

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**SHIPLAKE C.E. SCHOOL**

HENLEY ON THAMES

LEA area: OXFORDSHIRE

Unique reference number: 123203

Headteacher: Mrs. J. Bishop

Reporting inspector: Stuart Dobson  
18074

Dates of inspection: 7-10 October 2002

Inspection number: 248440

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Church of England Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Memorial Avenue Shiplake Henley on Thames Oxfordshire
Postcode:	RG9 4DN
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J. Loose
Date of previous inspection:	December 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18074	Stuart Dobson	Registered inspector	Science Information and Communication Technology Design and Technology Equality of Opportunity English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13450	J. Madden	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24528	G. Muton	Team inspector	English History Geography Music Special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17456	A. Smithers	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Physical Education Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in a semi-rural area to the south of Henley on Thames. Most of the pupils come from the village of Shiplake and the surrounding area. The area is one of relative social advantage and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs in this school than in most schools but the proportion of pupils with statements of need is above average. These pupils have a mixture of specific and general learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils for whom English is a second or subsequent language is slightly above average.

The school is smaller than average with 153 boys and girls attending in broadly equal numbers. They are taught in a mixture of single and mixed-age settings. When they enter school in the term prior to their fifth birthday, their attainment, especially their ability to use English, is above average. The school has had a very high turnover of staff in the last two years and the recruitment of teachers is very difficult due to the high cost of living in this area.

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

This is a good school which is improving rapidly. It provides a good education and is effective in ensuring that all pupils benefit from school provision. It caters well for those pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils make good progress and the standards achieved in this year's national tests at the end of Year 6 are very high. The school is very well led and now that staffing has stabilised is in a good position to improve further. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good and often very good. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Well above average standards are achieved in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, because there is consistently good and very good teaching in these three subjects.
- Almost all of the pupils behave well both in the classroom and at other times when they are less closely supervised.
- The school has high standards of care for the pupils. Despite many of the staff being relatively new to the school they know the pupils well. They are supported in this by the school's good systems for assessment of pupil's achievements in English, mathematics and science.
- The school is very well led by a highly skilled headteacher, supported very well by a developing management team and a conscientious and knowledgeable governing body.
- The school provides a good curriculum which is significantly enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and events.

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

- The satisfactory standards which the pupils achieve in some subjects could be raised to reach the high standards achieved in English, mathematics and science. There is a need to improve the use of assessment in the foundation<sup>1</sup> subjects.
- Standards of presentation should be raised throughout the school so that displays and pupils' work celebrate high standards.
- The presentation of some of the accommodation and the quality of some of the resources are not of a good enough standard.
- Pupils inter-personal skills should be developed to help them to take more responsibility for their own actions and learning and particularly to support the few pupils who show indifference to the opportunities which are provided and to the needs and feelings of others.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school experienced a dip in performance in 1999-2001; this has been reversed and there has been very good improvement overall since the last inspection in 1996. The quality of teaching has improved. There is a better time balance for subjects and there are more opportunities for independent learning. The staff make good use of assessment information. There is a rigorous performance management system for the teachers. Most of this has occurred since the appointment of the current headteacher. There has been excellent improvement in the overall management of the school.

## 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	B	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A*	A*
Science	C	D	A	A

**Key**

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

The standards achieved in tests in English and mathematics are consistently above average when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools and in 2002, the school results were well above average in all three core subjects listed above. In English and mathematics they were in the top 5 percent nationally. This is a considerable improvement on previous years especially in science where attainment levels had declined considerably. This improvement has been achieved through more closely focused work and a rigorous curriculum especially for 9-11 year olds. These standards are also reflected in pupils' classwork. The school sets and meets appropriate targets for improvement whilst reflecting the ability of each cohort. Recent good analysis of assessment information has given staff a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of each cohort of pupils and work is targeted well to pupils' needs in these three subjects.

Pupils in Year 2 achieve well in national reading, writing and mathematics tests and standards in science are above average. There is room for improvement in the standard of presentation of some children's work. There is a focus on raising the standard of writing for all pupils throughout the school. Pupils on the school's register of special educational needs make good progress and achieve good standards for their capabilities. Pupils who are particularly talented make good progress.

In other subjects pupils make satisfactory progress overall and achieve levels which are similar to those expected nationally. However standards in design technology standards are higher than those seen in most schools at ages 7 and 11. Children in the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> achieve well and most reach or surpass the Early Learning Goals<sup>3</sup>.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Almost all of the pupils have good attitudes to school and to learning. They work well and join in with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour is very good at all times but occasionally a tiny minority of pupils fail to consider others.

<sup>2</sup> The reception class.

<sup>3</sup> Nationally agreed targets for the end of the Foundation Stage.



Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Almost all of the pupils show very good initiative.
Attendance	Very good levels of attendance.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Three quarters of the teaching seen was good or better with nearly half being very good or excellent. Most of the remainder was satisfactory and only one lesson was unsatisfactory when the work was mis-matched to the pupils' needs. In almost all lessons teachers plan well; they have appropriately high expectations of the pupils who learn well. English and mathematics are taught well and most often teaching is very good or good in these lessons. There are no particular weaknesses in aspects of teaching.

The teaching of the reception age children is good or very good at all times. From the minute they come into school until they leave at the end of the day, they are busily engaged in a wide range of learning opportunities. They make good progress and learn well because of the consistency of the teaching. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall but it is very good and sometimes excellent in Year 2. In this class pupils make very rapid progress and achieve high levels. Teaching is predominantly good in Years 3-6 and pupils' good progress in learning continues.

Literacy and numeracy are taught well and often very well. The headteacher and acting deputy-headteacher have led these initiatives strongly in the last year and levels of attainment have risen dramatically. All the staff have been particularly closely focused on these two areas to halt and reverse the slight decline in standards. They have also been successfully focused on improving the teaching of science and the steep decline in standards has been reversed.

The staff clearly focus on the needs of the pupils and all are catered for appropriately in lessons.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good quality curriculum with appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics and a broad and well-balanced set of learning opportunities in other subjects. The curriculum is enriched through a very good range of additional activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision. These pupils' needs are well known and work is planned to meet those needs. They are given good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although there are pupils who speak languages other than English, none of them require particular help to access the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good overall. There is good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The staff have high expectations of pupils' moral and social behaviour. The school has planned for but does not yet have a fully established, comprehensive programme to support pupils' personal, social and health education.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for the pupils. They are well known to the staff and they are treated with respect and courtesy at all times. The staff make good use of assessment information to plan to meet the needs of pupils.
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The school works very well with parents who support their children well and has a lot of support from most parents. The curriculum, whilst good overall, needs to improve in the area of personal, social and health education and the headteacher has planned for this improvement. The school is a very secure place for pupils and they are very well cared for.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led. The headteacher gives excellent leadership and manages the school to a very high standard. She has been able to gain the respect and support of all of the staff in a very short time and bring about school improvement. She is supported well by the senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well and the overall quality of governance has improved greatly since the last inspection. The Chair particularly, and other governors are very involved in the work of the school and are fully aware of development needs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good monitoring and evaluation of pupils' performance has helped the staff to improve the standards which pupils achieve. There is also good analysis of the overall performance of the school and managers have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well to support learning. The school invests heavily in its teaching staff and this has supported the raising of standards to their current high level.

There are sufficient qualified staff to meet the needs of the school though there has been a huge turnover of staff and the role of co-ordinators is currently being developed. The accommodation, whilst adequate in size, is in a poor decorative state in many parts and some of the rooms are difficult to use. Both of these factors have an adverse impact on pupils' learning. Learning resources are barely adequate for many subjects including design technology, history, geography and art due to under-funding of resources over some years. There is a need to significantly up-grade the library and the Parent-Teachers Association has recently given the school £9000 to re-equip the library and improve the book stock generally. The headteacher and governors apply best value principles to all major spending decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school</li> <li>• Children are making good progress</li> <li>• Children behave well</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount and frequency of information on how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The range of activities which the school provides outside normal lessons.</li> <li>• The amount of homework given.</li> </ul>

The team supports the parents' positive views of the school. There are very regular newsletters and letters in addition to school reports and three annual parent's meetings. It is made clear that parents are welcome to visit or contact the school if they have any concerns. It is difficult to envisage how more information could reasonably be provided. However, reports to parents could contain more detail about progress in the foundation subjects.

The amount of homework given is similar to that in most primary schools. There are five lunchtime clubs and three after school clubs. In the last year the school has taken part in Henley Youth Festival, and had music, football, cross-country and skipping events. There have been theatre company visits, dance workshops, 'Sculpture in the Forest' and art appreciation. The school takes part in inter-school quizzes, swimming, football and rugby tournaments. A further 20 events have taken place in the last year which are outside the scope of normal lessons. This includes a residential visit to Bude for the oldest pupils. It is the view of the inspection team that the curriculum is very significantly enriched by this vast range of additional activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the foundation stage, children make good progress in almost every aspect of their learning because of consistently good and very good teaching and the provision of stimulating and informative activities. Most children begin school with above average standards in most areas of learning and in particular they speak well. By the end of the reception class most are likely to surpass the expected levels in all areas of learning.
2. By the time pupils begin Year 1, most of them have the confidence to question and to explain their views and ideas. The teachers focus well on reading and writing and the pupils learn quickly between the ages of five and eleven. By the age of seven, many of the pupils have made good progress and reach above average levels in reading. This is consolidated and extended in Key Stage 2 and many are good readers by the time they leave the school at eleven.
3. Progress is slower in writing and this has been a close focus for development in the last year and continues to be so, though standards achieved in Year 6 are above average. Pupils generally construct sentences well but some of their writing lacks creativity and flair. Pupils make steady progress in writing when their efforts are clearly focused. Mostly they record accurately and the work of the oldest pupils for the last year shows that there were high expectations of them to write clearly in science. The pupils wrote clear individual explanations for their findings and this helped them to develop their scientific thinking and their writing skills. However, this level of work is not regularly seen in other subjects such as history and geography and presentation standards are sometimes not as good as they should be. There is an on-going need for pupils across the school to improve their handwriting. After a decline in standards in 1999-2001 there are clear indications of improvement in tests and the trend of improvement is now similar to the national trend. This was mostly achieved in the last year.
4. In mathematics, standards have risen in the last year with a very high number of pupils achieving levels which are above the nationally expected levels. This has been achieved through very rigorous teaching in Years 5 and 6 and a clear focus on pupils developing their investigative skills in mathematics.
5. Both literacy and numeracy skills are developing well and these skills are beginning to be used satisfactorily in other subjects. However, there is potential to improve the use of writing across the curriculum.
6. In science, there has been a tremendous improvement in results in the last year. Compared to national averages, the performance of eleven-year-olds was below average in 2001. In 2002 pupils achieved well above average standards. This is due to a more concerted effort to teach the curriculum fully and much more challenging work for the pupils, which has encouraged them to think as scientists.
7. Inspection findings confirm the improving picture shown by the test results. Standards in writing are still not as high as they might be but they are improving. Pupils reach good levels in reading. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and recently, very good progress in science. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection but in the intervening period there has clearly been a decline which has now been reversed.
8. Recent test results show that the performance of boys and girls is similar in English, mathematics and science and the inspection found no significant differences in the performance or participation of boys and girls. At both 7 and 11, there is evidence that recently, pupils who are able are sufficiently supported in reaching the higher levels by the ends of Year 2 and 6. In the last year there was a very high percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 at age 11 in all three subjects.
9. The standards often evident in work in English are sometimes not reflected in other subjects such as geography and history, where there is less evidence of written work and what work there is does not allow the pupils to use their literacy skills fully.

10. The standards achieved in art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education are similar to those expected nationally at ages 7 and 11 and, whilst this is satisfactory, some of the pupils could reach higher levels. Standards are above average in design and technology because teaching is well focused and the subject gets due attention. Pupils sing well but their achievements in music overall are just average as they do not spend an equal amount of time on some aspects of the subject.
11. Pupils with special educational needs who have learning difficulties make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs) because the school has consistent procedures for dealing with their needs. Pupils with English as an additional language make the same good progress as other pupils.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good, as found at the last inspection. The youngest pupils are happy to leave their parents for the start of the school day that is brisk, well organised and where pupils settle quickly to the first lesson. They show a real interest in school life and are keen to learn. In lessons they respond enthusiastically to well planned and interesting work from the reception class onwards. This was shown clearly in a Year 2 design and technology lesson, when the teacher's questions prompted a host of suggestions and debate on the most effective and visually attractive way of decorating puppets. The overwhelming majority of pupils are eager to answer questions and enjoy challenge in their tasks, trying hard to please and reach their teacher's high expectations. A tiny minority of pupils does however, from time to time, display disrespectful and selfish attitudes to the staff and fellow pupils demonstrating the limitations of their social skills and lack of maturity. This is especially disappointing, as staff are unfailingly respectful and considerate of pupils in the school. Pupils with special needs are fully integrated into school life, taking a full part in lessons, as a consequence of the interaction of teachers and learning assistants with them, and the clear expectations for learning and the values provided.
13. Behaviour in the school has remained very good since the last inspection, and this is apparent in lessons, and around the school. This behaviour pattern begins in the reception class and carries on through to Year 6, where, in a maths lesson, pupils' very good behaviour contributed to the atmosphere of concentration and achievement. This is recognised by the majority of parents who communicated with the inspection team. Good teaching and classroom management, through challenging and well-paced lessons, supports this level of behaviour. In the playground, whilst pupils are boisterous and full of energy, there is little sign of inappropriate behaviour, and they play together with the wide range of equipment provided for their use. There were no signs of bullying during the inspection, and pupils have room to move around in the playgrounds, not dominated by football, even though this is a cause for complaint by some pupils. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said there were small amounts of verbal bullying but both they and their parents agreed that other forms of bullying have been eliminated by firm action and pupils' confidence in reporting incidents.
14. Personal development and relationships are good for almost all of the pupils. The adults provide very good role models of the highest standards of consideration and good behaviour. Most pupils co-operate well though some request to work on their own or have difficulty sharing information and coming to joint decisions. In one example, during a Year 4/5 geography lesson, a few pupils initially struggled with the group work but guided by the teacher negotiated their way to a majority decision and were then able to complete the work to the required standard. Pupils across the school take responsibility for tasks, which contribute to the smooth running of their classroom, and, as they become older, these tasks such as library monitors and playground Buddies, take on a school wide role. Pupils particularly enjoy these responsibilities instanced by a boy in Year 1 given the responsibility of delivering registers to the Reception and Year 2 classrooms who could hardly contain his delight. Pupils are being encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and help to build confidence, encourage hard work and maintain enthusiasm, whilst challenging all pupils. Pupils with special needs, including those with high levels of ability, are enabled to make equally good progress by differentiated work appropriate to their personal needs.

15. Attendance in 2000/1 was above the national average and the school's figures for 2001/2 show an increase. However, unauthorised absence which was very low, has risen slightly due to a small number of parents taking their children out of school for such events as family holidays of more than 10 days.

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

16. Teaching is good overall throughout the school and in almost all lessons pupils learn well. There are variations between classes. In some classes teaching is a mixture of good and satisfactory whilst in others it is a mixture of good, very good and occasionally excellent. During the inspection as a whole, three quarters of the lessons were good or better with more than 4 lessons in 10 being very good or excellent. Most of the remainder was satisfactory; one was unsatisfactory. This lesson was untypical of the teacher and the school. This profile of teaching is a significant achievement as many of the staff are new to the school and some are new or relatively new to teaching.
17. In most English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy lessons the quality of teaching is good or better because these two subjects are very well led by co-ordinators who have a very clear understanding of how to raise standards through good teaching. There has been considerable training for the staff in teaching successful literacy and numeracy lessons and all teachers are guided well. The teachers are therefore developing real confidence and good knowledge and they are able to maintain a good pace to lessons, ask challenging questions of the pupils to guide their thinking and are able to offer support where it is needed. Pupils are kept busy and thinking for most of the lessons and therefore they learn well. Writing and mental arithmetic have been a close focus for improvements in teaching and the results are visible in the good standards which pupils achieve.
18. The teaching of the youngest children is never less than good and is often very good. The teacher has only been in school for a matter of weeks but has established very positive relationships with the children. They trust her and feel safe and are therefore able to work really well. The teacher provides a very good range of activities through which children learn well both indoors and in the outside area. The teacher is making very good use of the new outdoor area and children are making great strides in all areas of learning.<sup>4</sup> The teacher explains new knowledge clearly, discusses aspects of work with the children whilst they are learning and the children gain and retain knowledge. A good example of this was seen in a mathematics focused lesson where children had a range of activities; building, cutting, sticking and drawing whilst focusing on the names of 2 and 3-dimensional shapes. Towards the end of the session the teacher brought the children together for a class discussion and it was clear that they had learnt and could use the names of the shapes. They had also had physical, social and language experience. The children made very good progress.
19. The quality of teaching varies in Year 1 and 2 but is good overall. The teaching in Year 2 is exceptionally good. In this class there is a very high level of challenge for the pupils both socially and academically. The teacher has very high expectations of the pupils, giving them a range of individual, small group and whole class tasks. In a very good science lesson, pupils were asked to find their own ways of exploring differences between people. This was set up very well and involved the pupils in a lot of discussion and clear thinking before they could come to a consensus view. They achieved their tasks very well and in the process deepened their understanding of the subject and the processes of science.

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<sup>4</sup> Personal social and emotional; language, literacy and communication; mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development.

20. In most lessons the pace of learning is good but just occasionally when the teachers spend a little too much time re-inforcing and rewording instructions, the pace of learning slows and some of the children become a little restless. However, during the inspection all of the teachers showed that they were very capable of returning the pupils to their tasks.
21. Pupils from ages 7-11 continue to make good progress because of predominantly good teaching. In some of the lessons the pace is very swift, teachers have made it very clear what the pupils are to do and they get on, seeking assistance only when it is needed. This was seen in some very good design and technology lessons where the pupils were designing and creating pizzas and making evaluations of their own work and of commercially produced packaging. The teacher managed all of the groups very well, kept them very busy and made it very clear that she was relying on them to organise their own work. The pupils responded very well and learnt rapidly.
22. In some lessons, most noticeably history and music, activities are sometimes less challenging and do not gain the same level of involvement or stimulate the same level of thought from the pupils who are less well engaged. In the work sample which the school provided, written work in some subjects was rather less challenging and creative and this is a development point for some of the teachers. In the satisfactory lessons and where work was judged satisfactory, the most usual cause was that the work required was not sufficiently demanding for some of the pupils.
23. Overall teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils and the subjects they teach. They celebrate pupils' successes but wall displays do not do justice to the levels standards achieved. Teachers make good use of assessment activities to inform their subsequent planning, marking and feedback to pupils. They generally manage pupils well. They are all very good role models of appropriate behaviour, showing high levels of consideration for pupils and adults alike. Most of the pupils follow this lead and are learning to become valuable members of the school society. Teachers make good use of homework.
24. Generally teachers are very aware of the individual needs of their pupils and match work well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The quality of teaching is as good as described at the time of the last inspection and there is a lot of evidence to show that it has improved greatly in the last year.

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

25. The quality and range of opportunities provided within the school curriculum are good with some very good elements. Recent improvements to the planning and organisation of the curriculum have ensured that there is coverage of the programmes of study for all subjects. There is still work to do at the termly planning stage to ensure that there is a progression of learning in all elements of all subjects.
26. The school has put much thought into the implementation of the national strategies for numeracy and literacy. This was initiated by the previous acting headteacher and developed by the current staff. The strategies have been modified after identifying school priorities and teachers continue to make changes in the light of experience. In other subjects the schools relies almost entirely upon nationally produced schemes of work. Strong emphasis has been given to English and Mathematics whilst at the same time maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum. There is very close monitoring of the weekly plans for Literacy and Numeracy.
27. In Years 1 and 2 subjects are often linked under topic headings but the current school organisation means that older pupils are often in different groupings in the afternoon. This puts additional demands on teachers for their planning. Teachers do sometimes make links between subjects; pupils develop their writing skills and their understanding of history for example by writing 'in role' as an historical character or

learn some songs which have a connection with their history lessons. In the main however this enrichment of the curriculum by providing experiences which allow pupils to make connections between different areas of their learning is not fully developed.

28. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. Teachers follow the themes of the school assemblies and discuss these issues in 'circle times' (when pupils sit around in a circle and discuss social, moral or religious issues). There is however no clearly defined programme of work for teachers to follow. A full programme of drugs education has not been adopted. Although Year 6 pupils receive some advice from a visiting group of specialist teachers once a year, a policy for this important area of education has not yet been agreed. The governors have an agreed policy for sex education but this is an area, which will be reviewed shortly. There are plans to link all of these areas and incorporate them into curriculum planning.
29. The arrangements for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are good. Individual plans are completed for all pupils on the SEN register; these are reviewed regularly and realistic targets are set. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of pupils who need extra support. Occasionally some pupils will be withdrawn from the classroom for activities that need an especially quiet time, for example to support specific listening skills. However most of the support is given in the classroom so that pupils with SEN benefit from the full range of learning opportunities provided by the school.
30. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. The headteacher is committed to making the learning opportunities of pupils as rich as possible and rarely misses an opportunity for the school to become involved in local projects, use the opportunities provided by the local environment or to invite visitors into school. A highlight of every year is the pupil's involvement in the Henley Festival. This involves an enormous effort by the school staff for pupils to join other children from the area and take part in sporting, music and art activities. There are visits by theatre groups, dancers and artists. Pupils make visits to places such as Oxford Natural History Museum and Sulgrave Manor. Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to Bude in Cornwall. There are 'clubs' every lunchtime including a writing club and children have the chance to learn Spanish after school. There are inter-school football, swimming, football, rugby and athletics competitions.
31. The provision for pupils' personal development is good overall as it was at the time of the last inspection. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory with some good elements. There is a strong commitment from all members of the school community to value pupils as individuals and to provide a climate in which their personalities can flourish. This commitment permeates all aspects of school life but staff are attempting to do this in a learning environment which is drab and far from uplifting. The atmosphere in classrooms is calm and assemblies provide a peaceful pause in the busy school day. The integrity and beliefs of individuals are valued; this is demonstrated in religious education lessons and circle times when pupils are encouraged to express their own views and opinions. Teachers do not however plan sufficient experiences to heighten pupils' awareness through music and art.
32. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Teachers and support staff provide good role models for pupils to learn to respect other people and property. The methods that teachers use to manage behaviour are all based on positive reinforcement so that good behaviour is praised and rewarded. There is no oppressive discipline. There is a set of rules for playground behaviour and pupils are aware of the consequences of not observing them. The 'time out' sanction at playtimes is very rarely needed. A few pupils who have underdeveloped social skills take a little longer than others to learn self-discipline. The school is aware that it has to find more effective ways of modifying the behaviour of the few individuals who sometimes impair the otherwise very positive climate in classrooms.
33. The school's provision for pupils' social development is good. Teachers regularly provide opportunities for pupils to work together co-operatively and pupils of all ages are given jobs with responsibility. Classroom monitors have routine tasks; in Year 6 for example they may have to ring the bell at the correct time, set up the equipment for the nursery and for school assemblies. The monitors view this as a shared responsibility for mature Year 6 pupils. There are lots of activities which reinforce the idea of the school as a community including church services, competitions and performances although the poor decorative state of the school building does not help foster a sense of pride in the school. Pupils become involved in the work of several charities including a 'walk for wildlife' and the collection of produce at harvest time. Social



issues relevant for their age are discussed in 'circle time' and in assemblies. The special events such as the Henley Festival and the residential trip to Bude are very valuable for pupils' social education.

34. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school is aware that its pupils do not come from a diverse group of cultures so in order to widen their experience a link is being sought with a school in the area, whose pupils come from a variety of backgrounds. The school has established a link with a school in Sierra Leone and the pupils have written letters to their African counterparts. Within the curriculum there are opportunities to celebrate other cultures in geography when they study a community overseas and in music and art through a number of visiting performers and artists. The traditional Christian festivals of Harvest, Easter and Christmas are celebrated and in RE lessons they extend their knowledge of cultural imagery by learning about religious artefacts and symbols. Most classrooms have displays featuring aspects of life in other lands.

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

35. Overall the school takes very good care of its pupils. The teachers, many of whom are new to the school, have a good knowledge of pupils in their classrooms and others across the school. Pupils interviewed during the inspection had every confidence that their teacher or the head teacher are easily approachable and there to support them. Pupils with special needs are well supported in the classroom by well-matched work and learning assistants are already making a considerable impact on the work of these pupils. The Code of Practice for special needs is fully in place.
36. The school provides very good care for pupils' health and safety. Whilst the head teacher has overall responsibility, a teacher and the Bursar take day-to-day responsibility for regular checks. Governors make termly checks around the premises and grounds and the school has had a recent risk assessment. The procedures to deal with child protection in the school are very good, the named person is well trained and staff are aware of appropriate procedures. A whole school training day was completed in January 2001.
37. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good and extremely effective, attendance having risen considerably in the last school year from an already high standard.
38. There are good procedures to promote and monitor behaviour. In classrooms pupils are well managed and keen to learn and consequently almost all have neither the time nor the inclination to misbehave. There are however a few pupils whose lack of respect for others, including adults, can occasionally become apparent in their immature behaviour and this was especially apparent in a Year 5/6 football coaching session. As a result they did not get the best from excellent opportunities to learn from a skilled coach. This is especially disappointing for the school where pupils are expected to have good social behaviour, be courteous and well mannered and where the majority regularly do so. The reward system varies from class to class but is based on the same values of mutual respect and high achievement. Especially appreciated is the head teacher's award for excellence in either academic or personal achievement. Behaviour in the playground is similarly good and based on a playground code of conduct, which emphasises positive aspects of behaviour. Pupils are well supervised at break times and lunchtimes. The pleasant and interesting play areas allied to the wide range of equipment available ensure pupils are positively occupied and return to classrooms ready to learn.
39. There is very little bullying in the school and pupils are made very aware that this should be reported immediately and that it will be dealt with by the staff. The procedures for dealing with such issues are very good. Parents report that a previous outbreak of lunchtime bullying has been eradicated and any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with at once. As a result the school has only recorded one incident of continuing misbehaviour in the last school year.
40. Good assessment procedures are in place for the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science using national tests and guidance. The information collected is analysed and used to target specific groups of pupils for additional work and to highlight specific topics that require additional teaching. This process is having a direct impact on improving the standards pupils achieve. Pupils have individual targets for some areas of their work.

41. Assessment through observation is an integral part of the Foundation Stage curriculum and good records are kept for children in the reception class. The assessment of pupils' achievements in art and physical education is not satisfactory; it is inconsistent and depends on individual teachers. Generally assessment in the foundation subjects is carried out but not as well as it is in English and mathematics. Because of the lack of assessment information, some co-ordinators are not able to make a judgement on standards in their subject in relation to the specific targets of the National Curriculum and are therefore not yet in a position to take steps to improve them.
42. Assessment information is used well to track individual pupils' progress in English mathematics and science. Pupils have targets to work towards and this helps them to see how to improve their own work and this is a useful model upon which to build further work. Teachers evaluate pupils' understanding at the end of each lesson and this is used effectively, in English, mathematics and science, in future sessions.

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

43. Overall parents are satisfied with the school and this reflects the recent unsettled period in the school's history when they were worried about the frequent changes in teaching staff and lack of stability in the school.
44. The school provides a good level of information for parents including the regular newsletter, which keeps them up to date on all aspects of school life. The prospectus is informative and clear, even if a little dull in its presentation. There are termly opportunities for parents to meet with their child's teacher, and the school makes it clear that parents should take the opportunity offered for informal contact with teachers before and after school. The head teacher sees numbers of parents on a daily basis if they feel that they have a query only she can deal with. Meetings are arranged to ensure parents have as complete knowledge as possible, on for example, the literacy and numeracy strategies and there is good attendance at these. The written annual reports give a good resume of pupils' skills in the core subjects of English, maths and science with targets for their progress. Information on foundation subjects is very brief and adds little to what parents know about their children's abilities in these subjects. The parents of those children with special needs are fully involved at every stage of their child's education in the monitoring and recording of progress and planning their work.
45. Parents whose children are entering the reception class are given the opportunity to meet the head teacher whilst their children have introductory visits to the school. They are given an extremely helpful booklet, which introduce parents to the best way to help their children with the core subjects, craft activities, and social and personal skills.
46. Parents are increasingly involved with the school in a number of ways and this partnership is now becoming very good. They have traditionally helped with art, maths, reading, teaching recorder and games in after school clubs. In addition, two parents are now working in close partnership with Year 5 and 6 pupils using the school's ICT facilities to put the very good school newspaper "The Shiplake Standard" together. Those parents who feel they have skills and knowledge useful to pupils are encouraged to volunteer their help, one example seen during the inspection was work based on resources provided by a parent who is a dentist. The school grounds in particular, and some internal features have benefited enormously from the regular 'Groundforce Days' which includes parents, staff and pupils in a concerted effort to improve their school. The Parent Teacher Association has been able to raise substantial sums of money to invest in the school's facilities as well as acting as a social focus for parents and the local community.
47. Parents play a very substantial part in their children's learning at home many helped by the reading and homework diaries which act as a channel of communication between parents, teachers and pupils, parents appreciate the prompt marking of homework and the helpful guidance provided for their children. The school has a clear homework policy and helpful guidelines for parents on which this work is based. One parent was especially pleased that her child had been made to repeat homework that was not at the required standard.

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

48. The school is very well led. There is a real sense of purpose and direction which is shared amongst the staff, the pupils, the governors and most of the parents. The headteacher has been instrumental in developing this since arriving at the school just over one year ago. Prior to that time the school had been experiencing some difficulties with the lack of a headteacher, very high levels of staff movement from the school and gradually declining standards especially in science. It is clear that a considerable number of parents were losing confidence in the school despite the strenuous efforts of the Acting Headteacher.
49. The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent. Since taking up the post, she has identified and tackled areas of concern with great vigour and determination despite the fact that there have been many staff changes including the deputy headteacher. The headteacher has made the restoration of confidence in the school a high priority. She has been very successful and shows great patience and professionalism when working with parents to resolve any concerns. The quality of her leadership is almost universally acknowledged by the parents. She has a very clear vision for the school and her management of it is both responsive and creative. For example, recruitment of staff and their deployment is particularly difficult; it has been well considered and the quality of teaching is strengthening. Similarly she has tackled underachievement in writing and science and standards have risen dramatically in one year. The headteacher works closely and effectively with the newly appointed Deputy Headteacher and the Key Stage 1 manager and together they are leading the improvement of standards and the quality of education.
50. The headteacher, with very good and well-informed support from the governors, has developed a long-term plan to improve the school. Crucial to this plan is increasing pupil numbers so that the school can afford a seventh class which will obviate the need for mixed age classes. The school is well aware that whilst the current organisation of mixed classes for the afternoon sessions is the best possible at present, single classes would be better. Already the school is making progress in attracting more pupils because of its growing, positive reputation.
51. The governors fulfil their roles very well. They are closely involved with school issues and keen to see the school improve. They bring their considerable expertise to the work of the school and are of great support to internal management. The Chair in particular gives generously of her time and expertise. The governors are well organised and clear thinking.
52. There are co-ordinators for all subjects though many of the staff are new to the school and are only just establishing themselves. However, they have all made a start on monitoring the standards which the pupils are achieving and have begun to develop plans for improvement. The quality of teaching is monitored well by the headteacher. All staff have very good relationships with the headteacher and a very strong staff team is developing.
53. School finances are used very well and clearly for their intended purposes. The work of the school benefits from the good level of staff training which is undertaken. The finances are well managed by a very good school secretary who is very knowledgeable, capable and efficient. Strategic planning for the use of resources is good but has been hampered in the last two years by the very high level of spending incurred as a part of recruitment. This is a very difficult area to recruit teaching staff due to the very high cost of living. In part this accounts for the high turnover of teachers in the last two years. There is an underspend of resources but money has been put aside for building improvements and in particular to support the establishment of a seventh class.
54. The management of the school helps to ensure that all pupils benefit from what the school offers. Pupils with SEN are very well managed and provision is good. The staff support all of the pupils in accessing the full curriculum of the school.
55. The process for school improvement planning involves staff and governors and ensures that work is regularly reviewed and areas are identified for further development. This is effective in focusing the work of co-ordinators. Governors are similarly involved in the plan for school

improvement. The plan is clear and relatively concise and effective in pointing the staff and governors to addressing relevant priorities.

56. There are good arrangements for the professional development of staff based on a well-structured system of performance management. Teachers' training needs are identified and supported and a good programme of training is informed by the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The impact of training is evaluated and areas of weakness are systematically addressed. The quality of support provided for inexperienced teachers is very good. This is given very high priority and as a result, newly qualified teachers flourish.
57. The school has a good level of staffing and in many lessons, good use of additional support staff has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
58. Accommodation is not adequate for the needs of the school. The school has grown and changed over the years and some of the classroom spaces are awkward spaces in which to teach. This is particularly the case in the Year 1 classroom. Similarly whilst the Year 4 class have a large workspace, they are housed in the resources area and ICT suite. The school has a very good plan to change the use of some spaces so that they might be more efficiently used. The outdoor area for the children in the reception class has been greatly improved recently and is a very good resource for learning. Some of the classrooms and the hall are in desperate need of redecoration and up-grade. The Year 1 class for example has dirty and damaged walls and an unpleasant floor. Even the best work fails to make an impact when displayed in this environment.
59. The quality and quantity of resources is variable but is unsatisfactory overall. The school has recently developed a computer suite with ten new computers and this has brought the resourcing level to adequate in this important subject. The library is in need of many new books and resources for design technology, art, history and geography are lacking. At the present time the level of school financial resources allows for only minimal up-grade of these areas. This unsatisfactory level of resources and the difficulties with accommodation impact adversely on pupils' learning.
60. The school is developing its use of new technology, particularly in expediting administrative work more efficiently.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The headteacher, staff and governors now need to ensure that:

- (1) where standards achieved are judged to be satisfactory, they be raised to the high levels achieved in English, mathematics and science by:
  - a) reviewing the curriculum to ensure that there is continuity of skill development
  - b) improving assessment so that targets for pupils can be set and teachers can plan for all levels of attainment
  - c) ensuring that co-ordinators gain the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfil their roles.
  - d) improving the quality and range of resources in design technology, geography, history and music.  
*(Paragraphs 25 27 103 118 124 132 140 142 )*
- (2) the presentation of displays and pupils personal work reflect the highest standards by
  - a) ensuring that the presentation areas of the school (displays in particular) reflect the highest standards
  - b) expecting pupils to make a continuous effort with the layout and presentation of their work, in particular their handwriting and give continued support to pupils to improve.
  - c) ensuring children from the reception class onwards are taught to hold pencils correctly.  
*(Paragraphs 3 22 58 84)*
- (3) the quality of accommodation and resources improves, where necessary, to reflect the high quality of other aspects of the school by:
  - a) devising a programme for reorganisation and redecoration of the interior of the school ( this is already in hand)
  - b) improving the quality of learning resources.  
*(Paragraphs 58 59)*
- (4) the school implements a programme of personal, health and social education which helps the pupils to gain a well-balanced view of the world and their role in it. This needs to support all pupils in displaying appropriate and positive attitudes towards others and to the opportunities which are provided for them, thus getting the best from school.  
*(Paragraphs 12 14 32 38)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
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	5	16	15	11	1	0	0
Percentage	10	33	32	23	2	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	153
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### *Attendance*

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	8	16	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	15	16	15
	Total	23	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (85)	96 (88)
	National	84 (85)	86 (88)	90 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	7
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	24	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (85)	96 (92)	96 (96)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	9	10	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	10	9	10
	Total	18	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (92)	89 (83)	95 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	87 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	7	8
	Girls	10	9	10
	Total	18	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (96)	84 (100)	95 (92)
	National	73 (72)	75 (74)	83 (82)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	5
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	122
Any other minority ethnic group	

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	18

#### **Education support staff: YR-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	362483
Total expenditure	362127
Expenditure per pupil	2605.23
Balance brought forward from previous year	32722
Balance carried forward to next year	33078



*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	153
Number of questionnaires returned	90

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	40	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	47	6	2	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	53	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	58	13	6	7
The teaching is good.	30	54	4	2	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	37	27	8	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	28	7	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	47	3	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	37	38	17	3	6
The school is well led and managed.	58	37	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	53	3	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	2	18	43	30	7

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

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

62. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection.
63. When children begin the reception class they are very articulate, they have a good knowledge of the world around them, and they are confident. They are more capable than would be expected nationally in their communication, language and literacy skills, their mathematical ability, their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their creative and physical development. They make good progress through in the reception year and achieve or exceed the Early Learning Goals<sup>5</sup>. The majority is working within the early levels of the National Curriculum. Children with special educational needs are fully integrated into the class and due to good support make good progress.
64. Children enter the Reception class in the term of their fifth birthday. Currently, there are six reception age children in the mixed Year 1 and Reception class who attend full time and one child who attends part time. The quality of the teaching is never less than good and is frequently very good or better. Children find the sessions interesting and challenging, as the teaching shows a very good understanding of how young children learn. It provides a very good combination of direct teaching of skills with opportunities for children to be creative in consolidating new ideas. Expectations are high throughout the day, and time and support staff are used very well. Assessment procedures are very good, and used well to plan what the children need to learn next.
65. There is an exciting outdoor area, which is used very well to support all the areas of learning. It has a variety of interesting sections with good facilities within each. There are plans to develop this area further and this will benefit children, particularly in their physical and social development. Indoors the resources are less well organised and developed. Many are old and need replacing and the internal decoration is poor.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

66. When children enter school they are interested and well motivated in their learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority are likely to exceed the expected early learning goals in this area. Children are keen to learn and show independence when they have the opportunity to select tasks. They have good concentration and work consistently at activities for long periods of time. They know how to share and co-operate with other children and do so through a range of activities but a few of the more able children feel they have the right to dominate and impose their ideas.
67. Children are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong actions and the adults working with the children provide good role models, treating one another and the children with respect. The ethos is very positive and provides children with the security to explore new ideas and take risks while undertaking new learning. Adults are sensitive to children's needs and encourage them to express their feelings and show respect for others. For example, while enjoying the story of Elmer and the Teddy, the teaching emphasised that all teddies are special to their owner. In response to the question about how the lost teddy might feel, one child responded " the same as baby elephant, very sad" showing that he could also make deductions. The

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<sup>5</sup> nationally agreed targets for the end of the Foundation Stage

organisation enables children to make independent selections, initiate ideas and solve simple practical problems.

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

68. Children develop good communication, language and literacy skills. By the time they enter Year 1, they are likely to exceed national expectations and be working within the National Curriculum levels. They speak confidently and most children interact with others, negotiating plans and activities and taking turns in conversations. They listen well and are able to respond to what they have heard. They use language to recreate roles and experiences, for example whilst digging a road in the sand. They have good knowledge of initial letters and they enjoy repeating the sounds and actions associated with the letters. Outdoors they found hidden objects whose rhyming sounds match, for example a coat and a boat, a bell and a shell. Many know a range of phonic blends such as 'oo' and 'ai'. They use their phonic knowledge to write simple words such as 'atic' and 'chinnie' while labelling parts of a house. They can read simple texts with accurate word match; they use initial letter and context clues and enjoy listening to stories. Most know that the author writes the book and the illustrator draws the pictures. Writing skills are developing well, but insufficient attention is given to ensuring that the children hold pencils correctly and form letters in the correct manner so that as they grow older they will find it easy to develop a consistent, legible, cursive script.
69. Well-planned literacy activities enhance children's knowledge and understanding of the sounds and patterns of written and spoken English. Children are encouraged to develop their reading and writing skills. The national guidance for the teaching of literacy is used effectively to ensure children experience a range of stimulating activities that are challenging but meet their needs well; particularly the very good use of time and emphasis on developing basic skills. The teacher models written language very well, for example drawing up a personal profile so that children understand what is expected of them. Outdoor provision is exciting and used well but both indoor and outdoor resources for role-play are insufficient and much of what is available is old and in a poor condition and doesn't stimulate the best of involvement. There is a quiet area where children can read but the books are not well organised and many need renewing.

### **Mathematical development**

70. Children enter the Reception class with good levels of mathematical knowledge and vocabulary. They make good progress within the Foundation Stage and, by the time they enter Year 1, they exceed the nationally expected goals and the majority of children are working within the National Curriculum levels. The teacher provides a range of practical activities to help them to use their mathematical skills. They use mathematical language to describe quantity, shape, position and size. They use shapes to create a collage and a pattern. They work co-operatively, building with bricks to make a castle which is high and wide. Through practical activities they learn the names of a good range of both two and three-dimensional shapes, and understand that a number of two-dimensional shapes make a three-dimensional shape. They recognise coins and can use number bonds to twenty.
71. The provision is very good. Staff plan effectively using the national guidance. They include a very good range of practical, relevant first hand experiences and pupils apply themselves intelligently and creatively to the tasks. Questioning is challenging and allows children to think for themselves. Assessment procedures are good. Resources are adequate but are not in good condition.

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

72. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world develops well and is of a good standard. They reach, and some exceed the early learning goals. They are able to be 'historical detectives' and find information from books about how people travelled in the past and they record their finding with drawings of boats, cars and trains. They can articulate similarities and differences from transport then and now. For example, that a train in the past used steam to make it move. The more able know that the steam is made from heating water with a coal fire in the furnace of the engine. They share information on holiday destinations and find the places visited on a map. They name the different parts of their bodies. They are dextrous, using the computer mouse to click and drag parts of the body to make a person and name the different limbs. They are able to use their knowledge of how they dress themselves to dress the teddy in the correct order, using a computer program confidently. A few less able children are not secure in their knowledge of the correct order to dress for example they put on shoes before trousers.
73. The very good range of activities makes useful links to children's own experiences for example holiday destinations and getting dressed. Teaching has high expectations of children's response and activities are made exciting and stimulating. For example, they work in small groups to make a plan of a fantasy island, which is creative and shows a good understanding of the need for different habitats and environmental features. Very good use is made of the digital camera to record children's work. Plenary sessions are used well to check children's understanding and show them where their learning is leading in the future.

## **Physical development**

74. Children make good progress in their physical development and meet the early learning goals. By the end of the reception year they have good co-ordination and control of their movements. They are confident pedalling wheeled toys and scooting although some of the tricycles are too small and children cannot get their knees under the handlebars to turn the pedals. They show a good understanding of the use of space while moving confidently and with good co-ordination during the physical education session in the hall. They can dress and undress themselves with the majority able to do up accessible buttons and put shoes on the correct feet. They are aware of the importance of warming up the muscles of the body before exercise and then allowing the body to cool down at the end.
75. Teaching is good. There is a programme of direct teaching, where children are able to develop body movements systematically so that they move in a variety of different ways across the floor and apparatus, for example, balancing on different parts of the body. They are given opportunities to use tools for example cutting with scissors and so increase their co-ordination. Currently there are no opportunities for children to climb while outside but this is planned for and the outdoor area is to be extended in the near future.

## **Creative development**

76. By the end of the reception year almost all children reach the early learning goals. Children enjoy painting and using a variety of textures to create collages. They have good opportunities to use their imagination, in both two and three-dimensional tasks, and in individual, small group and whole class projects. They make pictures of butterflies by folding the paper in half so that each side is symmetrical. They are creative in their use of sticks and tissue paper when making caterpillars.

77. Provision is good. Children are provided with a stimulating range of activities through which they can use all their senses creatively. They are given specific guidance as to how to achieve skills and so improve their work. For example, children are taught which tools create specific types of design while using clay, they learn that clay is most easily handled if it is kept damp and the exact process required to successfully make a thumb pot. They are shown how to plan for a drawing by selecting the colours that are needed to represent a face.

## **ENGLISH**

78. Standards attained by both seven and eleven year olds are above national expectations. There is no particular difference in the standard of work seen from boys and girls. The development of teaching and learning in the subject has been a priority in the school over the past year. Teachers enjoy teaching all aspects of the subject (speaking and listening, reading and writing) and this enthusiasm is 'caught' by the pupils who tackle their work cheerfully. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection
79. When pupils start school they speak confidently and quickly learn to listen attentively to their teachers. The ability to speak confidently to others in the classroom or in assemblies is built upon skilfully by the teachers who treat all their pupils' contributions with interest and respect. In one assembly, when lots of hands went up to talk about individual worries about being different, one child thought she was different because she 'could wiggle her ears'. Both teachers and children treated her view with respect.
80. In many lessons teachers plan activities when pupils have to work together either in pairs, such as a Year 1 history lesson when they had to discuss aspects of some historical objects, or in small groups such as in Year 2 when four pupils were discussing the similarities and differences between two story settings. By the time they are seven the standards of speaking and listening skills are above national expectations. Opportunities for developing spoken English continue to be provided in Years 3 to 6, in a wide range of subjects and learning situations. Teachers use every opportunity to explain the meaning of words and to use appropriate vocabulary in different contexts. Pupils make good progress in developing their spoken vocabulary and their ability to listen. Although a small but significant minority of pupils have not acquired the social skill of listening respectfully to their classmates even by the time they are eleven, the overall standards of speaking and listening of eleven year olds is above national expectations.
81. Standards in reading are above expectations throughout the school and many seven year-olds and eleven-year olds achieve standards well above average. Recent developments in the school have placed more emphasis on the teaching of letter sounds so that even the youngest pupils use this knowledge to read unknown words. Pupils with special educational needs who have particular problems with this aspect of reading have individual action plans and receive extra help and support. Pupils learn about many aspects of reading and literature. In Year One for example they learn about the different features of books including the author and illustrator, in Year Two about story settings and characters. The level of challenge increases as they get older so that, by the time they reach Years 5 and 6, pupils are justifying their opinions on books by quoting examples from the text. These reading and critical skills are taught in whole class groups when teachers and pupils read and discuss a displayed 'Big Book' or when older pupils look together at the same text. Pupils show genuine interest in these sessions; Year 5 pupils loved reading and talking about 'The Iron Man' and Year 6 pupils confidently described their favourite parts of 'Goodnight Mr Tom', a text used by teachers because of its connection with the history topic. Teachers are not afraid to present their pupils with challenging reading material; in a very good lesson in Year 2 all pupils followed a difficult text and were bursting to share their ideas about it. Teachers also lead small 'guided reading' groups when pupils of similar capability read a book together and teachers

can focus on individuals within the group. These teaching methods are effective and all pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress.

82. A recent reorganisation of the books within the school and the purchase of new ones have helped to develop pupils' enthusiasm for their personal reading. Books are arranged according to difficulty and pupils are given plenty of time and opportunity to choose. The range of books available however, their general condition and the way in which they are displayed is unlikely to inspire many young readers. Parents are very supportive with their children's reading. All pupils have reading diaries, in which parents write thoughtful and useful comments. Teachers keep some records on personal reading. The methods used however do not enable teachers to monitor the range of reading tackled by individuals effectively or to ensure that the difficulty of pupils' personal choice of books matches their capabilities. Development of the library to promote the joy of reading is inhibited as the room is currently used as a classroom.
83. During the inspection the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Inspection evidence including pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that the quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers have adopted the methods of the National Literacy Strategy and are adapting them to suit the needs of the pupils. Teachers' planning and the management of their pupils are good. Lessons usually start with pupils being reminded about previous learning and teachers describing what they hope to achieve during the lesson, thus making learning clear. They use methods to include all pupils. Some teachers are particularly skilled and maintain challenge for the most able whilst still involving those of lower capability. Other teachers are still developing these skills. When the teaching is very good the lessons move along at a good pace keeping the pupils on their toes. Sometimes, however the pace of lessons is slower and some teachers keep the whole class on the carpet for too long instead of quickly motivating them to do some individual work.
84. One of the ways in which the National Literacy Strategy has been adapted in the school is to increase the amount of time devoted to developing pupils writing, including handwriting, and spelling as these two aspects of writing have been identified by the school as a priority for improvement. The standard of handwriting of many pupils is below expectations and the standard of presentation overall is inconsistent. It is often untidy. When pupils enter the school their control skills are not so well developed as some other aspects of their learning. Pupils are given regular handwriting practice but insufficient attention is given to pencil grip and posture. All teachers' focus on the importance of spelling and older pupils are given regular spelling practise and homework.
85. The overall standards in writing of both seven and eleven year olds are above national expectations. Throughout their time in school pupils learn to write in an increasing range of forms. The youngest pupils complete simple sentences or write captions for pictures. In Year Two they can write their own version of a story such as 'Can't you sleep little bear?', write a letter to a friend or describe a visit to a school by a performing musician. They can organise their writing into sentences and know about headings and sub headings. In Years 3-6 pupils tackle an increasing range of writing. The standard of punctuation and grammar is very good. Older pupils can write complex sentences and weave together story plots, descriptions and characterisation. Spelling standards lag behind other writing skills but teachers are aware of this and continually focus upon this relative weakness. Pupils write poetry, stories, diaries book reviews or instructions on for example 'how to treat shock' or the rules for swimming. They write 'in role' such as when the current Year 4 pretended to be Neil Armstrong in a piece entitled 'The Eagle has Landed'. By the time they reach Year 6 they are tackling ambitious tasks such as re telling the story of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', writing critiques of stories or writing in 'rap style'

(one child writes *'Hey everybody lets write a rap about a big fluffy dog and a big fat cat'*) or of well-known poets. They know about similes and metaphors; on reading Tennyson's Charge of the Light Brigade one pupil wrote *'Into the mouth of Death is an emotional line because it forms gory pictures in my head'* and went on to describe those images. These experiences and challenges, together with the good quality teaching, enables all pupils including those with special educational needs to make good progress.

86. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported throughout the school and consequently make good progress towards their learning targets. Their needs are identified early, parents are supportive and the assistance of a special needs advisory teacher, who works closely with the headteacher, and special needs assistant ensures that appropriate work is prepared for them. Teaching assistants know the pupils well and are sensitive to their needs.
87. In subjects other than English, such as History and Geography, the writing capabilities of pupils in the school are not reflected in the work they produce. Pupils write articles for 'The Shiplake Standard' and contributions from the youngest to the oldest are included in this very good innovative school project. This is a valuable outlet for pupils writing talents and the journalistic skills learnt by the older pupils. There are some displays of pupils writing in classrooms and there is evidence that some pupils use word-processing well. However, the quality of displays and the quality of presentation in pupils' books does not effectively celebrate the high standard of many pupils' writing.
88. The headteacher has recently taken over the role of Literacy Co-ordinator but even before taking up her post a year ago she had already agreed areas for development in English with the acting headteacher. During recent months there have been a number of changes to the organisation, teaching and resourcing of the subject all of which have resulted in visible improvements. At the time of inspection a new action plan had already been put in place and literacy is just starting to be used well across the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

89. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.
  - The good standards have improved further and are now well above average.
  - The quality of teaching is good overall and is very good in some years.
  - The curriculum provision is broad, balanced and relevant and teachers make good use of the national guidance to support continuity and progression for pupils.
  - Higher attaining pupils are challenged well.
  - Assessment is used effectively to inform future planning.
90. Standards in written presentation have fallen and are no longer high. Pupils do not always take sufficient care when setting out their work particularly when working with place value and recording mathematical data.
91. By the age of seven and eleven pupils attain standards well above those expected for their ages in numeracy and all areas of mathematics; number, algebra, space, shape and measures, and data handling. They can solve relevant problems using and applying their knowledge. National tests and inspection findings show a similar picture. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress, as do those pupils who are capable of attaining high levels.



92. Because of good practical learning experiences and lively teaching, by the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of place value; the majority are able to manipulate numbers to 1,000. They know the properties of 2D and 3D shapes, they can tell the time using analogue and digital clocks, they understand the specific vocabulary relating to weight, volume, money and length and use measuring instruments accurately. Pupils have good strategies for undertaking mental calculations and are confident in describing their methods.
93. Eleven-year-olds' are challenged well in lessons and multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100, and 1,000 with relative ease. They order and subtract negative numbers. They can reduce a fraction to its simplest form by cancelling common factors and can calculate decimal and fraction equivalents. They draw angles to the nearest degree and use the correct language associated with angles. They can calculate the perimeter and area of shapes and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants. Because the teacher challenges their thinking, higher attainers check to see that their results are sensible and draw conclusions of their own and give explanations of their reasoning.
94. The quality of teaching is good. The teaching of skills and subject matter is knowledgeable. Most teachers make intellectual and creative demands on pupils to extend their learning. For example older pupils play a game which requires them to be able to manipulate fraction and decimal equivalence to prevent their partner getting three numbers in a row and so quickly learn the small increments between each position. Challenging questions are used to consolidate, extend and verify what pupils know and understand. For example, in a lesson on percentages, pupils are first asked to identify where they may have seen percentages used before then the teacher extends the questioning to take them from fraction equivalence to percentages. The methods chosen are well geared to the particular focus and demands of the lesson for example all the money calculations involve relevant shopping purchases and at the end of the task there is a challenge which pupils are keen to complete. Learning is set in context, as when pupils are asked to estimate length and the emphasis is on the use of estimation in everyday life and so the reason for learning is made clear. Most teachers make productive use of the time available; pupils are engaged fully and the sessions move forward with a brisk pace. Relationships in most classrooms provide a confident and positive atmosphere in which achievement is possible. Most pupils are keen to learn, rise to challenges in creative ways and think further. Despite the good teaching, a small minority of pupils do not make sufficient effort and do not seem prepared to take responsibility to improve for themselves. Mostly, pupils work well for extended periods of time and make steady good progress.
95. Good use is made of national guidance; a three part lesson structure is well established and there is a very good balance between direct teaching and pupils undertaking oral and written tasks. Most tasks are challenging and meet the needs of the pupils well. Teachers use the final part of the session effectively to check present learning and prepare children for forthcoming sessions. Some use is made of numeracy across the curriculum, for example collecting and recording data in geography lessons but this is not fully developed. The use of information and communication technology as an integral part of teaching is unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures are good. Pupils have individual targets, which allow them to see how to improve their own learning. However, marking does not take sufficient account of the targets and they are not checked and reviewed frequently enough to have a full impact on the progress pupils make. Using and applying mathematical knowledge is an integral part of teaching but to raise standards further, the school has correctly identified a need to develop this. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership for the subject. She is knowledgeable and supports and guides colleagues and developments very effectively.

## SCIENCE

96. By the time that the pupils reach the age of 7 they have above average knowledge of science and at the age of 11, they have well above average knowledge and understanding of many aspects of science and have developed a good understanding of scientific processes. This is a very good level of achievement for these pupils because in the school generally in the years to 2001, standards in science were falling. Science has improved considerably in the last year because of improvements to teaching and the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and there is little difference in the attainment levels of boys and girls.
97. The improvement in standards has been brought about by very focussed teaching and an emphasis on practical work. When she arrived at the school, the headteacher noted the relatively poor science results, which had been achieved by the previous cohort of pupils. She immediately ensured that as far as possible, throughout the school, a rigorous programme of science was put into place immediately to cover all aspects of science as listed in the National Curriculum.
98. In addition, there was also an insistence that the pupils were to learn by experiencing science. Scrutiny of the pupils' work for the last year in Year 5 for example, indicates that they have engaged in a great deal of practical work. This has covered topics such as the body, including the circulatory system, habitats, nutrition in plants and animals, sound, light, electricity and other forces and a wide ranging topic on the properties of materials.
99. In every case, the work has been very well recorded and the teacher has insisted that the pupils record their hypotheses, findings and learning using their own words and illustrations. This is excellent practise as the pupils learn through sorting out what they are going to record and writing about it. The teacher is readily able to check the pupils' understanding because the work is recorded individually. There is plenty of evidence to show that good marking of this work has helped the pupils to improve. Assessment of pupils' work is good. To a greater or lesser degree, all teachers get pupils to record independently and this is a great bonus in developing their learning. By the time they are 11, most of the pupils can discuss most aspects of science intelligently and with very good recall of what they have learnt.
100. Pupils like science because of the practical nature of most of the lessons. They know that they are learning because they are so heavily involved in what is happening. Many of the older pupils say that they are fascinated by some parts of the subject and are particularly interested in the current topic of tooth decay. The teacher has made this topic interesting for them by having a rotting tooth in the classroom and using computer assisted photography to help monitor the decay. Also the teacher has used the activities well to illustrate some faults in the scientific process of monitoring.
101. The quality of teaching is often very good though just occasionally satisfactory. Overall it is good. The main weakness of teaching is that although pupils undertake a lot of experimental work, most of it is prescribed and, though pupils record their own ideas, they are not often asked to decide what or how they will record. However in one class pupils were asked to decide for themselves what they could do to show differences between pupils in the class. They were also asked how they would measure and record. This prompted a very lively and sustained debate but because of the guidance given earlier, the pupils managed a consensus and set up a very good piece of research work. Similarly in a Year 5 class, one boy was challenged to 'accurately label his graphs for himself'. This proved to be taxing but beneficial, as he had to think very hard about the purpose of the work. These examples of excellent practice are a model for the school's next steps in science teaching.

102. At the times when parts of lessons are only satisfactory, good experiences have been set up for the pupils and clear guidance given. However, pupils have too long to practice the task after they have fully understood and drawn conclusions and the pace of learning slows. The subject is well managed as seen through the recent improvement which has been achieved. Very good use is made of ICT to support learning, as seen when pupils use images from a computer assisted microscope.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

103. At the age of seven and eleven, pupils' attainment is as expected nationally. Standards achieved and the quality of provision has been maintained since the previous inspection, but there is more evidence of pupils having the opportunity to respond in a creative and imaginative way. All pupils make satisfactory progress but achievement would improve if the school identified how skills were to be taught incrementally. Standard are restricted because the current curriculum does not fully identify how skills can be taught incrementally or of skills or the specific needs of pupils.

104. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Evidence is drawn from discussion with pupils and teachers and a scrutiny of past work and teachers' planning.

105. The pupils are given a suitably broad range of experiences. By the time they are seven they have an understanding of a range of media, including paint, pencil, pastels and collage. They work on individual pieces and combine their efforts to make large group murals. For example Year 1 pupils illustrate their work on Australia, although much of this work is too teacher directed. Their work using a computer program is much more creative and they effectively draw using the pencil device, use the 'paintbrush' or 'spray can', use the 'rubber' and change colours to make lively patterns, and lifelike faces and boats. Year 2 pupils use shading and line techniques with pastels to create trees in the countryside. They combine the use of water-colour and pastels to effect a background, with objects such as boats in the foreground. Work is undertaken in both two and three dimensions, with pupils coiling paper to make flowers. Very effective results are evident when pupils use batik to make colourful and interesting motifs depicting the sun.

106. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Some pupils in Year 3 and 4 demonstrate a good knowledge of perspective and draw life-like figures when they portray relationships. Higher attaining pupils achieve very good results with a recognisable portrait of the Queen and Prince Charles, two friends sitting talking, and a father and son illustration. They are imaginative while designing a chair for a specific character or event, although the teaching allows them to spend too long designing to retain their interest. Pupils in Year 5/6 illustrate examples of the willow pattern story and are creative and imaginative in their interpretations and many pay good attention to detail.

107. The work of other artists and cultures is evident. Higher attaining Year 1 pupils achieve very good impressions of flowers in the field in the style of Monet. Year 5 pupils used Aboriginal art as their inspiration and design patterns and motifs to tell a story. The school has a bank of resources about the work of famous artists but this is not used sufficiently to show pupils how they can achieve particular effects.

108. Very good results are evident when pupils are engaged on specific projects with the help of additional adults who have specific skills and talents. For example, pupils made a colourful banner and bunting to celebrate the Golden Jubilee using printing techniques on material. Year 6 pupils made a ceramic wall map with very good attention to detail and displaying very good techniques

using clay effectively. They had the opportunity to be creative and imaginative making a sculpture in the woods from natural materials. These experiences enhance the curriculum very well.

109. The management of the subject is under developed. The co-ordinator has only just taken up the post and has not yet had an impact on teaching and learning. Currently, there is insufficient attention to a progression of skills through the school and, whereas some pupils achieve good results, this is not evident for all groups of pupils. There is very limited assessment and therefore a restricted view of what each pupils needs to do to improve. Work is displayed around the school but it lacks impact and quality and does not provide an environment that tells pupils the extent to which their work is valued.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Teaching is very good throughout the school and pupils learn very well. In particular they understand from an early age that design and the modification of designs is as important a part of the process as making. They develop very good evaluation skills. As a result, their finished products are of good quality and they are able to constantly suggest improvements to their ideas, and their practical work. The subject is taught regularly and all aspects of the subject are taught. Standards are higher than expected nationally. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
111. The teachers and pupils enjoy this subject and this is shown in the care and attention which is given to making it a success. Lessons are well planned and the needs of the pupils are anticipated.
112. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the teacher taught very well when the pupils were working on pizzas. This included the planning and making of a pizza as well as the assessment of commercially produced pizzas and packaging. Discussion with the pupils indicated that they took a very businesslike approach to the evaluation of their own work and were able to make very perceptive comments. They realise for example that colour, message, aesthetics and cost are all elements of 'customer appeal'. In making their own pizzas they followed their own designs with great care.
113. In a Year 2 class the teaching was similarly very good. The pupils were heavily involved in making character puppets and were constantly being challenged by the teacher who asked questions such as 'how can we attach the decoration to the felt?' rather than telling the pupils to glue them. Once again, these pupils had been through a rigorous design stage in their work and were in no doubt about what they were creating.
114. Over the school year, the pupils undertake three projects in each class. These range from pizzas to the development of musical instruments, shelters and pop-up cards. In every instance, the pupils had to use their own initiative to complete the tasks.
115. This is a very popular subject with the pupils as they enjoy being engaged practically with their work. They make a very good effort at almost all times and show pride in their results.
116. Above average achievement is solely due to the skill, creativity and enthusiasm of the teachers. The school is unsatisfactorily resourced. Resources and materials are in short supply and there

appears to be little organisation to the central storage area. There is a new and very enthusiastic co-ordinator who has many very good ideas to develop the subject further.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. Standards attained by both seven and eleven year olds are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection and are similar to national expectations.
118. There has been a lack of continuity in the planning and teaching of the subject in recent times whilst priorities for the school have been focussed upon raising standards in English, mathematics and science. The new co-ordinator, who is a newly qualified teacher, is very aware of the priorities for developing the teaching and learning of geography and, with the headteacher, has established a clearer planning framework. Teachers now have a nationally produced scheme of work to follow which supports their teaching with lesson ideas. There are no additional school systems to ensure a progression in skills. The absence of such systems is inhibiting the raising of standards, particularly whilst the school organisation means that pupils are regrouped into mixed-age classes in the afternoons. There are plans to build up learning resources and organise them into 'topic boxes'. In the meantime improvements in the subject are hampered by a shortage of books and artefacts.
119. During the inspection one good and one very good lesson were observed. However from the evidence of teachers' plans, a scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display and from talking to pupils, teaching overall in the subject is judged to be satisfactory. Most pupils in classes and in discussion demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject.
120. In Years 1 and 2 pupils begin their studies by drawing simple maps for their routes to school and making graphs for the different types of journey. They explore the area near the school and ask questions about making their area safer. In Year 2 they learn a little about a community overseas and build up their knowledge of mapping, land use and other features of a community by considering 'an island home'. During the inspection a very effective lesson was observed when the teacher skilfully combined pupils' knowledge of a fictional island with factual knowledge about features on an island. She challenged the pupils to justify their opinion about the most important place on the island; one child said 'the jetty because that's where all the food comes to the island'. By the end of Year 2 pupils can identify England on a world map, they know that the environment is spoilt by 'trees are being cut down', 'car fumes', and remarkably 'using up the oil and the water'. They know some of the differences between cities, towns and villages and the different types of journey people make.
121. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop their mapping skills with further studies of the local area. They produce sketch maps; learn about keys, co-ordinates and contours. Classroom work is enriched by local visits, most notably a walk to Henley along the Thames towpath, and in this way they build up knowledge of the geographical features of the area. They study a village community in India when they use information books to seek answers to geographical questions. The annual residential visit to Bude in Cornwall gives them an opportunity to learn about landscape features and environmental issues. By the time they are eleven their knowledge of places is sound; they can identify continents and oceans on a world map and know about the equator and the tropics. They know that places are characterised by the type of landscape and by people. They know where Shiplake is on a map of England. They know that people can cause damage to the environment, by for example, over-fishing and by various forms of pollution. They know about action that could be taken to improve the environment. They know that natural changes and

changes caused by people can affect lifestyle, for example people moving off the land into cities to find work.

122. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The teaching methods used throughout the school allow all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make satisfactory progress. The teachers both question and manage the pupils well. Pupils are given many opportunities to work co-operatively and whilst younger pupils were observed doing this successfully during the inspection some older pupils were less co-operative. Lesson planning in the subject does not ensure either that the more able are appropriately challenged or that some tasks are modified appropriately to encourage better progress with the less able but planning is overall satisfactory as a good range of topics are covered. Opportunities for the use of information technology are not used sufficiently. The maps, diagrams and writing that pupils produce in their topic books is often untidy; the quality of recorded work does not reflect the pupils' abilities. There are too few resources for the subject and some of the resources are of an unsatisfactory quality.

## **HISTORY**

123. Standards attained by both seven and eleven year olds are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection and are close to national expectations.
124. The number of recent staffing changes over recent times has made it difficult to maintain continuity in the planning and teaching of the subject. The head teacher and the new coordinator however have established a clearer planning framework. Teachers have a nationally produced scheme of work to follow, which supports their teaching with lesson ideas. There are no additional school systems in place to ensure a progression in skills. The absence of such systems inhibits the raising of standards, particularly whilst the school organisation means that pupils are regrouped into mixed-age classes in the afternoons. Development of teaching and learning in the subject is also hampered by a shortage of books and artefacts.
125. During the inspection three lessons were observed in which the quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to good. From the evidence of teachers' plans, a scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display and from talking to pupils, teaching overall in the subject is judged to be satisfactory. Pupils of all ages demonstrate a keen interest in the subject and a willingness to learn.
126. In Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about major events such as the Fire of London. They know how it started, some of the difficulties involved; 'they had to pull down houses' and they know about Samuel Pepys and that he 'buried his cheese in the garden'. They learn about other famous people such as Florence Nightingale who 'started the first hospital' and Guy Fawkes who was 'tortured because he tried to blow up parliament'. They understand some of the differences between the present and the past such as aspects of school life in their grandparents' time. Much of the teaching of the younger pupils is done through stories and discussion. Teachers also provide good learning opportunities when for example the pupils walk around the local area identifying the differences between old and modern houses, or, as in a lesson observed during inspection, pupils examine real or replica artefacts from Victorian times and talk about their uses. These experiences help the pupils to develop an increasing awareness of the passing of time and to develop ways of finding out about the past

127. In Years 3 to 6 pupils study a number of topics ranging from the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians to Britain in Tudor times, Victorian times and Britain since 1930. By the time they are eleven pupils have developed an understanding about some of the ways in which we find out about history for example, through archaeology, looking at paintings diaries and letters and they know that these are called historical sources. They have had experience of trying to interpret a variety of sources, such as looking at contemporary illustrations of nineteenth century factories or pictures of woodcarvings from Tudor times. During inspection, some Year 6 pupils were looking at a family's world war two documents and artefacts and some Year 3 pupils attempted to find out about the belongings of a sixteenth century gentleman by looking at a copy of his household inventory. Year 6 pupils know that the course of history is changed by wars and by changes in the law such as factory acts and children's acts.
128. Lessons for the older pupils are sometimes enriched through visits such as the one to Sulgrave Manor in connection with Tudor Studies in Years 3 and 4 or when visitors come into school to talk with pupils about life in Britain during the Second World War.
129. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and the teaching methods used throughout the school, especially the good questioning skills and the good management of pupils allow all pupils, including those with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress. Lesson planning is not always sufficiently rigorous to ensure that pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenged. However, planning does ensure a good range of learning opportunities and good coverage of a wide curriculum. In lessons observed teachers spent too much time talking to their pupils and did not allow enough time for pupils to develop their own skills and knowledge. Evidence from pupils' work and lesson observation shows that teacher expectations, either for the amount, the quality, or the presentation of work produced are not always high enough. Opportunities are provided to use information technology

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

130. In most aspects of the subject pupils achieve standards which are similar to those expected nationally though in some aspects of control technology pupils have limited experience and standards achieved by 11 year olds are slightly lower than those expected nationally. Standards in data processing and particularly word-processing are often higher than expected.
131. Pupils in Year 2 achieve satisfactorily in all aspects of the subject. This is because their teacher is already ensuring that they make full use of the new ICT suite and that these pupils have hands on experience. They can already access and retrieve stored data, logging onto and off the network efficiently. They have experience of control technology using a programmable floor robot to create patterns and follow routes.
132. The school was significantly hampered until September 2002 by lack of appropriate resources - in particular computers of good quality. The resources have now been put in place and the level of resourcing for the school is now adequate. However, the lack of resources over time has meant that the older pupils have not had enough experience of ICT. Teachers of pupils in the upper part of the school are now trying to compensate for this.
133. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in word processing. In part this is because they write with ease and many have the opportunity to use computers at home. There are some good examples of pupils' work which show that they can manipulate text and images to create effects and they know how to make changes to appeal to different audiences. They do not though, fully

develop their ideas and style because the school software is somewhat limiting. There are no facilities to develop multi-media presentations, though clearly many pupils are capable and are familiar with suitable software at home.

134. The oldest pupils have though recently been using a computer assisted microscope to assist with daily observations of a decaying tooth as part of their science work. The printed images have been invaluable in this work and the teacher has also made good use of the exercise to discuss the quality of the images and the techniques for improving them.
135. Generally the use of ICT to support other subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory though there is considerable scope for improvement now that the school is developing Internet access. This is beginning to provide a greatly improved range of information for pupils to support their learning.
136. Staff expertise is variable. Because of staff changes, only some of the teachers have undergone recent training. Unfortunately, and despite great efforts, the school has not yet managed to recruit a teacher suitably qualified and experienced to lead developments in this subject. To its credit and in particular to the credit of the senior management team, there is a clear understanding of the shortcomings and a clear and helpful development plan has been drawn up. The senior staff are determined to support improvement. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

## MUSIC

137. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be similar to those found nationally. Attainment in the performance elements of music are considerably stronger than other skills.
138. There has not been a strong musical tradition within the school in recent times. The new subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and energetic. She has had some major successes in overcoming some negative attitudes about music and performing, especially amongst the older pupils. Her most notable achievement so far has been to produce a performance of 'Resurrection Rock' when older pupils were eventually persuaded to audition for a part. Most progress has been made in singing. During the inspection all the pupils sang harvest songs in assemblies tunefully and confidently. The co-ordinator has also started a lunchtime choir but she has had an uphill battle at times to persuade pupils to give up their playtime. Nevertheless about twenty pupils attended choir practice during the inspection and sang reasonably well, albeit in unison with no examples of part-singing. Year 6 pupils are able to sing a small repertoire of songs from World War One such as 'It's a long long way to Tipperary'. Teachers are aware that pupils with special educational needs can often flourish in subjects such as music and there has been one outstanding example of a child being helped by nurturing his musical talents,
139. Two lessons were observed in which teaching was satisfactory but there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching overall. In one lesson some younger pupils found it difficult to sit still and listen to the music being played although they had plenty of opinions about the music being happy or sad or 'like a lullaby. In another lesson some older pupils were learning about the time value of written notes and tried to find the mistakes in a sample of written music. Their knowledge of rhythm and their ability to keep time is below expectations. There are examples in the school of pupils learning about composition and discovering different ways of producing music. Year 5 for example are working on a composition entitled 'Journey into Space'. There is also a very good example of Year 5/6 compositions in which pupils wrote lyrics and put these to music. The pupils had clearly linked rhythm to words.
140. There is only one musician on the teaching staff. A full programme of music teaching is established in the curriculum long-term plans. Teachers have a nationally –produced scheme of work to help them but the subject leader is aware that teachers need more teaching resources if they are to provide the pupils with the



experiences they need to raise standards. The school stock of musical instruments is insufficient and the music room is small and drab.

141. About five pupils receive percussion lessons and three learn the cello from visiting specialist music teachers. A parent at the school has helped the subject leader teach recorder. All of Year 6 and about eight Year 5 will be taught how to play the recorder this year.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

142. Overall standards are as expected nationally by the ages of seven and eleven. By the age of eleven pupils' attainment in swimming and games is above average. A significant number of pupils swim long distances, have good techniques, with a variety of strokes, and higher attainers are becoming confident in life saving skills. The provision for this aspect is good. Older pupils benefit from the excellent teaching of soccer skills and play football, rugby, netball and other games well. The very good provision for adventurous outdoor pursuits during the residential visit ensures that pupils achieve good skills in these aspects of the subject. The teaching of gymnastics, dance and athletics is less well developed and this affects the overall standards pupils achieve.
143. Seven year olds are aware of the effect of exercise on the body and engage in sustained physical activity. They are able to link a movement, which allows them to travel across the floor with a balanced position. The majority hold a creative bridge position successfully but only a minority are stretching their bodies to the maximum effect. They are able transfer these movements from moving across the floor to moving over apparatus. Older pupils continue to use their imagination well and find innovative ways of moving around the floor space in curled up shapes. They combine these movements with stretched shapes in the air. The oldest pupils have good football skills. They control the ball well while learning the specific skills a goalkeeper would use twirling the ball with their fingers above their head so they can push the ball upwards and over the back of the net. They learn to grasp the ball with closed body shapes and both hands drawing the ball to their chest.
144. Teaching is variable ranging from satisfactory to excellent; it is good overall. This variability has an impact on pupils pace of learning and performance in different aspects of the subject. Where teaching is excellent, pupils achieve very well. The football coach has high expectations of their performance and skilfully teaches the importance the correct techniques and ball control. Most teachers clearly explain the skills to be learned and the tasks to be undertaken in gymnastics and make use of a published scheme so the sessions have an appropriate balance of activities. Where teaching is less effective the pace of the session is too slow, space and resources are not maximised and expectations are insufficiently high. Not all teachers have the confidence to teach the lesson without strict adherence to the published scheme and are more concerned that pupils undertake each activity than ensuring that pupils achieve high standards of performance. There is some variation in teachers' expectations while promoting fitness and health. In the best sessions the initial activities systematically and energetically warm up pupils' muscles and increase cardiovascular activity. The youngest pupils are knowledgeable in their response to questioning about the purpose of exercise and in particular why the initial and final session is so important. Teachers do not currently make sufficient use of the assessment of pupils' capabilities to plan work which fully extends them all.
145. There are good opportunities for all pupils to take part in all aspects of the curriculum. Both boys and girls play football. Pupils work well together and are confident while performing in front of their friends. The majority of pupils enjoy sessions and participate fully. However, despite the fact

that they are given a wide range of exciting, challenging and sometimes unique opportunities a few pupils display indifference and do not make sufficient effort, hampering their learning.

146. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has not yet had the opportunity to have an impact on provision. The school has rightly identified the need to improve the resources and their storage. Some staff lack confidence in the teaching of gymnastics and dance and support and training are planned. Extra curricular activities in sports, inter-school matches and outdoor adventurous activities, make a very good contribution to the subject. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.