the organisation of the school day to make the best use of the available time.

21. Work for almost all aspects of English and mathematics is well organised because the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Teachers follow the recommended pattern for each lesson and, in most of the lessons seen, there was a good balance of whole-class, group and individual activities. Strong emphasis is given to the teaching of basic skills in both subjects. Numeracy lessons focus on mental mathematics skills and number work, but too few opportunities are provided for pupils to explore patterns in numbers and shapes. In English, reading skills, and writing skills such as spelling, punctuation and handwriting are taught methodically, and so

pupils reach high standards in these aspects. A consistent approach to the curriculum in these two subjects enables pupils to reach above average standards by Year 6.

22. Responding to weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report, policies and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects. Teachers' planning in all subjects is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. This enables teachers to set clear learning objectives for lessons, which give pupils an understanding of the purpose of their learning. As was identified at the previous inspection, however, the work provided does not always meet the needs of all the pupils.

23. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, which develops their individual talents and interests. Extra-curricular activities include art, recorders, chess, technology and country dancing, and all pupils are given the opportunity to attend a French club. The school organises concerts and productions, which are much enjoyed by parents and the local community. Whole-school events such as a science week, technology day and 'World War II' day, as well as visits to museums, enrich the curriculum.

24. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. A good scheme of work and policy enable teachers to plan a variety of activities. The school council plays an important part in the life of the school and is involved in improving the school environment. It also organises fund-raising events and decides how the money should be spent. Pupils devise 'Golden Rules' for their class, which guide behaviour and relationships. A revised sexual health and relationships policy provides for a good programme of sex education for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The PSHE scheme of work ensures that older pupils are made aware of the dangers of taking drugs.

25. The school fosters pupils' personal development well overall, and provision has improved since the last inspection. It has improved for spiritual and cultural development because more attention is given to reflection on experiences, to learning about different faiths and cultures and to relevant extra-curricular activities. The school knows that it has scope to explore cultural traditions and diversity more systematically than it does at present, although, in general, it provides satisfactorily for cultural development. Pupils say that they know it is important to develop understanding and avoid prejudice, and so regret that related work is not as frequent or stimulating as they would like. Subjects such as art, music and geography do not make enough contribution to developing a rich cultural awareness.

26. Support for pupils' spiritual development was judged as inadequate by the last inspection, but is now satisfactory. However, the school does not do as much to nurture and value personal development through its use of displays, artefacts, fabrics, flowers and plants as described in the last report. Few displays are vibrant and stimulating or celebrate the personal and academic achievements of pupils in a memorable and moving way. This shows the uneven quality in the way the school develops spiritual awareness and a sense of what is special in life because in other ways there are moments of enchantment. In a lesson for Years 1 and 2, pupils were fascinated when they first caught sight of an unfamiliar creature as the teacher lifted a newt out of a bucket. Reception children watched spellbound as the classroom assistant showed them how to make paint drip from the end of a brush on to their umbrella shaped paper and then, with a gentle shake of the paper, spatter like falling rain.

27. The school is very successful in the way it fosters pupils' moral and social development so that they know the difference between right and wrong and have a strong sense of responsibility and concern for others. As a result, their actions show very mature understanding of the effect they have on others. For example, in a lesson for Years 5 and 6 where pupils sat in a circle to talk about things that were worrying them, everyone listened with genuine respect while someone explained personal fears of what might happen on the planned residential trip. There were no silly comments or put-

downs, but a circle of concerned, supportive listeners showing an ability to put themselves in someone else's shoes.

28. As parents indicated, the school encourages pupils to become mature and responsible by promoting values such as tolerance, care and respect in its daily life. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 registration time, children were given the chance to listen quietly to sad news about a cat being run over and to think about how this would make someone feel. The teacher took care to strengthen their closeness by sharing happier news of cats and kittens and showing something special one cat had carried home carefully. Pupils, including the child with the sad news, were thrilled to see a perfect, birds' nest. Pupils have many opportunities to help each other and work together, not least the very good range of clubs where they enjoy teamwork and activities that depend on co-operation, such as country dancing.

29. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. There is an up-to-date register of pupils' needs and effective communication with parents. Pupils' individual plans for their learning are sharply focused, in small steps, upon what each pupil needs to learn. The governor responsible for special educational needs is knowledgeable, well informed and offers considerable support to the school. Future developments are well planned and include monitoring the success of pupils' individual plans to ensure that they continue to make good progress.

30. Links with the local community are good and this supports the pupils' learning. A group of older residents known as the 'wrinkly readers' comes into school regularly to hear children read and talk about their books. Pupils enjoy this contact with the community. The school has invited members of the parish council to talk about their roles and responsibilities, and this gave the pupils great insight into how one aspect of the local community works. Similarly, in one lesson observed, the vicar was interviewed by pupils who asked interesting questions about his role. The 'Safer route to school' project involves the county council, the governors and pupils in identifying issues regarding their journey to school. Measures have been proposed to address the problems identified. Members of the local community are involved in running extra-curricular clubs and the school has good links with the church and the local Sue Ryder home.

31. A lack of consistency in work provided for pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics means that all pupils do not have equal access to the curriculum. For example, in science, there is a strong and appropriate emphasis on experimental and investigative work in Years 5 and 6, but this is not the case in other classes. In art, the range of work is narrow, and there are inconsistencies in the way the subject is taught. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good use of sketch books to explore various media and to develop their ideas. In other classes, sketch books are little used. In design technology, however, where teachers adhere closely to the recommended scheme, the consistency and quality of the work is much better. Some inconsistencies, such as in music, stem from variations in teachers' expertise. The school is not doing enough to ensure that all pupils experience a broad and rich curriculum.

32. Although standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection, pupils in Year 6 are only just reaching the expected level in the subject. Many of the pupils bring good skills from home. The pupils are now covering the appropriate range of work, but their skills are not being used and developed sufficiently in other subjects. The school recognises this, and so raising standards in ICT is a key area identified in the improvement plan.

33. For a number of years the school has had a particular pattern to the school day but, as the curriculum has changed and developed, this has not been reviewed. As a result, it does not make best use of the time available for teaching and learning, particularly each morning. For example, in Years 3 to 6, literacy and numeracy lessons last one hour, but the first timetabled session of the day lasts one

hour and ten minutes. This leads to wasted time and does not encourage a brisk pace to the school day. The 30 minute session at the end of the morning is insufficient time to develop work to any depth, and lessons observed in this session were often rushed with no opportunity to draw together pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The school takes good care of pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Encouragement of high standards of behaviour and good attendance is very effective.
- Good systems are in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science.

Areas for development

- Implement more consistently systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
- Use information about pupils' current attainment to match work to their needs.
- In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, improve the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress.

34. The school has worked hard to make sure that its welfare systems are fully effective, without the gaps in matters of health and safety identified at the last inspection. All of these have been dealt with appropriately, resulting in significant improvement in the quality of care provided. The school has given a much higher priority to ensuring that it has a safe and secure environment for its pupils and staff. For example, it has been actively involved in improving local road safety through its award-winning Travel Plan and related initiatives. It has critical incident policies in place, including beneficial guidance on response to bereavement, and is well on track to complete the action resulting from its health and safety audit. The school takes good steps to safeguard pupils' welfare.

35. Pupils benefit from a network of very good relationships that ensure a family feel within the school community. Adults know children and their personal needs very well, partly because the school and village communities are small, which allows for very good, informal checks on their development and behaviour. Policies for promoting high attendance and improved behaviour are very successful because expectations are shared so clearly, are very well understood by pupils and parents, and the related rewards are valued. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. As a result of its more rigorous approach to pupils' welfare, the school is well placed to ensure that it uses high quality care as a firm foundation for improving not just personal development but also academic achievement.

36. The school is gathering increasing amounts of information about the pupils' attainment and progress. Some of this is used well to identify general areas for improvement and school development priorities. This information, however, and daily assessments, are not yet used well enough to match

work to individual pupils' needs. In English, mathematics and science, systems are in place to assess pupils' attainment and progress. In Years 5 and 6, these systems are used effectively to plan work suitable for pupils of varying attainment. In addition to the teacher's day-to-day assessments, termly assessments in English, mathematics and science identify those aspects of the subjects in which the pupils have weaknesses. They show clearly the levels at which the pupils are working, and progress is tracked carefully. Throughout the rest of the school, however, these systems are not implemented. As a result, in some lessons in English, mathematics and science, all pupils do the same tasks, which means that some are not challenged appropriately. The system of setting targets for groups of pupils in English and mathematics is developing and this should help pupils to become more aware of the next stages of their learning.

37. There are few assessment systems in place for subjects other than English, mathematics and science. For these other subjects, pupils are assessed once at the end of the academic year, and there are few systems for regular assessment. Planning in these subjects, therefore, lacks the precision to ensure that work is pitched at the right level.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents.

Strengths

- Parents think well of the school and are very happy to be involved in its life.
- Parents contribute very effectively to their children's learning.
- The school provides good information for parents.

Areas for development

- Improve communication with all families, including those not in close touch with the school.
- Build more effectively on pupils' learning outside school.

38. The school's partnership with parents is very good. Parents are very keen to be involved in school life and their children's work and have been given better opportunities for this than were evident at the last inspection. The school makes better use of reading records, checks on parents' views of what it needs to do to improve and provides a succinct, very helpful prospectus. This gives a very clear flavour of school life and values. Almost all parents feel comfortable about approaching the school, although not all feel that the school works closely with them. Working parents and those from homes outside the village do not always have the same chances of informal contact and catching up with the everyday life of the school as the majority. As in other schools, although the school sends letters home with pupils, parents do not always receive them. This is partly because parents do not know exactly when to expect information about the curriculum, or individual newsletters. As a result, although the quality of information is usually very good, communication is not equally effective.

39. The school provides parents with good information, in general. Written reports on pupils' progress vary in quality, but are satisfactory overall. The best reports give a clearer idea of what steps the individual child needs to take to make better progress and whether what has been learned is what might have been expected, given the child's previous strengths and weaknesses. Most parents attend consultation evenings, at which they have good opportunities to discuss their children's progress. Parents confirm that the school is very quick to respond to any concerns they express. Those who can, come to workshops and throng to special assemblies. A few parents help regularly in school and with clubs. The parents' and teachers' association (PTA) is thriving, with its small band of energetic organisers supported by a very responsive parent body.

40. Discussions with pupils confirmed that parents are quick to help out with reading, research, and resources, such as computers. The results of this high level involvement and of experiences such as local and overseas visits are not always used to best effect in lessons or displays, but contribute strongly to achievements, such as those in reading.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Overall, the standard of leadership and management is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The headteacher provides good, determined leadership.
- Governors are knowledgeable, supportive and have considerable expertise.
- The school has a very good, three-year plan for improvement, with appropriate priorities.
- Very good relationships support the management of the school.

Areas for development

- Re-establish and improve management systems.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning so that weaknesses are identified and tackled.
- Improve the learning environment, in classrooms and around the school.

41. The headteacher provides good leadership which, following a period of considerable change, is ensuring that the school has a clear agenda for improvement. She has very clear views about the high standards of work and behaviour to which the school should aspire, and she communicates these well to all members of the school community. Since her return from maternity leave, she has begun to re-establish appropriate systems for managing the school, although some of these are not yet implemented and others are not fully effective. Through the very good school development plan, she has established a clear vision for the school's future direction. This comprehensive plan contains appropriate priorities and time scales, showing what needs to be done and how the school intends to bring about changes. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school's aims and values are fully reflected and recognised within the plan, as well as through the very good relationships that exist within the school.

42. The last inspection identified some inadequacies in the management of subjects and there are still some remaining weaknesses. Responsibilities are not shared equitably and teachers have not been trained adequately in order to manage their subjects properly. There is little consistency across subjects in the amount or type of management that has taken place. For example, managers have evaluated the quality of pupils' work in some subjects, but not in others. The school has tried hard to deal with these issues but has been thwarted by persistent staff changes.

43. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school through the work of individual governors and an appropriate committee structure. They are well organised, bring considerable expertise to their role, and have effective ways of evaluating the work of the school. For example, governors have been very involved in gathering the views of parents about the effectiveness of the school, and have acted on the findings. Most of the governors visit school regularly to observe the pupils working in lessons. By these measures, governors have formed an astute understanding of the strengths of the school and its areas for development and, therefore, contribute significantly to plans for improvement. They have formed a strong and effective partnership with the headteacher and staff.

44. The headteacher and senior teacher have made a satisfactory start in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, including pupils' performance in the core subjects. However, the school's procedures are not being implemented consistently or evaluated systematically. There is a satisfactory system for the performance management of teachers but this is not, as yet, making its full contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning, partly owing to staff changes. Subject leaders have few opportunities to observe lessons, but some monitor teaching plans and scrutinise pupils' work. The school has concentrated on raising standards in English and mathematics and, to this end, information from results of tests is studied to see whether pupils are achieving to the best of their ability. As yet, however, information about pupils' existing knowledge, skills and understanding is not used consistently to ensure that work in lessons is appropriately challenging.

45. Staff and governors pay good attention to the principles of best value, comparing standards at St Paul's with similar schools and seeking the views of parents about the school's effectiveness. The 'Parents' Focus Group' is a particularly worthwhile project, which provides a very good indication of parents' views, on a wide range of issues. Educational priorities are well supported through careful planning, and the school's financial management is good. The current large surplus is reasonable because much of the funding is earmarked for planned priorities, for example ensuring that the school continues to be organised in four classes, which parents, teachers and governors all feel is the most effective organisation. Designated funding is used well. For example, good use has been made of 'booster' funding to support specific groups of pupils.

46. The school is well staffed. As well as an adequate number of teaching staff, there are well-trained classroom assistants. Despite the many roles that a few teachers have to cover, expertise is satisfactorily matched to the needs of the curriculum and, overall, together with the classroom assistants, they form a committed and hard-working team. The building is set in very attractive, well-maintained grounds, which provide good learning opportunities. The school has done well to acquire recent local funding for the development of a wild-life area, which will enrich the curriculum considerably. Inside the building, facilities are adequate. Some areas are very cluttered, however, and do not make the best use of learning spaces or contribute to a workmanlike atmosphere. Similarly, whilst there are good displays of children's work and interesting artefacts, such as that about World War II in the school entrance, the standard and variety of attractive, stimulating displays is lower than in most schools. Since the last inspection, a new entrance hall, staff room and office have improved facilities considerably.

47. The school has made a good start to addressing many of its areas for development. Determined leadership from the headteacher and senior teacher and good commitment from governors and staff provide a sound capacity for achieving further improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. To maintain the existing standards, and to aim for further improvement, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:

- ◆ Raise standards in writing in Years 1 to 4 by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to use their good basic skills to write independently for a wide range of purposes.

(paragraphs 6, 58-60, 63)

- ◆ Ensure that pupils of different abilities are set work that enables them to take the next step in their learning, by:
 - using assessment information to establish what pupils already know, understand and can do;
 - planning different tasks for groups of pupils, or tasks that allow pupils to respond at their own level;
 - focusing on developing pupils' skills rather concentrating upon the content of the lesson.

(paragraphs 7, 18-19, 36, 64, 70, 73, 77, 90)

- ◆ Improve the quality of teaching where there are weaknesses, by:
 - ensuring that work is appropriately challenging for all pupils;
 - improving the use of regular assessment of pupils' work, including marking;
 - strengthening teachers' expertise in some subjects;
 - improving arrangements for homework in Years 5 and 6.

(paragraphs 18-20, 31, 64, 70-71, 96, 104)

- ◆ Improve the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievements, by:
 - continuing to develop the role of subject leaders in evaluating pupils' achievements;
 - sharpening the focus for monitoring and evaluation by having clear issues for exploration;
 - ensuring that the findings feed into plans for improvement.

(paragraphs 42, 44, 79, 94)

In addition to the key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. Each is followed by a reference to the paragraph(s) in which it is discussed.

- The use of ICT in other subjects. (32, 91-94)
- Lack of opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. (25-26)
- The organisation of the school day, which does not make best use of the available time. (33)
- Assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. (37)
- The learning environment, in classrooms and around the school. (26, 46, 83)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

28

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

17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		3	14	9	2		
Percentage		11	50	32	7		

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 over three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	79
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Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
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Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13
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English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with 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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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	5	5	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

* Results not included because group size less than 10

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (91)	87 (91)	93 (91)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	12	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (73)	80 (82)	100 (100)
	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
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
66		

Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

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)	5.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Average class size	20

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2002-2003
	£
Total income	299590.00
Total expenditure	277848.00
Expenditure per pupil	3517.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,868.00
Balance carried forward to next year	43,610.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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

48%

Number of questionnaires sent out

79

Number of questionnaires returned

38

Percentage of responses in each category

Totals may not add to 100% owing to rounding

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	26	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	32	5	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	39	3	0	0

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	42	5	3	3
The teaching is good.	59	32	5	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	50	13	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	26	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	32	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	37	21	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	59	32	5	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	29	3	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	57	5	3	0

Seventeen parents attended the meeting and were positive about almost all aspects of the school's work. They said that, under the leadership of the current headteacher, the school has improved considerably in recent years. Almost all are pleased with the progress their children are making, but a few feel that, in the mixed-age, mixed-ability classes, work is not always matched well enough to individual needs to enable their children to make the progress of which they are capable. Most parents feel they are kept well informed about what their children will be learning in lessons, but some said they had not received the information for last term. Parents agreed that consultations with teachers and annual reports provide good information about their children's progress. If there are concerns, parents said that staff are very approachable and respond sympathetically and quickly. These parents said that they are involved with the work of the school, though questionnaire responses indicate that some parents disagree. A few help in school, and many support the work of the school through the parent/teacher association. Parents said that the school has a good code of conduct, which the children have helped to devise, and behaviour is excellent. Most parents at the meeting were happy with the amount and type of homework. A few feel that it is inconsistent for children in Years 5 and 6.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. During the Foundation Stage (reception class), children have a happy and productive start to school. Following the recent appointment of the teacher, the curriculum is being developed steadily to provide a broader range of activities to promote the children's learning. As yet, however, the purpose of some activities is not clear enough, so children's ability to learn through their play is not always harnessed successfully. The children are confident, interested and try their best with all the tasks they are given. The adults know the children well and provide good support for learning. At the time of the inspection, there were 13 children in the class, all attending full-time. Parents say that their children settle quickly when they start school. Good links with the private nursery that uses an adjacent classroom, and close, friendly relationships between home and school help to ensure a smooth beginning.

50. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all areas of learning, with some good features. As a result, children's achievements are sound, and good for their personal and social development. This is a

similar picture to the last inspection. In whole-class sessions, planning and teaching are very clear about what the children should learn, and adults use clever strategies to involve the children in their learning. For example, in a mathematics session, children chose a number card from those spread upside down on the floor, such as 19, and then named a bigger number to which all the children counted. This activity developed mathematical language as well as practising counting skills. In some cases, a series of the whole-class tasks lasted rather too long, so some of the children began to lose interest. In some sessions, children choose from a variety of activities, whilst adults work with individuals or small groups on specific skills such as writing. This form of organisation works well, but many of the choice activities are not purposeful or challenging enough. For example, the role-play rainforest area is potentially a good activity for learning, but the children were not sure what they should do, and the resources provided were not stimulating enough to fire their imaginative play. Where adults work with individuals or small groups, they have good skills in supporting and extending children's learning, but the highest-attaining children are not challenged enough by some of the whole-class activities.

51. A few of the children have already reached the standards expected when they join Year 1 (the Early Learning Goals) and almost all will do so by the end of the reception year. Almost all of the children will exceed the expected standard for their personal and social skills. Facilities indoors are satisfactory, and the school has plans to improve the quality of resources. Facilities outdoors are currently a weakness, but there are plans to develop a more varied outdoor learning area.

Personal, social and emotional development

52. The children have good personal and social skills. They are confident, relate well to other children and adults, and show initiative in their learning. For example, one child wanted to paint. She put on an apron, asking an adult to help her tie the strings, got out the paper, paints and water, and began her painting quite independently, helped by the fact that all the materials were easily to hand. Many children show this level of confidence in organising their learning. Three children made, "the biggest mountain in the world", in the damp sand during outdoor play. They shared the task and the equipment sensibly, deciding who should be the one to put the shell on the top. Whatever children's starting points, the positive approach of the staff and good routines help them to become confident and motivated learners. Adults praise children consistently, not only for being successful but also for trying hard. Children offer their ideas confidently and concentrate on the task in hand. For example, with encouragement from an adult, children spent a long time doing their writing and making sure that the letters were correctly formed. Children understand the rules of the classroom, as seen in a quiet time when children said, "We share and we are kind to each other". When acting as daily helpers, children go about their tasks with confidence.

Communication, language and literacy

53. Adults ensure that children improve their skills in this area of learning by incorporating talk within all activities. For example, during the teacher's reading of Noah's Ark, the children answered a range of questions, showing that they were listening actively. During a science activity, the children were encouraged to describe a variety of materials that could be used for mopping up water, and this extended their vocabulary. The children are good communicators and the constant emphasis on speaking and listening helps them to develop their skills. Most of them express their ideas clearly, and they listen well to adults and to each other. Children make steady progress in the early skills of reading and writing and show a keen interest in words. For example, during a literacy lesson, one child said, "On the motorway, mummy asked me what a word was, and I guessed." Most of the children recognise commonly occurring words, and the higher attainers have a good understanding of how books work, such as when one child explained that a contents page tells you what is in the book. Most of the children read successfully a simple story with repetitive text, and have a good early knowledge

of letter sounds. In writing, almost all of the children write their full name and a few words, and the higher attainers write a simple sentence.

Mathematical development

54. Children make satisfactory progress in this area. Adults focus on developing the language of mathematics as well as basic skills in counting and calculating. Almost all of the children can count a group of objects to 10 reliably, but a few lower-attaining children do not yet count one number to one object. Many of the children are confident counting numbers to 50, and some beyond, and they know what words like more, less, greater and smaller mean. A few higher attaining children add or subtract 2 or 3 from a number mentally, or count in 2s and 3s. Whole-class work develops most children's mathematical skills effectively, but a few higher attaining children are not challenged sufficiently in these sessions. There was too little emphasis on developing mathematical skills in the choice activities seen. For example, there were lost opportunities to ask children to look for patterns or to solve simple practical problems. Most children recognise simple shapes, such as a triangle, and can explain that it has three sides and three corners.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

55. Children make steady progress in this area of their learning because there are lots of opportunities to explore, investigate and discuss a range of interesting tasks. For example, children examined a variety of materials and asked the question, "What will make the best mopping up cloth?" With support from an adult, they guessed which materials would be the best and tested them. The children observed very carefully, discussed how to make the test fair, and learnt new words such as absorb. The computers are used all the time, and almost all the children use simple programs confidently, showing good early skills with the keyboard and mouse. For example, one child typed her name and printed it out. Work about rainforests is helping children to learn what it is like in a very different environment to their own. In RE, the story of Noah's Ark provided starting points for discussion, and led to a well-judged quiet time in which children thought about how they could be kind. "If I see someone who is lonely, I go and play with them," was one child's thoughtful response.

Creative development

56. Children develop their creative skills steadily through a range of activities. During the inspection, a few children painted independently, exploring colours and shapes, though this activity was not chosen by many. An effective whole-class session provided a good range of creative activities. Children enjoyed working with an adult, dripping paint on to an umbrella shape and then making it run and spread. Meanwhile, children outdoors were 're-painting the school' with large brushes and water, and watching it evaporate, or contributing to a large-scale group painting. The adults' contribution to this session was particularly good, developing children's ideas and vocabulary, as well as helping them with their tasks. Children join in singing well-known number rhymes, matching their actions to the music. There are opportunities for creative play, such as in the rainforest area, but the children soon run out of ideas because the roles they are meant to adopt and the tasks that they might do are not interesting enough.

Physical development

57. Children make steady progress in their physical development. Activities in the outdoor area, such as skipping, throwing and catching, and physical education lessons in the hall, help develop children's co-ordination and movement. The outdoor area has few activities to develop children's larger muscles, for example by using climbing equipment or wheeled toys. Activities in the classroom develop the children's control of finer movements such as using the mouse for the computer, writing with pencils and making jigsaws.

ENGLISH

58. In 2002, the results of the end of Year 2 national assessments for reading and writing were very high and in the top five per cent nationally. This was a very good improvement since the last inspection, but results have fluctuated considerably, owing to the small numbers in each year group. Results at the end of Year 6, in English, were average nationally and about the same as at the last inspection, but well below average when compared with similar schools. There was a steady improvement in results from 1998 to 2001 but, in 2002, Year 6 contained a few pupils with special educational needs, causing a decline.

59. The standard of work in the current Year 2 is above national expectations. Standards are not as high as last year because there are fewer high attainers in this year group. Pupils are strongest in reading, speaking and listening, spelling and handwriting. The teaching of phonics is very effective, so pupils have a very good grasp of sounding out words. This helps them to spell and read well. A strong emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar helps pupils to write sentences correctly, but there are too few opportunities for them to produce their own pieces of original writing. Standards in the current Year 6 are also above expectations and better than last year because there is a larger proportion of higher-attaining pupils. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have experienced changes in teaching and have not capitalised on good test results at the end of Year 2. Standards are average, particularly in writing.

60. When pupils start school, overall attainment varies between average and above average. In relation to their starting points, most pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 2. For example, pupils begin the year unable to use punctuation consistently, and progress to writing sentences that are correctly punctuated with full stops and capital letters. During Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, but current progress is slow in Years 3 and 4. For example, a minority of the higher-attaining pupils are beginning to use better words in their writing but, for most pupils, vocabulary is still very simple and some words are repeated too often, making sentences uninteresting. Progress during Years 5 and 6 is good. By the end of Year 6, pupils are reading to a high standard, with fluency, expression and enjoyment. Their writing is characterised by complex sentences and a wide vocabulary in the form of diaries, letters, stories and reports. Across the school, the few pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

61. In Year 2, standards of speaking and listening are above expectations. Pupils are given good opportunities to practise speaking and listening in lessons. For example, when pupils were being taught to spell, the teacher encouraged them to listen very carefully, and repeat the sounds in the word with her and on their own before attempting to write it. This developed pupils' listening skills well and supported them in learning spelling. By Year 6, speaking and listening skills are well above the expected standard. When the local vicar came to talk to pupils about his work, they responded appropriately, listening attentively to him and to each other as they confidently and articulately asked sensible and thoughtful questions.

62. In Year 2, standards in reading are above expectations. The very few pupils who find reading difficult have a very good knowledge of sounds and try hard to use this to help them read unknown words. Although some pupils read slowly and quietly, they read carefully with understanding, expression and accuracy. By Years 3 and 4, most pupils read fluently and recognise when they make a mistake, correcting it as they go along. A few pupils do not observe punctuation and consequently lose the sense of what they are reading. Many have a favourite author. They talk knowledgeably about their chosen book and guess what might happen next. Standards in Year 6 are also above average. Pupils are positive about reading; many read daily for pleasure, and all read aloud in class with confidence. Throughout the school, pupils use their class and school libraries regularly and are

appreciative of the good selection of books provided. Until Year 6, pupils have a reading record that travels between home and school, and this creates a very useful dialogue between parents and teachers. Pupils' good reading skills make an important contribution to overall standards in English.

63. Standards of writing are average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The school pays considerable attention to the formal aspects of writing and this ensures that, at an early age, pupils' spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and handwriting are good. These basic skills are well taught throughout the school and, because of this, the presentation of pupils' work is good. There are too few opportunities, however, for pupils in Years 1 to 4 to use well known stories and poems as models for their own independent and original work. Pupils spend too much time completing exercises and worksheets rather than practising their skills by writing for a variety of different purposes and audiences. Work in Years 5 and 6 is much better, and is characterised by challenging and sophisticated tasks, which encourage pupils to use imaginative vocabulary and complex sentences. For example, in a series of lessons about writing from another character's point of view, pupils were first taught how to link complex sentences successfully, and then introduced to a powerful piece of writing as a model for their own work. They have learned how to write reports, formal letters, poems, play scripts, instructions, descriptions and stories. They sequence their work correctly and can take notes.

64. Although the quality of teaching observed was good, scrutiny of pupils' past work indicates that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and similar to that at the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain clearly what pupils are to learn in the lesson, which helps them to make progress. They plan thoroughly, and use interesting and appropriate teaching strategies, which ensure that pupils are keen and eager to learn. For example, in a very good lesson for Years 5 and 6 teaching pupils to link clauses to form complex sentences, pupils supported one another by working in pairs. They used whiteboards to record a series of quick tasks, which gave the lesson a brisk pace and allowed pupils to succeed at regular intervals. However, in other classes, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and the work planned is not always at the right level of challenge for all pupils. Teachers are not clear enough about what pupils already know and can do, and they do not use assessment information well enough to plan the next stage in pupils' learning. In most cases, marking does not identify what pupils have achieved, and does not explain to how they can improve their work. There were very few examples of pupils' competent use of the computer to present their work. In the lessons seen, pupils had very good attitudes to learning and behaved well, responding to very good relationships with adults.

65. Leadership and management of English are good because the co-ordinator has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. There is an appropriate plan for further development. Pupils' literacy skills are used and developed satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, in RE, pupils use diaries and news reports as a means of recording their thoughts and feelings. However, there are few examples of other subjects contributing to English lessons, for example by using historical or geographical texts.

MATHEMATICS

66. Results of the 2002 national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 were very high and in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Whilst this was a very good improvement on the last inspection, results have fluctuated, owing to the small numbers in each year group. For example, results in 2000 were average. At the end of Year 6, the 2002 results were above average nationally, but average when compared with those gained by similar schools. For the previous three years, results were consistently above the national average and stronger than in other subjects. The Year 6 results have improved since the last inspection.

67. The standard of work in the current Year 2 is above national expectations. Standards are lower than last year because there are fewer high attainers in this year group. However, almost all of the current Year 2 pupils are reaching the expected level of attainment and about a third are exceeding it. They add and subtract numbers to 100 accurately, carry out simple multiplication and division, and have a good understanding of the value of the digits in a number. Higher-attaining pupils are confident with calculations beyond 100. All pupils know odd and even numbers, and place two digit numbers in the appropriate order on a number line. Work with shapes and measuring is less well developed, but still meets the standards expected for pupils' ages.

68. Standards of attainment in the current Year 6 are also above national expectations. Almost all pupils are working at the expected level and just over a third are exceeding it. Most Year 6 pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of multiplication facts up to 10×10 and are able to recall these facts quickly. They carry out long multiplication with two-digit numbers such as 17×40 . For example, in a lesson seen, most Year 6 pupils knew that they could multiply by 40 by doubling a number, doubling again and then multiplying by 10. Most Year 6 pupils convert percentages to fractions and decimals confidently. For example, they knew that 25% is the same as $\frac{1}{4}$ or 0.25.

69. When pupils start school, overall attainment varies between average and above average, making it difficult to judge pupils' achievements by a point later in their schooling. Nonetheless, in relation to their starting points, the current Year 2 pupils have achieved satisfactorily. During Years 3 to 6, information comparing pupils' results in national tests in Year 2 with subsequent performance in Year 6 shows that achievement was good in 2001, and satisfactory in 2002. Currently, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making satisfactory progress but, owing to a number of changes of teacher, are not building sufficiently on the high standards they achieved in the Year 2 tests. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making good progress. Across the school, the few pupils with special educational needs are well supported in mathematics lessons and make satisfactory progress.

70. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and good in Years 5 and 6. Work in pupils' books showed that, in Years 1 to 4, teachers do not take enough account of pupils' existing attainment, and so the work is not always appropriately matched to their needs. For example, work in Years 1 and 2 is largely organised by year group rather than by matching work to pupils' attainment. Throughout Years 1 to 4, in too many pieces of work, the higher-attaining pupils in a year group do exactly the same tasks as the lower attainers. As a result, the higher-attaining pupils, in particular, are not challenged sufficiently by the tasks they are given.

71. In general, basic skills are taught well and planned carefully to build on pupils' learning. For example, in a lesson for Years 1 and 2, pupils counted forwards and backwards in tens. They approached the activity with enthusiasm and were confident to tackle work with large numbers. Where the quality of teaching was good, the lesson moved at a fast pace and the teacher had good expertise in the subject. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils worked out two-stage problems involving division of decimals and rounding up or down. In this lesson the teacher's skilful questioning encouraged the pupils to think carefully about a range of methods, and they were able to explain their thinking clearly and confidently. Where teaching had weaknesses, including one unsatisfactory lesson, the pace was too slow and the balance of whole-class and individual activity was not appropriate. These lessons lacked challenge for many of the pupils. Teachers and classroom assistants have good relationships with the children, which creates a positive atmosphere for learning and ensures that there are rarely any incidents of misbehaviour. Throughout the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, enjoy their work and are keen to succeed. They concentrate well, are confident and work well together. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work varies across the school. Although some pieces of work have positive comments on them, there are few helpful comments to encourage

the pupils to reach higher standards. Some teachers use only ticks or crosses, which do not help pupils to improve.

72. All the required aspects of the curriculum are covered, but there is too heavy an emphasis on number work and too little attention to other elements. For example, pupils' past work showed few opportunities for them to investigate and explore numbers patterns and shapes, which would add extra challenge. There is little use of ICT to support work in mathematics. Numeracy skills are used and developed in some subjects. For example, in a science lesson observed, Years 1 and 2 pupils measured their heights, arm length and span, and pupils' past work in Year 5 and 6 shows good use of measuring skills in science and design and technology.

73. Teachers set a termly assessment test to measure pupils' attainment and progress, but ongoing assessment procedures are variable across the school. Where the new assessment policy is being followed, in Years 5 and 6, it works effectively. There is little evidence in other classes, however, that teachers keep ongoing records of the pupils' progress, which would help them match work to pupils' needs. A system for setting attainment targets for a group of pupils is developing, to help them to become aware of the next steps in their learning. Despite current inconsistencies in teaching and learning, leadership and management of the subject are good because the co-ordinator is aware of strengths and weaknesses and has a clear plan to raise standards.

SCIENCE

74. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 have risen since the last inspection. The 2002 results were exceptional, with all the pupils reaching the expected Level 2 of attainment, and eight out of ten gaining the higher Level 3. Results at the end of Year 6 have improved gradually, but have fluctuated from below average to above average. In 2002, results were close to the national average, with all but one pupil gaining the expected Level 4 and just over a third reaching the higher Level 5. The Year 6 results were below average compared with similar schools. Fluctuations in the performance of small schools, at Year 2 and Year 6, are to be expected because the results of a few children can make a significant difference to comparison with national averages.

75. Attainment in the current Year 2 is close to national expectations. It is considerably lower than last year because there is a larger proportion of lower-attaining pupils and fewer who will reach the higher Level 3. Nonetheless, in the lesson observed, the pupils showed a good knowledge of living things when the teacher brought in 'minibeasts' from her garden and pond. They recognised spiders, woodlice and earwigs, and they knew that these animals need particular conditions for them to live and grow. When the teacher captured a spider and put it in a plastic dish, one pupil said, "The spider can't stay in the dish for long because it needs to breathe." The pupils used good observational skills to examine the 'minibeasts', putting them in groups according to their features. Pupils' past work showed attainment as expected for this age group. For example, they looked at materials and tried to find out which was most waterproof. They made simple electrical circuits and found out which materials make the best conductors. The factual work is typical for Year 2, but the amount and quality of work building pupils' scientific skills in posing questions, suggesting outcomes, carrying out simple experiments and drawing conclusions is weaker than would be expected.

76. Attainment in Year 6 is above national expectations and better than last year. Almost all the pupils have knowledge and skills at the expected level, and just less than half should reach the higher Level 5 in the national tests. In the lesson seen, pupils made electrical circuits and tested a variable that might affect the brightness of a bulb. All the pupils have a good understanding of scientific method and explained how they planned the experiment and what they were hoping to find out. Two pupils tested the hypothesis that the size of the battery would affect the brightness of the bulb and, when it

did not, drew the correct conclusion that the batteries were both 1.5 volts, even though one was bigger than the other. Many of the pupils draw conclusions and evaluate their methods at a level above that expected for Year 6. Pupils' past work shows a good emphasis on investigation, for example controlling variables scrupulously when carrying out an experiment to find out what shape of parachute canopy will make it fall slowest. Well-produced booklets recording a range of experiments are of good quality. A weakness is that findings are not always explained in detailed conclusions, drawing on pupils' wider scientific knowledge, a task that would challenge the higher attainers more fully.

77. The standards attained by groups of pupils entering Year 1 vary considerably. Therefore, judgements about pupils' achievements are more reliable when made on the basis of pupils' work, rather than comparing standards in the current Year 6 with those in Year 1. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory across the school. For example, work in Years 1 and 2 on simple electrical circuits is built upon when Years 3 and 4 explore ways of making switches. This is extended well by the more complex investigations seen in Years 5 and 6. Progress in Years 3 and 4 is currently unsatisfactory, with most work being factual, relying on worksheets and not developing pupils' investigative skills sufficiently. Progress in Years 5 and 6 is good. These pupils' past work shows a broad range of content, largely linked to experiments and investigations. A weakness across the school is that pupils in the same class generally carry out the same work and, in some instances, this is not made challenging enough for the higher attainers. The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory.

78. In the three lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good overall, but evidence from pupils' work shows that the usual standard is satisfactory, with weaknesses in Years 3 and 4 and strengths in Years 5 and 6. A very good lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2 was extremely well prepared, with 'minibeasts' from the teacher's garden creating great interest. When the teacher showed the children a newt swimming in a plastic bowl, there were gasps of excitement, and none of them knew what it was until they had searched in reference books. The teacher's enthusiasm, her good knowledge of living things, and her perceptive questioning enriched the lesson. In Years 5 and 6, very careful planning and good discussion about experimental method prepared the pupils to carry out their own investigations with electrical circuits. The practical activity was well organised and managed, with the teacher providing good support for a group of lower-attaining pupils. A weakness was that pupils were not given sufficient responsibility for explaining their findings. Satisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4 enabled the pupils to investigate the relationship between a person's height and arm span. Opportunities were missed at the end of the lesson to focus on what pupils had learnt and to ask further challenging questions. In all these lessons, pupils were interested and made a good effort with their tasks. Teachers make sure that pupils learn correct scientific vocabulary, which makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. In Years 1 to 4, the teaching seen had a greater emphasis on investigation than is evident in pupils' past work.

79. The curriculum is sensibly planned on a two-year cycle to take account of the mixed-age classes. The emphasis on investigation and experiments shown in the school policy and scheme of work is not so evident in all classes. Special events such as the planned Science Week enrich the curriculum. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are adequate. The co-ordinator keeps a file containing examples of pupils' work, which are useful for establishing expected levels of attainment. The use of assessment information, however, is not always evident in the work set for pupils in each class, which is often the same. Information and communication technology is being used increasingly for research and to present the results of experiments. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but have yet to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school. The co-ordinator has carried out some evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, which has provided information about strengths and areas for development. There has, however, been little evaluation of pupils' work. The school is developing the grounds to provide a range of natural

environments that will support learning in science. Since the last inspection, aspects of the subject have improved, including standards of attainment in Year 6.

OTHER SUBJECTS

80. Evaluation of other subjects of the curriculum is based on limited evidence. This table shows the number of lessons observed in each subject.

Art	Design and Technology	Geography	History	ICT	Music	Physical Education	Religious Education
0	0	2	0	0	2	2	3

This is normal for the inspection of a small school because the team is present for only a few days and should only observe each teacher for about half of each day. In these subjects, inspectors' evaluations are based largely on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers.

ART and DESIGN

81. As at the last inspection, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment is close to the standards expected nationally. Weaknesses in the curriculum noted at the last inspection remain, however, because pupils still do not tackle a wide enough range of work. Most of the work seen was drawing, painting and printing and, throughout the school, there is too little work with fabrics, collage and in three-dimensions.

82. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' sketch books show that they are developing their drawing skills steadily by experimenting with pencils, charcoal and oil pastel to discover the lines and textures they can produce. Their subsequent observational drawings of training shoes and leaves show that they look carefully at objects to capture the shape and detail. Printing with a plasticine block, and then one with a string pattern, has helped pupils to try new techniques and find out which works best. Their finished printed patterns are of good quality. Printing is also the current work in Years 3 and 4, with a sea theme leading to carefully printed patterns of sea creatures such as jellyfish. Pupils have tried a number of techniques, comparing printing using raised shapes to a polystyrene block with the pattern impressed. Pencil drawings of scissors capture the reflections skillfully. These pupils' sketch books, however, contain little work, so they have not spent enough time developing their skills by experimenting with a range of techniques and media. Work in Years 5 and 6 is more varied and of better quality, with sketch books being used consistently to develop ideas. For example, pupils drew their designs for batik patterns and then developed these in their finished work on fabric. Well-observed pencil portraits of other members of the class, attractive paper weaving, and the use of variety of materials to explore textures provide a more varied curriculum than in other classes.

83. The school has recently introduced a new scheme of work, which aims to promote a wider range of activities, but has yet to be successful. A particular weakness of the current curriculum is that little use is made of the work of famous artists and craftspeople to stimulate pupils' ideas. Too little use is made of art from a diversity of cultures. Art supports activities in other subjects satisfactorily. For example, there are close links with design and technology, seen in the way in which Year 5 and 6 pupils have made and decorated their slippers to a high standard. The amount of art work on display, particularly in communal areas, is less than in most schools, which does not help to motivate pupils. Management of the subject across the school is satisfactory because the co-ordinator is aware of the

weaker aspects and is taking action to improve them. Overall improvement since the last inspection, however, has been unsatisfactory because the weaknesses identified then still remain.

DESIGN and TECHNOLOGY

84. As at the last inspection, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, they reach standards that meet national expectations, with some work of higher quality, such as the slippers made by pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils tackle a well-planned series of projects that develop their skills steadily. As a result, progress during Years 3 to 6 has improved since the last inspection and the higher-attaining pupils are now being challenged by the work they are given.

85. In Years 1 and 2, pupils made wheeled vehicles. They evaluated a variety of their own toy vehicles, drew a design and listed the materials they needed, and then made the vehicle from their design. They learnt skills such as using a hacksaw, and explored different ways of fixing the wheels to the chassis. Their latest project was making a winding mechanism. The designs are of good quality and, though the finished models do not work as well as planned, good evaluation of how they might be improved has added to pupils' understanding. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learnt a lot about hinged mechanisms and then made books, with moving parts, which are well constructed and intriguing. For example, *The wolf and the mouse* is a traditional tale, but made much more entertaining by a series of tabs that make the characters come to life. Pupils made sound use of their artistic skills to illustrate the books. In Years 5 and 6, pupils made hand puppets, learning a lot about working with fabric, making a template and sewing. These skills have been developed in their current project making slippers, in which pupils have followed a very good design-and-make process. They took to bits a range of slippers to see how they were made and evaluated the strength and weaknesses in the designs. They drew good quality designs to make their own slippers, often for a 'customer', and then spent a Design and Technology Day making them. The products are carefully finished, attractive, fit for purpose and use a wide range of fabrics.

86. The range and quality of pupils' work indicate that teaching is satisfactory, with good features. Teachers' plans, based on a nationally recommended scheme of work, show that a good range of tasks is undertaken, including work with food, fabrics, card and wood. Pupils make too little use of ICT skills as part of their design and technology work. Leadership and management of the subject across the school are sound because they ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning. The assessment of pupils' growing skills is still a weakness. The subject co-ordinator monitors the quality of pupils' work across the school, and so she knows the strengths in pupils' learning and the aspects that need to improve further.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

87. These two subjects are taught in alternate terms and, at the time of the inspection, geography was being taught in all classes. The work seen in history indicates that the pupils attain the standards expected for the ages and achieve appropriately. Pupils also achieve satisfactorily in geography and, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, reach standards that are close to those expected for their ages. For example, in Year 6, pupils read different types of maps with understanding and use keys to distinguish between physical and human features. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have some knowledge about different countries such as France, Turkey and Iraq. Pupils use their literacy skills appropriately in both subjects, such as in the written accounts and note taking seen in Years 5 and 6. Standards in both subjects are similar to those found at the last inspection.

88. In history, pupils' work shows that the teachers aim to make the lessons interesting and encourage pupils to use a variety of sources to investigate historical periods. For example, the Year 5

and 6 topic about World War II began with the pupils considering, “What do I already know about World War II?” and “What do I want to find out?” They then went on to research the things about which they were interested and to share their findings. They studied the role of women in the war and compared the types of food eaten during rationing with the food we eat now. They found out about different types of air-raid shelters and worked out the advantages and disadvantages of each. The topic culminated in a World War II Day when children dressed in appropriate clothing, learnt how to march and had a course in first aid, taught by a local resident. This event made the history topic much more meaningful and one pupil commented, “This was one of the best school days ever because it was lots of fun, especially the costumes.” An attractively presented display in the school entrance shows pupils’ work from the day and historical artefacts. Pupils’ written accounts about what life would have been like during an air raid show that they had developed good understanding of the topic.

89. In the two geography lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. Where teaching was good, the lesson was well prepared with interesting activities for the pupils to carry out. The work was related to finding out about Cromer in advance of the school journey later in the term. The pupils were encouraged to devise their own relevant questions such as, “How far is Cromer from the nearest beach?”, “Are there any golf courses in Cromer?” and “Are there any endangered species in Cromer?” They then used sources such as Ordnance Survey maps, street maps, tourist board leaflets and photographs to find answers to their questions. A small group of pupils used the internet for research and were very excited to find an aerial photograph of Cromer. In Years 3 and 4, pupils were learning about a village in India. They gathered information about the village by looking at photographs, and showed good factual knowledge of the work they have covered so far. They discussed issues in a developing country, such as water supply and a balanced diet. This lesson gave pupils the opportunity to find out about a culture that contrasts with their own. There was little recorded evidence of history or geography work in Years 1 and 2, but the teacher’s plans show that an appropriate range of work is covered.

90. In both subjects, pupils are taught the expected topics for the National Curriculum. The school’s scheme of work is appropriately planned using a four-year rolling programme to take account of the mixed-age classes. The main weakness in both subjects is that pupils’ attainment and progress are not formally assessed. The teachers carry out assessments at the end of each year, but these do not give enough specific information as to the exact level at which pupils are working. As a result, most pupils complete work at the same level, which limits better achievement by the higher-attaining pupils. Leadership and management of the subjects are satisfactory and the co-ordinators have suitable plans to improve aspects of the subjects.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

91. Pupils’ achievements are satisfactory and, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards of attainment are close to those expected nationally. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when pupils’ progress was unsatisfactory and standards were below national expectations.

92. Pupils in Year 1 have good mouse control skills. They select and listen to text, change colour, enter data and, with help, retrieve and print their work. When making a picture, they select and use paint tools, change the brush size and use the *rub out* and *undo* features. When word processing their work, they use the shift and back space keys as well as return and enter. By the end of Year 2, these skills have progressed to pupils centering titles and selecting different font sizes and styles. Younger pupils also use commands with a floor robot to draw a square and find a way through a maze. By Year 4, pupils amend text and use *repeat* to draw. Year 5 and 6 pupils use spread sheets to make a graph of results in their science experiment to see how quickly different shapes of parachute will fall. They use the internet for research in history and geography and build upon their work with the floor

robot by using a more complex program on screen. Older pupils discuss the use and importance of technology in daily life.

93. Whilst pupils' achievements at school are satisfactory, many bring considerable skills learned at home which help to supplement their learning in the classroom. In discussion with pupils, they said that they really like using computers, and many regularly use e-mail facilities at home. For example, in response to a piece of homework, one pupil had produced, with help, an excellent brochure about the school. During the course of the inspection, very little teaching was observed, and of just a few pupils. This evidence, alongside a scrutiny of pupils' work and displays, shows that teaching is satisfactory, but still has weaknesses. Although pupils are now using computers for a wide range of purposes, they are still not being used sufficiently or to their full extent across all subjects. There are many missed opportunities for use in lessons. A small group of pupils with special educational needs was given the opportunity to use the computers during a literacy lesson. This resulted in them making a good start to a challenging task. Their keyboard skills were adequate and the voluntary helper assisted them successfully. Records are kept of pupils' progress but these are not used to inform future teaching plans.

94. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and are supported by a good plan for future development. Currently, standards of teaching and learning are not monitored sufficiently. Despite much improvement in resources, the way in which the computers are situated and the organisation of their use mitigates against their effectiveness. In addition, although there has been recent training, changes of staff and poor teacher expertise is still hampering the quality of teaching and learning. This remains a weakness, even though the school has done much to improve the situation since the last inspection.

MUSIC

95. Very little evidence was available during the inspection. The two lessons observed and pupils' singing in assembly suggest that, as at the last inspection, standards are close to those expected for pupils' ages. It is not possible to make a judgement about pupils' achievements across the school.

96. The quality of teaching was good in one of the lessons seen, but unsatisfactory in the other. The discrepancy was almost wholly owing to differences in the teachers' expertise. In a good lesson for Years 1 and 2, the teacher developed the pupils' understanding of musical elements such as pitch and rhythm effectively by using a series of games and songs to explore sounds. The pupils listened carefully and joined in very enthusiastically, particularly enjoying the activity where they chose a card and made the sound represented by the symbols. A good balance of tasks, including opportunities to play instruments, ensured that all the children made good progress. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher followed the planning closely, but did not fully understand the musical content. Little reference was made to musical elements. Terms such as 'melodic phrases' were introduced but not explained. Pupils' listened to a short, West Indian song, with a distinctive beat, but they were not asked to comment on the musical features. Pupils coped well with work on glockenspiels and xylophones, but the teacher moved too quickly into work in two parts, and so the pupils were not successful. In their response, however, the pupils showed that they have many of the skills expected for their ages.

97. The school has good teaching materials, from a number of commercial schemes of work, to support pupils' learning. It encourages pupils to develop an interest in music through a variety of activities as well as lessons. Pupils learn the recorder, and some older ones learn the guitar or piano. Concerts involve all the children and are enjoyed by parents. Pieces of music are played as pupils enter assembly, but too little attention is drawn to them. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and

progress are weak. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, because the co-ordinator is aware of the weaker aspects of the subject and has plans to tackle them.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

98. Only two games lessons were observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements and attainment in physical education overall, which also includes gymnastics, dance, swimming and, in Years 3 to 6, outdoor adventurous activities.

99. In a lesson for Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. Activities were well planned and included opportunities for pupils to learn a variety of ball skills. These pupils throw and catch a large ball competently and are beginning to understand the effects of exercise on their body. The teacher changed into appropriate clothing and paid good attention to health and safety issues. A cricket lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils was led by a visiting coach whose good expertise ensured that skills were taught clearly. Pupils learnt how to hold a cricket bat appropriately for different types of shots. Pupils made good progress in this lesson, benefiting from specialist teaching. These sessions provide teachers with a good opportunity to assess pupils' skills, but this information is not recorded or used to plan for the next stages in the pupils' learning. Pupils really enjoy their physical education lessons and channel their enthusiasm well. They work effectively in groups and are very supportive, encouraging each other with comments such as, "Bad luck! Try again, though!"

100. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have swimming lessons in the autumn term. By the end of Year 6, all pupils meet the national expectation for distance swimming, and most exceed it. Pupils take part in sporting activities with other schools, such as the large football rally when they play against schools of different sizes. This makes a good contribution to the pupils' social development. The wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities, including athletics, basketball and lacrosse, makes a very good addition to the curriculum. The clubs are well attended by both girls and boys, and some are run by members of the local community. Work is planned on a two-year rolling programme and includes all the required aspects of the National Curriculum. Leadership and management of the subject are good because the co-ordinator ensures that pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop their interests and skills. For a small school, facilities both indoors and outside are good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection and standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are now close to those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus. Through the study of Christianity and other world faiths, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of a range of religious beliefs and practices, learning from them as well as about them.

102. In Years 1 and 2, although there is limited recorded work, planning shows that pupils learn about the main events of the Christian calendar, including the Christmas and Easter stories. They consider moral principles through thinking about rules for family life and, during assemblies, they consider what it means to be a member of a team. They study the special books of different world religions and learn to how to treat them with respect. In Years 3 and 4, pupils compare what they already know about Jesus with what they find out from the Bible. By listening to, and reading, some of the best known parables, they learn about the Christian faith as well as asking the question, "What can we learn *from* this story?" Years 5 and 6 build upon previous work by asking, "Why do we have rules?" They practise reflection by considering what they are and are not proud of about themselves. They learn from religion by exploring the ten commandments and tease out the meanings by writing play scripts to explain them.

103. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory throughout their time at the school. During Years 3 to 6 teachers plan tasks carefully in order to use pupils' literacy skills. The subject makes a good contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A good example of this was seen in a lesson for Years 1 and 2 when the teacher very successfully created a spiritual atmosphere when handling the Torah. This aspect of the subject is much improved since the last inspection. However, in Years 1 and 2 in particular, the small amount of recorded work that pupils complete is poorly organised and does not do justice to the presentation and writing skills they are building through literacy.

104. In the three lessons observed, the overall quality of teaching and learning was good. Pupils' past work, however, indicates that teaching is satisfactory. In the lessons seen, pupils were encouraged to take a pride in their recorded work, to be thoughtful in their writing and to make full use of their literacy skills. Work was planned carefully and was interesting and motivating to pupils. However, pupils' past work shows that the same task is usually set for all of them and, as a result, some are not challenged whilst others find concepts difficult to understand and do not always complete their work. This remains an outstanding weakness from the last inspection. In a good lesson involving a visit from the local vicar to talk to Year 5 and 6 pupils about his role, the teacher had helped pupils to prepare very carefully. They had written very sensible questions, spoke well and listened attentively to the vicar and to each other, taking notes to record the main points. The teacher extended pupils' learning by using what pupils had found out about the role of the vicar to suggest what skills he may need to carry out his work. Teachers' good subject knowledge and the interesting way in which they presented activities made a considerable contribution to pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils remembered important facts. Pupils' work is not always marked in such a way that they know what to do to improve.

105. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and the implementation of the locally Agreed Syllabus is an improvement since the last inspection. There are no ways, however, of monitoring, assessing or recording what pupils can do from year to year. This means that currently the school has little idea of how good attainment is in relation to the expected standards. This was a weakness at the last inspection and has yet to be dealt with.