

INSPECTION REPORT

**BAYFORD CHURCH of ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bayford, Nr Hertford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117387

Headteacher: Mrs Alison Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr George Crowther
18814

Dates of inspection: 24th – 26th March 2003

Inspection number: 247773

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Shirley Course
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 Geography History Music Educational inclusion, including race equality	What sort of school is it? The school's 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?
Paul Ducker <i>Team inspector</i> 18488	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
David Jones <i>Team inspector</i> 32737	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bayford is a small, voluntary controlled primary school for boys and girls who are 3 -11 years old. It has 105 pupils organised in four classes, including 16 children who attend part time in the nursery and reception unit. Numbers have risen significantly since the last inspection when there were 67 pupils. The school is situated in the village of Bayford about five miles south of Hertford. Approximately half of the pupils live in the village, or nearby villages, but many 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. Across the school, 17 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning difficulties, and one of these pupils has a statement that describes particular needs. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is below average. Almost all pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and none is learning English as an additional language. During the inspection, the headteacher was absent from school, owing to family illness.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bayford is an effective school, which provides a good standard of education. It is a happy, orderly learning environment, where staff know the children well and want them to be successful. Children get a successful start in the nursery and reception class. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils' achievements are good. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are currently above average. Results in national tests, however, have varied considerably in past years, which is to be expected in a small school because the performance of a few pupils can alter comparisons with national averages significantly. The leadership and management of the school are sound. Since her appointment in 2002, the headteacher has maintained the many strong aspects of the school's work, but has yet to develop a clear vision for future improvement. The quality of teaching is good, which plays a large part in ensuring that pupils achieve well. The school provides good value for the funding it receives.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The school creates an environment in which pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning.
- In the nursery and reception class, children make a successful start to learning at school.
- The curriculum is well planned, with particular strengths in English, mathematics, science information and communication technology and physical education.
- Positive and productive links with parents make an effective contribution to children's learning.

What could be improved

- In some subjects, where all pupils in the class are given the same tasks, these are often too easy for the older higher attainers and too hard for the younger, lower attainers.
- Pupils' presentation of their work is weaker than the standard of its content.
- Information gathered about how well the school is doing is not analysed carefully enough so that precise targets for improvement can be set.

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, Bayford was judged to be a developing school with a few weaknesses but with several areas of its work improving rapidly. Since then, overall improvement has been good. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved and the school achieved very good results in national tests in both 1999 and 2001. The quality of teaching is now good across the school. The key issues identified at the last inspection have been dealt with satisfactorily. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) are much better, owing to improved resources and more effective teaching. Pupils' achievements in music were a weakness, but too few music lessons were seen to judge whether this has improved. Weaknesses in relationships between pupils are no longer evident, and good co-operation at work and play is now a strength. Deficiencies in health and safety policy and practice have been remedied. Planning for all subjects is now very thorough and detailed, which is reflected in the good teaching and learning seen in lessons. Whilst the school monitors pupils' attainment and progress more closely, the large amount of information gathered does not help staff to track pupils' achievements efficiently. The school is well aware of the areas in which further improvement is needed, and has a good 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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	A	C	E
mathematics	B	A*	B	C
science	B	A*	C	D

Key

top 5% of schools **A***
 well above average **A**
 above average **B**
 average **C**
 below average **D**
 well below average **E**

When children start school, their overall attainment is normally about average, though some year groups have higher attainment, for example the current Year 4. During the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception), children's achievements are sound in all areas of learning, and good for their personal and social development, and in communication, language and literacy. The curriculum is well matched to their needs and the teaching ensures they make steady progress. Almost all are likely to reach the standards expected by the time they join Year 1 (the Early Learning Goals), and a few will exceed them.

Throughout the rest of the school, pupils' achievements are good overall. Results of national assessments fluctuate considerably. For example, in 2001, results were well above the national average for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with performance in the top five per cent of schools for some subjects. In 2002, the results were much lower. Such fluctuations are due to the small number of pupils who take the tests, and the proportion of lower or higher attaining pupils in each year group, and are not a reflection of the quality of teaching and learning. Data comparing pupils' results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 and their subsequent performance at the end of Year 6, in 2002, show that they made better than 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 picture. Schools set targets for the proportion of Year 6 pupils expected to reach the national average, Level 4. In 2002, the school just fell short of challenging targets for English and mathematics.

Pupils' work shows that overall attainment in the current Year 2 and Year 6 is above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Throughout the school, pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are above average overall. In all other subjects, pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory, with good achievement in ICT and physical education. In some subjects, however, because all pupils are set the same work, the highest and lowest attaining pupils are not challenged appropriately. Pupils' presentation of work is weak.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about their learning. They want to be involved in activities and are keen to do their best. They contribute their ideas confidently and concentrate well when they are given a task to do. This provides a good basis for learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils know they are expected to behave well. They behave sensibly and responsibly in lessons, in the playground and when moving around the school. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very positive and friendly, and this supports learning. Pupils work and play well together. When given responsibilities, pupils carry them out sensibly.
Attendance	Good and above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 good overall with some very strong features. It has improved since the last inspection. Teaching and learning for the nursery and reception children is satisfactory overall, and often good. It is best when the children have a rich variety of activities and adults support and guide their learning. Whole-class sessions are not as productive, owing to the wide range of attainment in the group. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is clear from the interesting activities they provide, their lively presentation of new ideas,

and the way in which they encourage pupils to participate and work hard. Lessons are planned well, with clear learning objectives that are shared with the children so they know what they are trying to achieve. Learning is well organised, with a good balance of methods that keep pupils interested. Work is generally well matched to pupils' needs but pupils' past work showed that, in subjects other than English and mathematics, the match is not always good enough for the highest and lowest attainers in the mixed-age classes. The very good and excellent teaching seen had a pace and challenge that really inspired the pupils and helped them to complete their work to a very good standard. Teaching is good for both English and mathematics, and basic skills are taught well in both literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers and classroom assistants have very good relationships with pupils and provide considerable support to enable them to succeed, particularly where pupils have special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception class is well planned and provides a wide range of suitable activities. English, mathematics, science and ICT are strong areas of the curriculum. For example, the emphasis on investigation and enquiry in science and mathematics promotes good learning. In other subjects, such as history and geography, whilst pupils' knowledge builds steadily, there is too little emphasis on developing pupils' skills. Provision for French and drama adds richness and variety to the curriculum, whilst a wide range of clubs and activities outside lessons adds breadth and interest.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are identified quickly and appropriate plans are drawn up to meet their needs. They receive good support in lessons and, when necessary, from outside specialists. 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. The school provides good support for pupils' personal development and the staff know each child very well. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good because the school teaches the children about why they should behave well. Pupils' social skills develop well, and there are lots of situations for pupils to interact with others. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good care and support for pupils includes a strong emphasis on good behaviour, respect for others and positive relationships.
Assessment	Satisfactory. Teachers gather a good deal of information about pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. They are not yet sifting it carefully enough to extract the most significant information to help them plan the next steps in pupils' learning. The setting of targets based on assessments of pupils' potential is a good development.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school has 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 school is well managed and, since her appointment, the headteacher has built on its strengths. As yet, however, plans for future development do not provide a clear and focused picture of how the school should move forward. The deputy headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators, are effective. They know the strengths and weaknesses in the school's curriculum and what needs to be improved.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governing body is keen, supportive and wants the school to thrive. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and they are developing better systems for monitoring its work. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well, and they are beginning to play a fuller part in planning the way forward.
Aspect	Comment
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school monitors the quality of teaching and learning, including pupils' attainment and progress. Some of this information is used well, for example in identifying the need to increase the emphasis on investigation in science. However, taken as a whole, evaluation lacks precision, so the school is not clear enough about what it is trying to improve. The current school improvement plan is unsatisfactory. Staff and governors pay appropriate attention to the principles of best value, comparing standards at Bayford 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, and school plans ahead methodically. Choices about the effective use of scarce funding are weighed very carefully.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed. Teachers, classroom assistants and other staff work well together as a team. The building provides adequate facilities inside, and the grounds are extensive, interesting and make a good contribution to learning. Resources for learning 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. ▪ Teaching is good. ▪ Staff are approachable if parents have concerns. ▪ The school expects children to work hard, achieve their best. ▪ Behaviour is good, and the school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<p>Some parents feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ they do not get enough information about how their child is progressing; ▪ the school does not work closely enough with them; ▪ the leadership and management of the school could be improved; ▪ there are not enough activities outside lessons.

Just over a quarter of the parents returned the questionnaire, and 14 attended the meeting. Most of these parents are pleased with all aspects of the school's work, and inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. Inspectors do not agree that parents get too little information about their children's progress because they have useful discussions with staff, both formal and informal, and reports are satisfactory. Many parents work very closely with the school. Activities outside lessons are

many and varied, and far more than seen in many small schools. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, even though the headteacher has not been able to give her full attention to her job, owing to family illness.

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 the progress they make in relation to their initial attainment. Therefore, a child starting school with low attainment may achieve well but still not reach the nationally expected standard of attainment by the end of Year 6.)*

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

Strengths

- In the nursery and reception class, children make a successful start to learning at school
- Pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science
- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology and physical education
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress

Areas for development

- In some subjects, the achievements of the older, higher attainers in the class, and the younger, lower attainers, are not always good enough
- Pupils do not present their work to the same standard as its content

1. When children start school, they settle quickly into the nursery and reception class because it is a welcoming and caring environment and an interesting place for learning. The great majority of the children are keen to learn and they have good personal and social skills, which help them to be successful. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and was good in a number of the sessions observed. Staff have high expectations of what the children can achieve. A well planned curriculum supports children's learning by providing a good range and balance of activities. When children work independently, or as part of a small group, activities are well matched to their needs and adults provide skilful support and encouragement, whilst allowing children to find out for themselves. Whole-class sessions are satisfactory, but the range of ability in the nursery and reception groups makes it difficult to meet their individual needs in these sessions. As a result of the good provision in the nursery and reception class, children have a successful start to school and, by the time they join Year 1, almost all reach the standards expected for their age and a few exceed them.

2. When pupils start Year 1, their overall attainment in English, mathematics and science is about that expected for their ages. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils' achievements are good in all three subjects so that, by Year 6, overall attainment is above average. The main reason for pupils' good progress is the good quality of teaching in all three classes. Pupils also play their part because they have very good attitudes to learning. Teachers have high expectations of the progress pupils should make, which are evident in the challenging tasks they set in lessons and the lively pace at which they expect pupils to work. In all three subjects, the curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that pupils develop their skills well. For example, good arrangements for teaching pupils to read result in almost all of them being fluent by the time they join Year 3, and these skills support the rest of their learning. In mathematics, teachers make good use of the recommended lesson format of the National Numeracy Strategy, so pupils' mental mathematical skills develop steadily, and their good understanding of number is a strong feature of their work. In science, an emphasis on investigations and experiments means that pupils learn about science by being 'scientists'. As a result, they have good science skills, which they apply to any new situation. Pupils' good achievements in all three subjects are supported by a consistent approach to teaching and learning throughout the school. This is because the staff work together very closely on planning the curriculum, sharing their skills, ideas and good practice.

3. Current attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. In national tests, however, results have varied significantly over recent years. For example, in 2001, results for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well above average for English, and in the top five per cent of schools nationally for mathematics and science. These were outstanding results. In 2002, however, results were average for English and science, and above average for mathematics. The English and science results were not as good as those gained by similar schools. In a small school, where only a few pupils take the national tests each year, such fluctuations are to be expected. The result of one child counts for a large percentage of the overall performance of the school, and just that one result can change the comparison with the national average significantly. More reliable is data showing the progress pupils make between their tests in Year 2 and their tests in Year 6. For the group of pupils who took the Year 6 tests in 2002, almost all made at least the expected progress and about half made better than expected progress.

4. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. The quality of teaching is particularly good in these subjects. In ICT, a recent improvement in resources, including a new suite of computers, has enabled teaching and learning to be more effective. Staff have increased their expertise. The pupils are very enthusiastic about their ICT work, and teachers make sure that ICT skills are used and developed across a number of other subjects. Improved standards in ICT are even more commendable because the last inspection found that pupils' achievements were unsatisfactory. In physical education, pupils develop their skills well because lessons, and extra-curricular activities, provide a broad range of experiences. In lessons, pupils concentrate well, work enthusiastically and co-operate with each other. They achieve well because they are taught skills and encouraged to practise them, whilst teachers increase challenge by varying the task.

5. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average, but they make good progress in lessons. The school makes good provision to support these children both educationally and emotionally. Work is well matched to their needs, so they make good gains in learning towards the targets set for them. They receive good support from both teachers and classroom assistants. The school does well to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs are fully included in lessons and all aspects of school life.

6. In subjects other than English and mathematics, 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 geography and history, the skills of the higher attaining pupils are not developed sufficiently by some of the factual 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 these subjects are satisfactory, not enough attention is being given to developing pupils' skills from their current starting point.

7. The presentation of pupils' work in their books is a weakness in many subjects. The quality of the content is usually good, but the setting out, handwriting and attention to correcting careless mistakes are not of the same high standard. The school has already identified presentation as a weakness, but has not yet done enough to ensure that there are consistent routines to support the good presentation of work. Pupils are not clear about expectations for good presentation and, where it is not good enough, they are not made aware of the shortcomings and how they can put them right. All the pupils are capable of better presentation, as seen in the best examples of their work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Overall, standards are **very good**.

Strengths

- Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are very good
- Pupils' behaviour is very good
- Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are very good
- There has been a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships since the last inspection

Areas for development

- More opportunities for pupils to have a voice and take responsibility in school life, so that their personal development is improved
- Wider understanding and respect for different values and beliefs

8. Pupils really enjoy school and are keen to learn. As a result, they are very pleased "when lessons are really exciting". They want to be in school, and good attendance reflects this enthusiasm for learning. They concentrate very well, particularly when encouraged to do their best with a task that challenges them. For example, in Year 3 and 4, pupils were so determined to try hard to improve their handwriting that it showed in their expressions and gritted teeth, as well as in the extreme care they took to form their letters. Year 5 and 6 pupils said that involvement in a lively range of activities makes a real difference to their enjoyment of subjects and learning. For example, they highlighted differences between numeracy and music lessons. They said that brisk mental maths, lively presentation of new work and help for all groups has motivated them strongly, whereas in music lessons they have been disheartened by too much time spent just watching a chosen few playing instruments. In the best lessons, such as a Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson about how to write clear instructions, pupils were so fired with enthusiasm that they did not want to stop work and continued discussing their ideas as they went out to play. This showed how very willing they are to learn.

9. Pupils behave very well. As parents indicated, behaviour in school and on visits is very good, with instances of taunting or bullying very rare and dealt with promptly. Pupils agree with their parents and say that occasional teasing is usually resolved quickly in circle time activities. Pupils said that they behave very well when lessons are stimulating and teaching is of high quality, but admit that they tend to fidget when bored. Just occasionally, pupils become restless, usually when individuals do not have

enough to do or, in the case of younger children, are still not clear about how listening, speaking and taking turns work in a classroom. During the inspection, behaviour around the school was very good because pupils were clear about what was expected and usually very keen to please. In the best lessons, their behaviour was impeccable because they were so involved in their work.

10. Relationships in the school are very good because pupils respond well to the very constructive example of teamwork set by the staff. Pupils have huge respect for the teachers and support staff, who try to bring out the best in them. Pupils play together very happily in the playground. They say that playtime has improved significantly since the introduction of outdoor activity equipment that allows them to practise balancing and climbing, or sit on carefully placed benches to chat. Pupils are very tolerant of adults' different ways of relating to them at lunchtime. They follow instructions from midday staff without fuss and chat very happily to adults who sit with them to eat lunch. In lessons, they are co-operative and very happy to work in pairs or groups to try to achieve a specific task. For example, in Year 3 and 4, pairs of pupils tested each other's instructions on how to build a house using plastic bricks, pointing out what did and did not make sense with good humour. Pupils look after each other and understand the effect of their actions. For example, when pupils are hurt accidentally, the person who caused the accident is quick to offer help, and the victim accepts an apology. Although they have great respect for each other's feelings, their respect for values and beliefs outside their everyday experience is not so strong because of gaps in the school's provision to promote understanding of other communities and traditions.

11. Pupils have jobs such as taking charge of the overhead projector and taped music in assembly. They take responsibility for helping to put away tables after lunch. Children organise themselves quite happily, in general at lunchtime. The school council is working out how to spend money raised in Friday tuck shop to buy small games and resources for the playground to make playtime even better. Pupils think that they could contribute to the life of the school even more, for instance through consultation about lunchtime routines and introducing 'friendship' or 'buddies' systems to ensure that everyone has a playmate when they want one. Inspectors agree that there is scope for pupils to take further responsibility and use initiative more regularly in school life.

12. Attitudes, behaviour and relationships have improved greatly since the last inspection when pupils' difficulties in working together were identified as the heart of a key issue. Now, pupils' responses are very good. Their great willingness to have a go and to do what is asked of them underpins their good achievement.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

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

Strengths

- In lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
- The pace and challenge of work was high in the best lessons seen
- Planning for lessons is of good quality
- 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
- Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs is good
- Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils' learning well

Areas for development

- The degree of challenge for both higher and lower attainers in the mixed-age classes

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some very strong features. A high proportion of very good and excellent teaching was seen in the Year 3 and 4 class. Throughout the school, teaching was at least good in 21 of the 28 lessons observed, very good in four and excellent in three. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

14. Teachers expect pupils to learn a lot in lessons. This is clear from the interesting activities they provide, their lively presentation of new concepts and ideas, and the way in which they encourage pupils to participate and work hard. For example, in an excellent English lesson for Years 3 and 4, the teacher began by exploring various ways of making plurals and, through rapid questioning, involved all the pupils in spotting a range of patterns. The teacher sustained the pace of the lesson very effectively saying, "Now I've got a little test that should take you five minutes at the most", which galvanised the pupils to get on quickly with the next task. The main activity, writing instructions, was introduced very clearly and, with excellent support from the teacher and the classroom assistant, all the pupils completed their work and grasped the point that instructions must be precise. Many of the lessons observed had similar strong features, which encouraged a high level of involvement from the pupils and helped them to be very successful in their learning. For example, in a very good English lesson for Years 1 and 2, it was the interesting and challenging task of writing an information leaflet, and the way the work was well matched to the needs of pupils of varying abilities, that resulted in all the pupils getting a lot done.

15. The very good and excellent teaching seen had organisation, pace and challenge that really brought the best out of the pupils. For example, an ICT lesson for Years 5 and 6, using the computer to program a sequence of traffic lights, was introduced rapidly and clearly so that the pupils could get on with their task quickly. Resources were very well organised and constant, targeted questions challenged the pupils to check and re-think their plans. The session at the end of the lesson was used skillfully for pupils to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in their own work. In a mathematics lesson for Years 3 and 4, a combination of very clear demonstration and highly effective questioning ensured that the pupils understood how to draw a bar graph accurately and could get on with their work rapidly. The extra challenge provided for the higher attaining pupils, to draw a graph with two strands of information, really made them think. Where teachers are very well organised and set a cracking pace for learning, the pupils have the capacity to respond. They sustain their concentration, work at the speed expected and make very good gains in learning.

16. Teachers plan individual lessons in some detail, based upon good longer-term plans. For example, sessions in the nursery and reception unit often include a wide variety of activities that are meticulously planned, so that adults can work most effectively with small groups of children and individuals. All the science lessons seen were very carefully planned to include discussion about previous work, explanation and demonstration of new work, practical activity, and a session to check learning. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils had to draw on their previous learning about the properties of materials so that they could work out how to separate a mixture of sand, salt, cocktail sticks, iron filings, marbles and chick peas. The skilful planning of the lesson helped the pupils use what they already knew to find successful solutions to the problem. Most lessons are equally well planned and teachers share the learning objective with pupils so that they know exactly what they are trying to achieve.

17. Lessons have a good range of methods and strategies that promote pupils' learning. Teachers work effectively with the class as a whole, explaining new concepts or leading lively question and answer sessions that extend pupils' learning. For example, in all numeracy lessons, good opening sessions were observed in which teachers developed pupils' skills in counting and calculating. In an English lesson for Year 5 and 6, the teacher used an extract from a story to raise questions about how the author portrays the characters. Good questioning kept the pupils very interested and they offered their ideas readily. Most lessons also involve some group or individual work, so pupils have the

opportunity to carry out a task independently or to work collaboratively with others. Practical activities in science are a particular strength, such as when Year 1 and 2 pupils measured the distance a toy car will travel down ramps of varying gradients. Other formats are also used successfully, such as whole-class lessons for French, music and physical education, and teachers ensure that these are lively and active. The good range of teaching methods keeps the pupils keen and develops a wide range of learning skills.

18. In response to good teaching, pupils try very hard with their work in lessons and 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 3 and 4 pupils measured the temperature of cooling baked potatoes and melting ice cubes whilst investigating the effects of insulators. They were very keen to get on with the experiment, but they concentrated whilst the teacher reminded them how to use the thermometer accurately and how to record their results. This was a very active session, but the pupils channelled their enthusiasm very well to make sure that they completed the task. Pupils also showed that, when the teacher sets a fast pace, they respond. The good quantity of work seen in most pupils' books indicates that they usually complete the work set in lessons. Pupils rise to a challenge in lots of learning situations. For example, Year 1 pupils really tried hard in a gymnastics lesson when the teacher asked them to make ever more difficult shapes with their bodies. The pupils' very good learning skills are a significant factor in supporting their progress.

19. The quality of teaching for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Teachers devise good individual education plans for these pupils, with specific targets, which are easily implemented and, as a result, very effective. In a number of lessons seen, pupils with special needs made good progress because teachers knew their pupils' needs well and taught in a lively, enthusiastic and challenging way. For example, in a literacy lesson for Years 3 and 4, the pupils' response to the teacher's enthusiastic and interesting teaching resulted in the achievement of the lesson objectives.

20. Teachers and classroom assistants know the children very well and capitalise on the very good relationships they have built with them to support them effectively in lessons. For example, the adults in the nursery and reception unit work very productively with the children, particularly when they have a small group carrying out a particular activity. In an English lesson for Years 1 and 2, it was the support of the three adults that enabled all the pupils to complete their tasks. Teachers and classroom assistants know when individual children need help, so those with special educational needs are particularly well supported and make good progress. The good relationships teachers have with their pupils also ensure that the management of pupils' behaviour is effective.

21. In most of the lessons observed, the work was well matched to the needs of the pupils, whatever their ability. However, 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. In subjects such as geography and history, it is not necessarily different content that is required, but varying challenges within the same work in terms of the skills that pupils are expected to use and develop.

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

Overall, the curriculum is **good**.

Strengths

- The overall quality and relevance of the curriculum
- The good range of extra-curricular activities
- The quality of the ICT curriculum
- Investigative work in mathematics and science
- Very good provision for pupils' moral development
- Good provision for pupils' personal and social development

Areas for development

- In some subjects, not enough emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills
- The range of experiences to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness is too narrow

22. The well-planned curriculum is enriched by additional features that provide a greater range of experiences. French and drama for all pupils contribute to a curriculum that is broader than is seen in many schools. In mathematics and science, investigative work that really catches the pupils' interest, is a particular strength. The recent acquisition of new computers and the good subject knowledge of the staff have helped the school make rapid progress in developing the ICT curriculum. Teachers make good links between subjects that enrich pupils' learning. For example, ICT is used effectively in different subjects, as seen when pupils in Years 5 and 6 used the internet to visit the St Lucia tourist board website to help them learn about the island and its climate. In science, pupils in Year 2 used data handling software to produce graphs showing the rate at which ice melted. Literacy and numeracy skills are also developed well as part of work in many subjects. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 were taught to read the scale on a thermometer accurately when measuring temperature. In a physical education lesson, pupils used ideas of reflection and symmetry in their activities. Special activities including a book week, arts' week and the visit of a storyteller enrich pupils' experiences. Year 6 pupils benefit from attending a life skills' day run by the emergency services. Pupils enjoy the wide range of lessons and, as a result, reach above average standards in a many subjects and activities.

23. Staff give of their time generously and have developed a good range of extra-curricular activities that further strengthens provision for French, science and physical education. These activities take place during and after school and are not restricted to pupils known to have a particular talent. The residential visit to Osmington Bay for Years 4, 5 and 6 is an activity pupils particularly enjoy, which allows them to enrich their experience of the curriculum through a range of exciting activities in a different location.

24. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its provision for ICT significantly. The curriculum now provides the full range of content expected by the National Curriculum. A policy and a comprehensive scheme of work have been introduced to ensure that pupils develop their skills step by step as they move through the school. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the curriculum, which has led to the production of a focused action plan to ensure further improvement. As a result of better opportunities for learning, by the end of Year 6, pupils now reach standards that are above national expectations.

25. There is a strong emphasis on investigation and enquiry in both science and mathematics, which promotes good learning. Pupils are encouraged to test ideas and to justify their explanations. Practical and first hand experiences and activities are used well to stimulate curiosity. Pupils are encouraged to articulate their thoughts and ideas through speaking and listening to each other. For example, pupils in Year 1 and 2 were given the practical task of testing the distance toy cars would travel down ramps of

varying steepness. Accurate measuring, debate about whether pushing the car was fair, and discussion about two sets of findings all made for far better learning than if the teacher had demonstrated the experiment.

26. In art, geography and history, the curriculum is not as well structured as in other subjects. Lessons largely focus on content rather than the skills the pupils should be developing. For example, in history, pupils are taught about past times without being encouraged to question the reliability of sources of evidence through investigative activities. In art, pupils focus on processes such as drawing, painting and modelling in isolation without being shown how they can be linked thematically to provide a richer experience. Although, inevitably, pupils do develop skills as part of their work in these subjects, teachers do not assess and monitor the development of these skills, so they cannot be sure what the pupils need to learn next. In subjects such as science, where teachers have particular expertise, they know how to develop pupils' skills steadily.

27. As parents said, the school fosters pupils' personal development well. Overall provision has improved since the last inspection because of a stronger focus on productive relationships and high standards of behaviour within a friendly, caring community. This has resulted in very careful attention to pupils' moral development, particularly in terms of knowing the difference between acceptable and unacceptable conduct. The school's values and ethos are obvious in very clear expectations of behaviour and in the way teachers encourage pupils to follow their example by listening, helping, doing their best, noticing when someone is successful and smiling. As a result, pupils are very clear about right and wrong, even if they make mistakes from time to time. During an assembly, pupils were told that daffodils close to the school had been picked and that a local resident was very upset. The harm caused by this action was explained simply, without being heavy-handed. As a result, pupils recognised that this was wrong. Later, older pupils said that they were upset because they had been involved in planting bulbs and understood the sense of loss very well.

28. The school has planned for more systematic development of pupils' personal and social skills through personal and social education lessons, including chances to sit in a circle and take turns to share experiences and concerns thoughtfully. Pupils appreciate these opportunities to sort out minor arguments and unhappiness openly. They value the happy atmosphere in the school, which helps them to feel at ease with other people and ready to learn more about teamwork and other points of view. Everyday routines such as registration, the organisation of assemblies and lunchtimes and regular use of group work help pupils to understand how to get on with others in school and to think before saying or doing something.

29. The school provides useful experiences for spiritual and cultural development through the curriculum, as is expected. Chances are missed to celebrate success stories and good deeds, as there is no special place to highlight these in the foyer or corner of the hall. In classrooms, wonderful examples of personal goals and special experiences that give pupils a sense of what is extraordinary about life are obscured or out of sight. The curriculum is not planned so that it helps pupils to see how one piece of work relates to another in order to build understanding of different cultures and beliefs, step by step. This is true of assemblies and religious education, as well as in other subjects. As a result, pupils do not understand how a display of images of the significance of light in many religions, drawn with computer software, relates to other work they are doing, for example in science or geography. This is because there are no displays nearby of related work, books or artefacts to celebrate similarity and diversity.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The school provides a caring community within which pupils are well known to staff
- There are very effective procedures for encouraging good behaviour and discouraging bullying
- There have been significant improvements in procedures that ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety

Area for development

- Information gathered from assessing pupils' attainment is not used systematically to ensure that future work is challenging

30. At the last inspection, the lack of policies and formal procedures for child protection, health and safety, behaviour and attendance made this area of the school's work unsatisfactory in spite of a caring atmosphere. Rapid improvement has turned things round, as all these policies are now in place and used effectively. This reflects the high priority given to pupils' well being, which is clear in the school's aim to make pupils feel happy, secure and confident. Teamwork among staff and a strong sense of community contribute to a caring ethos within which pupils are helped and guided. This is because teachers and support staff know pupils well and have a good idea of when they can manage on their own and where they need help or attention. For example, teachers check to see who has missed breakfast and, as a result, might not be able to concentrate for long.

31. The school has worked particularly hard to improve standards of behaviour and pupils' skills in working together. Staff ensure that expectations are consistent, that rules are understood, and that pupils come to recognise their responsibilities to each other. As pupils are so well known to staff, any changes in behaviour or attendance are noticed quickly. The school acts promptly to ensure that these do not affect progress adversely. For example, the governing body was swift to act two years ago when absence rates increased dramatically as a result of excessive numbers of term time holidays. Absent pupils missed far too many literacy and numeracy lessons, in particular, which made it very hard for teachers to ensure that everyone reached the standards expected. Active discouragement of term time holidays and checks on lateness have resulted in better attendance.

32. There is currently a temporary assessment co-ordinator, owing to a number of recent staffing changes. Although a good amount of information is gathered about pupils' attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science, this is not put to good use in tracking pupils' progress over time. Consequently it is difficult for teachers to say exactly what pupils already know, understand and can do, so that they can plan work as the most appropriate level of difficulty. Little systematic assessment is carried out in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The introduction of target booklets is potentially a good development as is the weekly curriculum evaluations, but it is not clear how these will be used to improve provision for pupils. Assessment information is not used well enough to match the work to the needs of all pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

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

Strengths

- Parents are pleased because their children are happy at school and making good progress
- Parents are active in school life
- The school provides good information for parents

Areas for development

- Reporting on pupils' progress
- For some parents, the closeness of the partnership between home and school, including consultation

33. At the last inspection, partnership with parents was being rebuilt after a difficult period. Now, parents are ready to recommend the school to others because their children have settled in well, are happy, and achieve good standards. Parents value opportunities to be part of the life of the school, for instance as governors and active members of the Friends of Bayford School, which organises well supported social and fund-raising events regularly. Attendance at parents' evenings is very high, which shows that parents take a keen interest in how their children are getting on. Parents appreciate the chance to come to weekly assemblies where children show their good work to everyone. Good links between home and school are based on shared community spirit and parents' willingness to be involved with what goes on in and after school. Parents support homework such as reading and spelling conscientiously, which helps their children's learning, confidence and the standards they achieve.

34. Parents receive a mix of good quality written and oral information. The school sends home a helpful outline of what is to be taught every half term, plus other useful information, including regular newsletters, to try to keep parents up to date with its life and work. The prospectus is lively and informative. It makes a strong commitment to working closely with parents. The governors' annual report is less interesting, with nothing to illustrate pupils' achievements or highlights of the school year. Parents receive regular information about progress through consultation evenings linked with good summary reports where targets are identified clearly. The annual written reports give so much information that it is hard for a parent to judge exactly what the child has learned, whether it is appropriate and what steps the child needs to take next to do as well, or even better. Clearer information is shared at parents' evenings.

35. As parents come from such a wide area, it is particularly important that the school does all it can to keep them well informed and involved in its activities. In general, it is successful in this because parents know when to expect the newsletter and they are welcome to visit and to help out in school. Some parents, however, would welcome more consultation and a closer working relationship with the school so that all feel fully involved and able to support their children's learning. The school has scope to make even better use of homework books and of technology so that parents who live at a distance, or cannot visit regularly, feel involved and in touch through regular journal entries, e-mail or a school website.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

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

Strengths

- The staff and governors work together as an effective and committed team
- Subject and department co-ordinators provide strong leadership in raising standards
- The aims and values of the school are successful in enhancing pupils' learning
- The governors have a clear view of strengths and areas for development
- Financial planning supports overall strategic development

Area for development

- Leadership to ensure the school has a clear educational direction
- Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and using the information to plan for future improvement

36. The staff and governors of the school have been successful in building a team whose common purpose is to develop an effective whole-school approach to improvement. There is a strong team spirit, which has had a positive effect on raising standards and improving the quality of education provided for the pupils. For example, efforts to raise standards in science by placing a greater emphasis on experiment and investigation have been followed through consistently in all classes, and have been successful. The headteacher manages the school in an organised and efficient manner. Together with staff and governors, she promotes a caring, supportive and ordered environment in which all pupils are equally valued, helping them to establish and maintain good relationships. An example of this is how the school council enables pupils to contribute in their own way to the day-to-day life of the school. The teamwork demonstrated by the school community has been a crucial factor in the good improvement made since the last inspection.

37. Each teacher has responsibility for the co-ordination of two or three subject areas. They are developing a good understanding of existing strengths and weaknesses, and this has enabled them to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. Alongside the deputy headteacher, they support one another effectively in planning lessons, monitoring pupils' recorded work and setting clear targets closely linked to improving performance. In the foundation subjects of ICT and physical education, priorities have been established and this has also led to an improvement in pupils' achievement and the standards they reach.

38. The school successfully fulfils its aims and values therefore enhancing pupils' learning. It provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils thrive and prosper and are encouraged to play their part as young citizens of the school. This breeds the very good attitudes to learning that were seen in many lessons during the inspection and supports pupils' good achievements whilst they are at Bayford. The school says that it wants its pupils to, "develop enquiring minds and enthusiasm for learning" and, on the evidence lessons seen during the inspection, it is successful.

39. The governing body provides good support and is committed to maintaining the school's strengths and improving it further. Governors are well organised, have developed a clear understanding of their role and recognise the strengths and areas for development of the school. There is a strong sense of partnership with the headteacher and staff. They work effectively in committees dealing with issues relating to curriculum, finance, staffing and premises where their considerable expertise is of particular benefit. They receive presentations and reports from the headteacher and visit lessons in order to gain a perspective on teaching and learning. The analysis of the results of a questionnaire sent to parents has also helped them begin the process of identifying priorities for development. Good financial planning is shown in the way that governors carefully evaluate whether money is being spent well, for example by checking how effectively classroom assistants are deployed. This evaluation helps governors to make important strategic decisions. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are beginning to play their role as critical friends effectively.

40. The headteacher, staff and governors are well aware of the strengths of the school and the areas where development is needed. However, the relatively new headteacher is not yet providing the leadership needed to move the school forward. It has been unfortunate that family illness has prevented her from tackling the role in the way she would have wished, and all members of the school community recognise the very difficult personal circumstances that have influenced her first year in the job. In addition, leadership is not supported well by the school improvement plan because it is not an effective tool for development. It lacks a perspective beyond the current year to show that the school is taking a strategic view of where it needs to go in a planned and systematic way. Governors have had a limited involvement in drawing up the plan, which means that, in this aspect of their work, they have missed out on opportunities to shape priorities for school improvement and to make a greater contribution in leading the school forward.

41. Although there is a strong commitment to raising standards, insufficient attention is paid to the systematic monitoring and evaluation of pupils' attainment, the quality of teaching and learning and the organisation of the curriculum. The monitoring that is carried out is not focused enough to identify the causes of weaknesses precisely so that an appropriate plan of action can be devised to rectify them. This is particularly apparent in art, design and technology, geography, history and religious education, where action plans are not yet focused enough in order to raise standards further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- ◆ Ensure that pupils of varying 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 6, 21, 32, 64, 71)

- ◆ Improve the presentation of pupils' work in their books, as planned, by:
 - ensuring the pupils are very clear about the standard of presentation that is expected;
 - establishing classroom routines that help pupils to remember how they ought to present their work;
 - reviewing marking practice to ensure that pupils know when they have presented something really well, when there are weaknesses, and how these can be put right;
 - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting.

(paragraphs 7, 58, 63, 70, 85)

- ◆ Improve the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of its work, by:

- sharpening the focus of strategies to monitor and evaluate the work of the school;
- identifying areas for improvement precisely, and being clear about what will constitute success;
- pursuing only a manageable number of initiatives at any one time;
- monitoring the progress towards improvement systematically.

(paragraphs 41, 67, 73, 77, 82, 86)

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.

- Ensure that all those who lead the school develop a clear vision for the future. (40)
- In all subjects, improve procedures for tracking the development of pupils' skills. (26, 32, 76, 82, 85-86)
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of cultural diversity. (10, 29, 100)
- Improve communication with parents, particularly those who live at a distance from school. (35)
- Improve resources for religious education. (100)

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

16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	4	14	7			
Percentage	11	14	50	25			

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 about five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Nursery

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	8	89
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	15

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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	4	6	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	7	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (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)

* Figures not included because the group size is 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	10	4	14

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (92)	86 (100)	93 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (77)	93 (100)	86 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census <i>Should be pupils of compulsory school age totaling 89</i>
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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
86		
1		
2		

Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
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: Y1– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	25

Education support staff: Y1– Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	81.5
Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery and reception unit	
Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	53
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	321758.33
Total expenditure	327356.94
Expenditure per pupil	3117.69
Balance brought forward from previous year	18092.63
Balance carried forward to next year	12494.02

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

	39%
Number of questionnaires sent out	74
Number of questionnaires returned	29

Percentage of responses in each category

Totals may not add to 100%, owing to rounding

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
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My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	45	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	7	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	32	14	0	0
The teaching is good.	86	3	0	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	21	21	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	14	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	31	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	29	21	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	29	14	7	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	34	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	39	21	0	4

Fourteen parents attended the meeting and were positive about most aspects of the school's work. A few said that they do not live near the school, but had chosen it because it is a good school. Almost all are pleased with the progress their children are making, but a few feel that children in Year 2 are catching up following a disrupted year. Most parents feel they are kept well informed about what their children will be learning in lessons, but a few said they had not yet received the information for the current term. Parents agreed that consultations with teachers and annual reports provide good information about their children's progress. If there are problems, parents said that the school generally responds sympathetically and quickly. Parents said that links with school are largely good. A few help in school, and many support the work of the school through the parent/teacher association. Parents said that the school promotes positive values, and behaviour is very good. Parents at the meeting were generally happy with the amount and type of homework. A few feel that it is inconsistent for children in Year 3 and 4, and too much for Year 5 and 6 even though the teacher is flexible when it is not completed. Parents said that the school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. Children make a successful start to school in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception unit). The staff provide a well-planned and relevant curriculum, which helps the children to learn a good range of skills. The children are confident, interested and clearly enjoy being at school. The adults work well as a team, organising, leading and supporting children's learning effectively. This is a more positive picture than reported at the time of the last inspection. The unit has 16 nursery children (three and four year olds) attending mornings only, and 13 reception children (four and five year olds)

attending full time. Good procedures ensure a smooth start to school. Parents say that opportunities to visit the unit before their children start school are very helpful, and ensure a settled beginning. Staff quickly assess children's attainment, and provide appropriate support for any special educational needs.

44. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with good features. As a result, children's achievements are sound in all areas of learning, and good for their personal and social development, and in communication, language and literacy. Work is planned meticulously, and adults translate the plans into a good curriculum that provides lots of opportunities for learning. For example, each morning begins with a time when children can 'plan' what they want to do from a wide range of activities. In one session observed, this included making 'shakers' with plastic cups and various beans, going shopping in the 'supermarket', throwing beanbags into a hoop target, and making pictures with wooden shapes hammered into a cork board. Learning was good because each child was appropriately challenged and adults were able to spend quality time with individuals and small groups. The 'review' element of these sessions is particularly effective, enabling younger children to discuss what they have been doing and older children to write about their experiences. Adults also plan group sessions and, for the reception children, these might be literacy or numeracy. Whilst learning in these sessions is satisfactory, the wide range of pupils' attainment, and the short period of time available, results in less learning than where adults interact with children individually or in small groups. Relationships between adults and children are very good, with lots of praise and encouragement that builds children's confidence.

45. The Foundation Stage curriculum, recommended for this age group, is implemented well. Each activity has a central purpose, but staff exploit opportunities to develop a wide range of abilities, such as encouraging children to discuss their work, thus developing communication skills. A few of the older reception children have already reached the standard expected when they join Year 1 (the Early Learning Goals) and almost all the children will do so by the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

46. The personal and social skills of the youngest children vary significantly. Many are confident and form relationships with adults and other children easily, but some are less mature. Whatever children's starting points, the positive approach of the staff and interesting activities help them to become confident and motivated learners. The nursery children show growing independence in the way that they choose activities and concentrate on them. Routine activities such as 'snack time' and 'tidy up time' provide opportunities for sharing, helping and being part of the community. The oldest children offer their ideas confidently and concentrate on the task in hand. For example, in the 'review' time, they discuss what they have been doing during the morning, then draw and write about their favourite activity. In a session when the reception children read 'Farmer Duck' with the teacher, they offered lots of ideas for sentences to describe the pictures and settled very well to their own writing tasks. Children have good relationships with adults and other children. For example, a group working in the supermarket shared out the jobs sensibly: "She's the customer and I'm taking the money". Children understand the rules of the classroom and know when something is wrong. For example, two boys accidentally knocked over a plant pot in the outside area, but were quick to admit their mistake and helped an adult to put things right. The oldest children's independence and self-help skills are very good, as was seen in art activities when they put on aprons, organised their own materials, and tidied up at the end.

Communication, language and literacy

47. Some of the younger children are already very articulate, but a significant minority has weaker communication skills. The staff ensure that children's achievements are good in this area of learning by incorporating talk within all activities. For example, a group of children made pastry 'purses' containing jam as part of their work about the festival Purim, and there was lots of discussion about the

ingredients and what happened to them as they were mixed. As a result of the constant emphasis on speaking and listening, the oldest children are good communicators. Most of them express their ideas clearly, and they listen well to adults and to each other. Children make good progress in the early skills of reading and writing. The highest attainers are already reading simple text confidently, and most of the older children read successfully a simple story with repetitive text. All the older children have a good early knowledge of letter sounds. In writing, the oldest children's 'review' books show the good progress they have made during the year. Many started with 'invented writing' but most now write a simple sentence and are on track to exceed the expected standard in this area of learning.

Mathematical development

48. Children make satisfactory progress in this area. The younger children show the expected skills in early counting and sorting. Through a good range of activities, the staff ensure that the children's mathematical vocabulary develops steadily, as was seen when children were filling containers with beads, learning about 'full' and 'empty', and an adult asked for one that was half full. All of the older children count objects reliably to 10 and beyond. In one session seen, the older children counted in 10s to 100 and then worked with coins, deciding how they could pay for something worth 9p in a variety of ways. It was particularly noticeable that, as part of many activities, the staff are very skilful in encouraging the children to count, measure and look for patterns so that mathematical development is enhanced.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

49. Good planning of the curriculum helps children to make steady progress in this area of their learning. For example, during the first half of the term, work based on the theme 'Clothes' led to many opportunities for 'finding out'. In science, children thought about different types of clothes to match the weather, and made waterproof hats from a range of materials, testing them to see which was the best. Dressing up in clothes from around the world helped the children to understand other cultures. Washing clothes by hand, playing in the 'launderette' and the class fashion show all added to children's learning. In history, children looked at old and new toys and then visited a toy museum. The current theme of 'Festivals', with a strong accent on cooking, is particularly good for helping children to understand something about religions and cultures. Incidental opportunities for fascination about how things work occur all the time, such as the group of children engrossed with 'spinners' they had made from small plastic bricks.

Creative development

50. Children develop their creative skills well through a range of activities. Finger painting of blossom, in shades of pink, celebrating a Japanese festival, is an example of carefully completed and attractive art work. Splatter patterns typical of 'Holi' show that children are given opportunities to be expressive, with creative results. In a music session, children joined in singing well-known songs and matched their actions to the music. A few children were seen playing the musical instruments on display, but too little emphasis is given to this activity. Play also develops the children's creative skills, such as in the supermarket, where one child was in the 'office', answering the telephone, dealing with the paperwork and making price stickers for the goods.

Physical development

51. Children make steady progress in their physical development. Activities in the outdoor area, such as throwing and catching, and physical education lessons in the hall, help develop children's co-ordination and movement. Few children were seen playing on the outdoor climbing equipment, which is rather basic and lacks challenge. Activities in the classroom also develop the children's control of finer movements such as making pictures using wooden shapes, hammer and nails, writing with pencils or managing their own clothes.

ENGLISH

52. The results of national tests have improved since the last inspection, even though the school's performance fluctuates from year to year, owing to the small number of pupils tested. For example, in 2002, results in reading and writing for pupils at the end of Year 2 dipped following continuous improvement since 1999. At the end of Year 6, results were close to the national average, but the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was below average. Inspection evidence showed that current standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are above national expectations. Pupils are achieving well and are on track to gain higher results than last year because the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is lower than last year. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching they receive, the effective use of classroom assistants who support lower attaining pupils, and the clear targets set for pupils in order to help move them forward.

53. Attainment in speaking and listening is above national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work and with great authority about the books they are reading and their respective authors. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were happy to explain the techniques they applied in a design and technology task involving pop-up books. Older pupils talked with great confidence when inspectors joined them at lunchtime, asking questions about inspectors' activities. Pupils of all ages listen well to others. They think carefully before making response, for example when discussing how to draw up a list of instructions to show others how to make a musical instrument. Good use of questioning enables pupils to think of different ways to express their views and ideas. Often they build on the views of others in classroom discussions and have the confidence to express an independent opinion or discuss alternative views with teachers.

54. By the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment in reading is above national expectations. Pupils enjoy reading, and most have positive attitudes towards books. Current achievement in reading in Years 1 and 2 is good, with the majority of pupils attaining expected levels and a significant number with above average reading standards for their age. Pupils handle books carefully and enjoy the stories that are read to them. The youngest pupils use picture clues and prediction as well as their knowledge of phonics to help them tackle new words. Year 2 pupils read with accuracy and fluency. They use appropriate expression because they understand the function of different aspects of punctuation, for example exclamation marks and questions marks. They recognise common words and continue to build upon the good understanding of letter sounds demonstrated by Year 1 pupils. They also exhibit good self-correction skills when they realise they have misread a word.

55. In Years 3 to 6, most pupils read with increasing fluency and continue to make progress beyond that expected for their ages. This is because they have a good knowledge of letter sounds, pay close attention to punctuation to help meaning, and draw on their own experiences to enrich the reading. One Year 6 pupil recognised that a very long opening sentence was impossible to read unless careful attention was given to its punctuation. When reading the opening pages of a new book, another pupil drew upon his knowledge of French to recognise that a number of place names which sounded French might mean that the story was set in France. By the end of Year 6, most pupils talk in depth about a preference of authors, and a range of genres including poetry. They are also developing skills of skimming and scanning, which they use to good effect when researching information using the small but well organised school library.

56. Standards of attainment in writing are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and 6, and pupils achieve well. This is due to good teaching and carefully targeted work planned to help most pupils make good progress. Writing skills are taught effectively. All staff who work with pupils have a very clear idea of pupils' readiness to take on the next challenge. As a result, lower and middle attaining pupils are stretched. However, the higher attaining pupils do not always have enough

opportunities to extend their learning beyond that with which they are already comfortable.

57. Year 1 and 2 pupils write using a varied vocabulary, for a wide range of purposes, including letters, lists of daily routines, recipes, information leaflets and reporting a design and technology investigation. Evidence from pupils' books shows how writing becomes more competent and accurate for middle and lower attaining pupils as they practise their skills in literacy lessons, and across the curriculum. Year 3 and 4 pupils continue to make good progress. For example, they devise a set of instructions clearly explaining to the reader what a Caribbean shaker is and how it can be made. Most pupils take notes when listening to their teacher describe the process of making the instrument, writing down only the key elements of the description. In Years 5 and 6, pupils refine and improve their knowledge of different types of writing including reviews, instructions and verse. By Year 6, the middle and higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of the power of print as exemplified by their writing that tries to persuade people about a point of view. Pupils write for a range of purposes in different subjects. For example, in geography, pupils write imaginatively about St. Lucia and the impact of hurricanes on the island and its people. They also write persuasively about the possible repercussions the development of St. Lucia might have on the environment.

58. As was the case at the last inspection, a significant weakness is the standard of pupils' presentation of work and their handwriting. Although work is always completed, pupils do not pay sufficient attention to the way in which work is presented. Headings are sometimes underlined and sometimes not. The overall standard of writing is sometimes spoiled by an over-zealous use of crossing out, rather than a more subtle approach, such as underlining or using one line to cross out. Handwriting is also weak, and many Year 5 and 6 pupils are not yet using a fluent and joined hand.

59. The quality of teaching is good overall, and was excellent in a two of the lessons observed. Teachers plan carefully and ensure that the different elements of the subject are taught well. Very good use is made of shared and guided reading and writing to demonstrate the skills needed to tackle an unfamiliar piece of text. Pupils are encouraged to bring their own experience to help them understand these texts. The excellent teaching seen really challenged the pupils because lively discussion was accompanied by high expectations of the amount and quality of work to be completed. All members of staff respond sensitively to pupils with special needs. These pupils make good progress because teachers know their needs well and teach in a lively, enthusiastic and challenging way. For example, in a lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher ensured that their response to her teaching resulted in the achievement of the lesson objectives because they were not diverted by inappropriate expectations related to presentation and handwriting. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and revisited at the end of each lesson to check pupils' progress and understanding.

60. Management of the subject across the school is good because the co-ordinator sets a good example through her teaching and strong leadership. She has improved the assessment, record-keeping and tracking systems for pupils, so staff are beginning to identify areas of under-achievement or lack of progress, such as in handwriting. Resources have improved through the purchase of large texts and sets of books for shared and guided reading.

MATHEMATICS

61. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved since the last inspection, but have fluctuated from year to year, owing to the small number of pupils tested. For example, in 2001, results

were in the top five per cent of schools nationally, but in 2002 they were below average because, whilst all the pupils reached the expected level of attainment, Level 2, a below average proportion gained the higher Level 3. Results at the end of Year 6 have also risen, but there has been less fluctuation. In 2001, results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. In 2002 they were above the national average, largely because almost all the pupils reached the expected level of attainment. The results were average compared with those gained by schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

62. Inspection evidence shows that for pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 standards of attainment are above national expectations. All pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of numbers, which allows them to carry out a range of calculations using addition and subtraction up to and beyond 20. The higher attainers are confident working with numbers to 100 and beyond. All pupils recognise odd and even numbers, and multiply single digit numbers by 2 and 10 understanding that this is like counting in 2s and 10s. Pupils measure using standard measuring units and group objects according to weight. For example, they know that a book and a pencil case are measured in grams but a television and a bicycle are measured in kilograms. They carry out simple investigations looking for patterns in numbers and shapes.

63. In Year 6, pupils' understanding of numbers is a strong feature of their work. They are quick and accurate when answering questions mentally, for example identifying common multiples of pairs of numbers. They work out ways of testing if a large number is divisible by a single-digit number, and recognise prime numbers and their properties. Pupils understand proportion, the relationship between fractions and decimals, and work out percentages of amounts. Most pupils measure and construct angles to the nearest degree and calculate the value of angles within shapes from given information. A strong emphasis is placed on testing ideas and encouraging the use of investigation when solving problems. The quality of presentation of pupils' work is, however, weak throughout the school.

64. Pupils start school with average attainment and their overall achievement is good, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Lower attaining pupils achieve well because of the good support they are given by teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils of average attainment achieve well because the work is well matched to their needs. Higher attaining pupils also achieve well, but they are not always given work of sufficient challenge. The school has already identified this issue and has begun to plan appropriately challenging work for all pupils.

65. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and has improved since the last inspection. In one lesson seen, the quality of teaching was excellent. Basic skills are well taught and lessons are planned carefully to ensure pupils' understanding is built upon progressively. For example, in a lesson for Years 3 and 4, activities to improve pupils' understanding of how data can be represented and more easily interpreted were well matched to their varying needs. Excellent use was made of the work pupils had done previously, and tasks were skilfully used to prepare them for their next lesson. All staff have very good relationships with pupils and provide considerable support for learning. Very good use of time ensures all pupils make good progress in lessons, and their very good attitudes to work makes a significant contribution to their learning. For example, a Year 5 and 6 lesson about multiples began at a very brisk pace with pupils eagerly recalling multiplication and division facts. This led quickly to the main activity where well-matched tasks were set for pupils of differing abilities. The pupils worked hard to keep to the time targets set for each part of the lesson. Good use is made of lesson introductions to practise mental mathematical skills and lessons are concluded very well enabling pupils to consolidate their learning and think about how it will be extended in their next lesson. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. A good range of resources was seen in use during the inspection which included good use of ICT to process data and produce graphs. Pupils in Years 5 and

6 used calculators well to check their answers when working out ways of testing if a large number is divisible by a single-digit number. Homework provides good support for pupils' learning.

66. The curriculum is well planned and covers a good range of work. In many lessons, good use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy materials to provide structured and challenging work for pupils. Booster classes are used effectively to help some pupils make better progress. Numeracy skills are well used and developed through work in other subjects such as science, physical education, literacy and music, where examples of counting and measuring were seen. Good systems for assessing pupils' work are in place so that weaker aspects of pupils' skills are identified and tackled. A recent development has been the introduction of key objectives booklets which list targets for individual pupils. These are monitored and reviewed on a termly basis and are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

67. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a good understanding through her monitoring work of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and has a clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards further. Weaker aspects of the subject have been identified and focused action has been planned to remedy these. The school is well placed to build on the good improvement since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

68. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 have risen since the last inspection. In 2002, all pupils reached the expected Level 2 of attainment, which was very high compared with the national average, and a fifth gained the higher Level 3, which was about average. Results for pupils at the end of Year 6 rose steadily to 2001 when they were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. In 2002, however, results were close to the national average, owing to the fact that the year group had a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs than is usual for the school. Fluctuations in the performance of small schools are to be expected because the results of a few children can make a significant difference to comparison with national averages.

69. Inspection evidence showed that attainment in the current Year 2 is above average because all the pupils are reaching the expected standard and a few are exceeding it. For example, in the lesson observed, all the Year 2 pupils could explain how the steepness of a ramp affects the distance a toy car will travel. With support from adults, in two groups, they carried out the experiment fairly, measured the distances carefully and recorded the results. The higher attaining pupils explained that the results of the two groups were different because the cars used were not the same. Pupils' past work showed that an emphasis on investigating and experimenting is having a beneficial effect on developing scientific skills. For example, pupils tested a range of materials to find out the one that is most waterproof, and placed ice cubes in various locations to see which would melt first. Although these pupils are not at the stage where they write long conclusions, they clearly show a grasp of scientific method and are well on the way to being able to devise their own fair tests. The prevalence of worksheets, noted at the last inspection, has now ceased.

70. Attainment in Year 6 is above national expectations. Once again, almost all the pupils show knowledge and skills at the expected level, and a few provide more detailed explanations for their findings. In the lesson seen, pupils had a mixture of sand, salt, cocktail sticks, iron filings, marbles and chick peas, and were set the challenge of working out how to separate them. All the pupils planned ways of using the equipment available, and were aware that salt could be retrieved from solution by evaporating the water. Pupils' past work shows a good emphasis on investigation, for example being scrupulously fair when setting up an experiment to find out how quickly water evaporates in different locations. A weakness is that findings are not always explained in detailed conclusions, drawing on

pupils' scientific knowledge, a task that would challenge the higher attainers more fully. The presentation of work does not match the quality of the content.

71. When pupils start Year 1, the standards they attain are average overall. In relation to these levels of attainment, pupils' achievements are good across the school. For example, work in Year 1 and 2 on classifying materials is built upon well when Year 3 and 4 devise a test to find out which material is most hardwearing. This is extended further in Year 5 and 6 when pupils look at the air content of different types of soils. A minor weaknesses is that the pupils generally carry out the same work and, in some instances, this is not made challenging enough for the highest attainers. The school has plans to address this when the scheme of work is reviewed. Pupils complete a good quantity and range of work, and apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of situations. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs make good progress in lessons, as seen in Year 3 and 4 when pupils measured the temperature of cooling baked potatoes, and melting ice cubes, working accurately and recording their results.

72. In the three lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good overall, and this was confirmed by an examination of pupils' work. Lessons are planned carefully, with a good balance and range of activities, which catch pupils' interest and encourage them to question and explore. All the lessons observed had practical activities that motivated the pupils effectively. Basic skills are taught well, such as when Year 3 and 4 pupils learnt how to use a thermometer correctly. Teachers ask searching questions and pose problems for pupils, which really make them think. For example, teachers are constantly encouraging pupils to predict what might happen ... "What do you think will happen to the temperature of the baked potato?" ... and then to see if they are right. The pupils are inquisitive and make a good effort with their work. Teachers make sure that pupils learn the correct scientific vocabulary which, in turn, makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. The very good teaching seen in Year 3 and 4 had a pace and attention to detail that kept the pupils thinking and working constantly. Accurate use of a thermometer and careful recording of results both made a very good contribution to developing pupils' numeracy skills.

73. The curriculum is well planned, on a two-year cycle, to take account of the mixed-age classes. The science club further extends learning opportunities. Very good leadership and management of the subject ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school. The way in which the work consistently focuses on pupils using and applying their knowledge is impressive. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are adequate, and there are plans for a system that will help teachers to make best use of assessment information to plan work that meets pupils' needs. The use of information and communication technology to support science work has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good grasp of strengths in teaching and learning, and areas for development, because she regularly monitors teachers' planning, pupils' work and test results. She has, however, had too little opportunity to monitor lessons. The current action plan is a good basis for future improvement. The school grounds, which include a range of natural environments, are a very good resource for studying science. Since the last inspection, all aspects of the subject have improved significantly, including standards of attainment. The school is well placed to raise standards still further.

OTHER SUBJECTS

74. 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	1	0	0	1	2	2	1

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

75. As at the last inspection, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, they reach standards that are close to those expected for their ages. Pupils' past work shows a particular emphasis upon drawing and painting, occasional collage, but very little work in three dimensions, fabric or printing. Nevertheless, pupils experience a variety of techniques, learn skills, and focus on different aspects of art, such as colour, line and texture. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use pastels to good effect when making observational drawings of toys. They look closely at the texture of objects and experiment with colour to match different tones. Tonal quality was also explored when creating weavings using a variety of different materials. Strips of material were selected according to the shade and woven together to produce a finished piece of work. This activity enabled pupils to explore colour and develop skills that required careful manipulation.

76. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' drawing and painting skills are well developed and are used effectively in other subjects. For example, pupils painted scenes from St. Lucia. Once again, colour and line were used effectively, producing lively Caribbean landscapes. Good drawing skills were also evident in posters designed by pupils advertising the recreational merits of a holiday in St. Lucia. Although there are isolated examples of work with different media, for example batik or clay, opportunities to work with a variety of materials are too narrow. This means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to experiment with techniques in some aspects of the subject, such as printing, and their skills are not developed steadily in all types of art work.

77. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall. Although the co-ordinator has not been able to observe lessons, she is monitoring standards through the examination of teachers' planning and evaluation of finished work. As a result of this, the need to introduce a skills-based scheme of work for Years 3 to 6 has been identified and is part of the school development plan.

DESIGN and TECHNOLOGY

78. As at the last inspection, pupils' achievements are satisfactory across the school and, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, they reach standards that are close to those expected for their ages. Pupils design, make and evaluate an interesting range of products and use a variety of tools and materials.

79. Pupils undertake at least one design task each year, often more. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have made 'pop-up' storybooks that include features designed to be pulled, pushed and turned. A range of

materials and techniques have been used, including card and paper, split pins, folding and joining. Pupils explain what they have made and describe the materials used. Some of the higher attaining pupils explain how each mechanism works and suggest ways in which the books can be improved.

80. In Years 3 and 4, pupils made photograph or picture frames. They evaluated a range of frames, looking closely at their construction and examining the way in which the corners had been joined. The pupils constructed their own frames using wood and card, creating a finished product that was both effective in its purpose and finished attractively. In Years 5 and 6, pupils made hand puppets. These are of good quality, showing design strengths as well as skilled use of materials, scissors and needles. The standard of recorded work is good throughout the school, with the design process strongly represented in booklets that illustrate pupils' ideas, proposed outcomes and evaluations. These booklets clearly illustrate the development of a design through a series of well thought out stages.

81. In the one lesson seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Year 1 and 2 pupils tested a variety of materials such as paint, fabric and cellophane, in order to select an appropriate finish for a vehicle they were designing. The activity was well planned, with all the necessary resources to hand, and the teacher guided the pupils carefully through each stage of the process, asking them why they had selected a particular finish and how it had been applied. As a result, the pupils developed specific skills such as cutting and joining, as well as producing interesting finishes for a vehicle. A weakness was that the teacher did not insist upon a high enough level of concentration and effort so some pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable.

82. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall. As yet, there are no whole-school systems for assessing pupils' progress or improving the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. However, the co-ordinator is beginning to monitor standards through teachers' planning and evaluation of finished work. Priorities for improvement have been identified and have been included in an updated action plan.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

83. As at the last inspection, pupils' attainment in both geography and history is close to national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory across the school but, based on the work seen and discussions with Year 6 pupils, the range and depth of work is better in geography than history. Only a relatively small amount of curriculum time is devoted to each of these subjects. As a result, pupils learn facts about places in other parts of the world and things that have happened in the past, but they do not spend sufficient time developing geographical and historical skills. For example, whilst the oldest pupils have learnt about the Ancient Greeks, they are not sure about the sources of evidence that enable historians to understand the civilisation.

84. In geography, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made a good beginning on map work skills. They draw a simple map of their journey to school, and a plan of the classroom, which show a good early understanding of how maps can describe places and routes. Pupils' work about possible changes to the school building shows that they have considered geographical issues within a real context. Good use is made of 'Barnaby Bear', who travels to different places, often with a member of the class. His visit to London led the pupils to think about the differences between rural Bayford and what it is like in a busy city. All the pupils in Years 3-6 are currently studying St Lucia. This is the best example of work pursued in some depth, with a number of geographical skills developed. Year 6 pupils have a sound factual knowledge of St Lucia's location, physical characteristics and culture. For example, they know about the tropical climate of the island, and their imaginative writing 'Hurricane' and 'Nightmare Floods' displays their geographical knowledge, as well as using and developing their literacy skills effectively. Pupils understand the economy of St Lucia and write knowledgeably about the effects of

tourism on other aspects of island life. Their class debate, arguing varying points of view about future development, is a good example of pupils using their existing knowledge to strengthen their skills. When questioned about similar or contrasting locations around the world, however, pupils showed little breadth of knowledge and understanding. Map work skills, begun in Year 1 and 2, have not been extended significantly.

85. In history, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have completed work that begins to give them an understanding of life in the past. They looked at toys from the past and compared them with their own, noting changes in the materials and the way they work. They have found out about some famous people and events from the past, such as Guy Fawkes and the gunpowder plot. The range of work completed, however, is less than would be expected. In Years 3 to 6, the most recent topic was Ancient Greece but, as this was studied last term, the Year 6 pupils' recollection of their work was limited. Pupils' recorded work shows a sound range of factual topics, such as school life in Ancient Greece compared with pupils' own experiences, the significance of Gods and philosophers, and the lasting legacy of the Olympic Games. There is too little emphasis, however, on considering the sources of evidence that help us to understand the period, tracking changes that happened during such a long span of history, and thinking about different points of view. An exception is a sound piece of work about the contrasting treatment of boys and girls in Sparta. The pupils' recollections were largely about drawing designs for Ancient Greek pots, but they did not understand that such artefacts are a good source of historical evidence. In both subjects, the presentation of pupils' written work is often weak.

86. The work seen indicates that teachers are good at planning the content of the curriculum, but they lack the expertise to extend the work, and to ensure that pupils' skills develop step by step. This is made worse by the lack of curriculum time. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory because the skills that pupils have and, therefore, the skills they need to develop next are not identified. Sound links are made with other subjects, particularly literacy. Aspects of the work make a sound contribution to pupils' cultural development but, overall, the subjects are not making the strong contribution that would be expected. Leadership and management of the subjects are satisfactory. The history co-ordinator was absent during the inspection and the geography co-ordinator is recently appointed. Apart from looking at teachers' planning, little monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in either subject has taken place. Nonetheless, the co-ordinators have a reasonable grasp of strengths and weaknesses, know that the subjects need a higher priority and have identified specific areas for improvement. Resources are adequate, but there is a heavy reliance of photographs and videos, which limits the range of sources of evidence available to the pupils.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

87. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards close to national expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above national expectations. Pupils' achievements are good during their time at the school. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection when pupils' progress was judged to be unsatisfactory.

88. Pupils in Year 2 are confident working with computers. They use a 'mouse' well to control programs, and they save and print their work. They use computers to develop their numeracy and literacy skills, for example translating data into graphs. In religious education, Year 1 and 2 pupils produced pictures of candles using art software when they were thinking about the symbolic importance of light. In a design and technology lesson, pupils created title pages for their work using a 'word art' program. Pupils are familiar with menus and icons and use these confidently to access different parts of the programs they use. Almost all pupils have reached this standard.

89. Year 6 pupils use computers extensively in their work. They word process, manipulate and change text, adding images and graphics. Pupils use the internet to access quickly the information they need for lessons. They use computers to control remote devices, record temperatures over time and measure light levels. For example, in the lesson observed, pupils were given the challenge of devising a set of instructions that could be used to control the sequence of red, amber and green signals in traffic lights. They worked well together in groups, firstly writing their sequence of instructions then testing it. The well planned activity allowed children to try out their ideas and refine them.

90. The quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers ensure that pupils practise and consolidate their skills. Teachers plan lessons well using their good knowledge of the subject. The high quality support given by the teaching assistants, often taking the leading role in lessons, is a strength and allows greater flexibility in grouping pupils so that best use is made of the computer suite. Teachers take opportunities in other subjects to develop ICT skills. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Years 3 and 4, very good use was made of computers to produce bar graphs from data collected and presented as frequency charts in the previous lesson. The lower attaining pupils made particularly good progress and completed and printed their graphs, which were used to good effect during the conclusion of the lesson. The number of computers is good, with one in each classroom and a suite located in a purpose built area next to the hall. This is a great improvement since the school was last inspected.

91. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and what action needs to be taken to raise standards further, despite having had little time to carry out systematic monitoring. A scheme of work has been developed to ensure a good range of activities is covered by pupils. A policy has been produced since the last inspection and an action plan has been devised, which clearly identifies targets and priorities for the development of the subject and how these will be achieved.

MUSIC

92. Very little evidence was available during the inspection. The headteacher normally takes a number of music sessions, but she was absent. A teacher from a nearby school taught two lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6. On the evidence of these two lessons and pupils' singing in assembly, standards are close to those expected for pupils' ages. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' achievements during Years 3-6 were judged to be unsatisfactory.

93. In the two lessons observed, the music was well linked to pupils' current work in geography about St Lucia by introducing Reggae music and rhythms. Pupils' singing of 'Rivers of Babylon' was satisfactory, though they needed considerable encouragement to give it the lively rhythm the teacher intended. During an imaginative series of activities exploring rhythm and pulse, all the Year 6 pupils showed that they could read the duration of notes in standard notation, and play the varying rhythms, often in a number of parts. They used a range of untuned percussion instruments confidently and, with mixed success, combined these with their singing. Pupils' skills in listening carefully and appraising music, including the work of others, were as expected for their ages. In both lessons, the pupils were enthused by a talented teacher whose expertise brought out the best in their performance.

94. The school encourages pupils to develop an interest in music through a variety of activities as well as lessons. Well-chosen pieces of music are played as pupils enter assembly and these are discussed. A significant proportion of the older pupils learn to play a musical instrument and children take part in local festivals. Leadership and management of music are satisfactory, though the absence of the co-ordinator reduced the evidence for this aspect of the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

95. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and, by the end of both Years 2 and 6, reach standards that are above those expected for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils experience a wide range of activities including dance, gymnastics, games, swimming and outdoor activities. By the end of Year 6, all pupils exceed national expectations in swimming and complete various water safety awards before they leave the school.

96. In the two lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good. During a gymnastics lesson seen, Year 1 pupils worked with effort and enjoyment. They understood that they must warm up their muscles by careful stretching before beginning more strenuous activities. Pupils made good use of space, changing speed and direction to add to a variety of movements. They performed a variety of balancing, stretching and rolling movements using different parts of the body. Pupils listened well to the teacher and responded quickly to instructions. In Years 5 and 6, pupils extending the same skills showed a significant improvement in controlling their bodies and exploring inventive ways of moving into space. They were aware of other pupils and paid close attention to safety issues. By Year 6, pupils have good skills in games, as seen during an after-school football club. This activity focused on practising and improving skills, and examples of good performance were used to encourage pupils to improve their own skills. This was also a good feature of the lessons seen during the inspection. Thorough planning and organisation, a carefully structured sequence of activities and good pace that ensured pupils were active for most of the time were also features of the good teaching.

97. Pupils' achievements in lessons are extended by a varied and interesting physical education curriculum. There are a number of extra-curricular sporting activities, some of which are supported by qualified coaches from the local community. As well as being well attended and enjoyed by the pupils, these are good opportunities for them to develop their social skills as they work in pairs, groups and teams. Physical education also includes outdoor and adventurous activities for all pupils. Both younger and older pupils take advantage of the good arrangements for swimming. The school also takes part in sporting activities with other schools and make the most of opportunities provided by local sports' organisations such as Saracens Rugby Club and Ware Athletics Club. Management of the subject across the school is satisfactory. The co-ordinator supports teachers' planning, offers advice and has developed a good range of resources. Although she has not yet had sufficient opportunity to observe and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, there are plans to improve this with the aim of raising standards further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

98. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Across the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This is a similar picture to the judgements made at the last inspection.

99. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity and are taught about other world faiths such as Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know some of the stories Jesus told and understand the importance of special celebrations and ceremonies. For example, they took part in a simulated Christening ceremony led by the vicar at the local church. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 explore the differences between the secular and religious aspects of Christmas and explain why people hold differing views. They discuss and think about the importance of having times to be peaceful and reflective.

100. In the one lesson seen, the quality of teaching was good. A lively discussion for Year 5 and 6 pupils about the Easter story led to a wide range of responses, which reinforced pupils' factual

knowledge and provoked interesting debate about the relevance of Easter today. The school maintains good links with the local church and makes effective use of these to deepen pupils' understanding about special places, special times and belonging to a community. However, the school has not yet established a similarly good range of first hand experiences to enrich the pupils' knowledge and understanding about other faiths. In the lesson seen, pupils articulated their own ideas well and discussed issues sensibly. Good use is made of reference books and the internet to gather information about religions but, as yet, the range and quantity of quality artefacts and resources is very limited, which restricts opportunities for pupils to learn from a range of sources

101. The curriculum is well planned and based on the locally Agreed Syllabus. This forms a good basis for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the multi-faith world. Teachers' planning is comprehensive and identifies clear learning intentions for lessons. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, and the co-ordinator has provided support for colleagues with long term and medium term planning. Assessment procedures are currently weak because, although work is marked regularly, there is no systematic checking of pupils' attainment and progress, which prevents the co-ordinator from identifying strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to build effectively on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding to raise standards.