

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VOLUNTARY  
CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Swindon, near Dudley

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124278

Headteacher: Mr Peter Griffiths

Reporting inspector: Dr Richard Perkin  
14591

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 248579

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wombourne Road Swindon Dudley West Midlands
Postcode:	DY3 4NB
Telephone number:	01384 273865
Fax number:	01384 273865
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Taylor-Williams
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14591	Richard Perkin	Registered inspector	English Music Physical education Religious education Educational inclusion	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well the school is led and managed Key Issues for action
8988	Joan Cross	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents and carers
30724	Delia Hiscock	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Design and technology	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
17085	George Mitchell	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography History Special educational needs	How well pupils are taught

The inspection contractor was:

Primary Associates Limited  
Suite 13  
West Lancashire Technology Management Centre  
Moss Lane View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TN

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>5</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>18</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a much smaller than average school, catering for girls and boys aged from 4 to 11. There are currently 70 pupils on roll, taught in mixed-age classes. Most pupils are of white British heritage, with a small number of Asian British pupils and a smaller number of pupils of mixed heritage. None of the pupils is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. While the number of pupils starting at the school in years other than the reception year is small, with such small year groups this mobility sometimes has a significant effect on standards. A below average number of pupils have special educational needs and no pupil currently has a statement of special educational needs. The range of needs includes emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and autism. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils qualifying for free school meals is broadly average. The school is situated in the village of Swindon close to Dudley and Wolverhampton. Children come from the village and the surrounding area, with a number travelling from Dudley and Wombourne.

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

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Pupils' standards of attainment are broadly at expected levels, though above average in mathematics, reading and religious education at age 11. Most pupils achieve soundly and those with special educational needs achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school, with good features. The leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governors are sound. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Standards are above average in mathematics, reading and religious education for 11-year-olds;
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they receive;
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well because the school provides well for their personal development;
- The school looks after its pupils well;
- The parents' involvement in school life has a strong impact on provision and standards.

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

- Standards, resources and teaching in information and communication technology;
- The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching and learning in order to ensure more challenge for higher attainers and more opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning and creative skills;
- The assessment of pupils' work in subjects other than English, mathematics and science;
- The quality of the accommodation.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Improvement since the last inspection in November 1997 has been satisfactory. Standards have improved in reading and religious education throughout the school and in mathematics for Year 6. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good, so that they make good progress. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented soundly. Progress has been made in the key issues from the last inspection, though none has been completely addressed. There have been substantial improvements in assessment arrangements for English, mathematics and science but the assessment of other subjects remains unsatisfactory. The involvement of governors in holding the school to account for its standards and provision has improved, as has their role in development planning and

policy review. The monitoring of teaching has improved but is still not systematic, frequent or focused enough.

## STANDARDS

Standards in English for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average, though standards of reading are above average. Standards in mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6 and broadly average by the end of Year 2. Standards in science are at broadly expected levels for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Comparisons with last year's national test results for seven and 11-year-olds are difficult because of the very small numbers of pupils involved. However, the school met its sensible targets for English and mathematics in 2002 and is on track to meet its more challenging targets, certainly for mathematics, in 2003. The trends are generally upwards over time, though there is evidence of some under-achievement for higher attainers in tests at both seven and 11 years. Boys tend to perform better than girls in all three subjects. Pupils joining the school during Years 5 and 6 have a disproportionate effect on test statistics, particularly when, as often happens, they have behavioural or learning difficulties. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are at expected levels.

Children in the reception group make satisfactory progress to meet the early learning goals in most areas by the time they begin Year 1; their personal, social and emotional development is above average and their creative development below average.

Standards in religious education are above average throughout the school. Standards in information and communication technology for the older pupils are below average, largely because substantial delays, beyond the school's control, have occurred in developing a computer suite. This means that pupils do not have enough access to computers. Standards in art and design, geography, history and physical education are at expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. No judgements were made about standards in design and technology and music.

Most pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported and work is suitably adapted for their needs. Higher attaining pupils make no more than satisfactory progress because work is not always sufficiently challenging to push them to their full potential.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards school and enjoy their work. They concentrate on their learning and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Sometimes behaviour is boisterous during pupils' free time. A very small number of pupils do not meet the school's high expectations regarding their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory but the school does not give them enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Attendance is good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning through the school is satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in all classes but other aspects of teaching were less strong. The teaching of reading and mathematics is good; other aspects of English are taught satisfactorily. Religious education is taught well throughout the school. The teaching of information and communication technology is sound in Years 1 to 4 but unsatisfactory for older pupils. Teachers establish positive and caring relationships with the pupils, creating a good atmosphere within which pupils can learn new skills and knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well served by teachers and support staff, with the result that they make good progress towards their targets. Basic skills, including those of literacy and numeracy, are well taught. Consequently, pupils reach above average standards in mathematics and reading by the end of Year 6. Teachers cope well with mixed age classes and plan work which meets the needs of different groups. There are times when the pace of learning slows because teachers do not ensure that pupils are working as hard as they can. Lessons do not always offer sufficient opportunities for pupils to make decisions and find information for themselves, which limits the development of their skills in operating independently and creatively.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The lack of a computer suite weakens the curriculum for information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The needs of these pupils are identified early and they benefit from good support and work that is carefully planned to meet their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The school provides well for pupils' moral and social development and there are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to reflect on life, feelings and ideas. Opportunities for pupils' cultural development are satisfactory though more could be done to prepare them for life in a diverse society. There is a satisfactory policy for racial equality that is implemented soundly.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. There are sound arrangements for child protection. Those with medical conditions are well cared for and pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are dealt with sensitively and, on the whole, effectively. Tighter procedures are needed for following up absence. Assessment has improved in relation to English, mathematics and science but planned procedures relating to other subjects are not yet fully implemented.

Parents' views are less positive than they were five years ago but, in the main, parents are happy with the school. They have good opportunities to discuss progress and the targets set for their child's development. There is very good guidance for parent helpers and the parents' and teachers' association is extremely successful. The school does not consult with parents enough about its effectiveness, nor provide sufficient information about topics and the curriculum to involve them more in supporting their children at home.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key	Satisfactory. Staff with leadership responsibilities in key areas such as mathematics, English and special educational needs work effectively to improve standards and provision. There is sometimes a lack of urgency

staff	in dealing with issues and problems.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are playing an increasingly active part in school development and know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They do not always ensure that the school acts with sufficient rigour.



The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school is beginning to analyse pupils' performance in order to bring about improvements in, for example, reading and mathematics. The checking and support for teaching and learning, however, is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the teaching develops pupils' independence and creativity enough.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used well. Financial planning takes sound account of the school's priorities though actions are sometimes not followed through sufficiently speedily.

Staffing and learning resources are satisfactory. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. It is cramped and the teachers do well to use the space for the range of needs in the mixed age classes. The lack of outdoor play facilities for children in reception, the state of disrepair of some of the corridors and the delay in creating a computer suite all have a negative effect on pupils' learning. The extent to which the school applies the principles of best value is satisfactory. The school takes advice from the local education authority and other local schools. It compares costs carefully before making spending decisions but does not always challenge its own performance rigorously enough.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school;</li> <li>• The children are expected to work hard and they make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons;</li> <li>• The quality of leadership and management;</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school;</li> <li>• Homework;</li> <li>• The school does not work closely enough with the parents;</li> <li>• Information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

The inspection judgement confirmed the parents' positive views to a large extent; progress is good for pupils with special educational needs and satisfactory for the other pupils. Behaviour in the school is generally good and particular problems of behaviour are being dealt with effectively for the most part. While leadership and management have some flaws, they are overall satisfactory. The range of activities outside lessons, the homework arrangements and the information provided for parents are all judged to be satisfactory as are the school's links with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The number of 11-year-olds taking the national tests in English, mathematics and science in 2002 was very small but a significant proportion achieved the level above that expected in English and mathematics. The results were well above the national average. The results in science were below the national average. For pupils in the present Year 6, where there are fewer higher attainers, standards in mathematics are above average, while standards in English and science are broadly at expected levels. Standards in reading for Year 6 pupils are above average as a result of the school's successful focus on developing reading skills during the last year. Skills in speaking and listening are at expected levels, as are writing standards. The school has satisfactorily implemented its literacy strategy to enable pupils of all ages and abilities to achieve soundly. The arrangements also provide opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length in some English lessons for the older pupils. The recent use of individual writing targets is beginning to have a positive effect on standards of writing. Pupils' literacy standards generally are sound and pupils are given satisfactory chances to write at length and in their own words in subjects such as history and religious education. They also have occasional opportunities to use their reading skills for research though there are too few to enable higher attainers to develop their enquiry skills fully. The good standards in mathematics are largely a result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which the school has effectively adapted to take account of the mixed age classes. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory; however, too few opportunities are taken to develop numeracy skills in other subjects. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection in English and science and improved in mathematics.
2. Standards in religious education by the end of Year 6 are above those expected, because the teaching makes the learning relevant to pupils' lives and interests. Standards for 11-year-olds in information and communication technology are below those expected, largely because the delay in creating the planned computer suite prevents sufficient opportunities for pupils to use the computers enough to develop their skills. Another result of the delay is that there are not enough opportunities to use information and communication technology in other subjects. In some cases, even when it is used, as for example in mathematics lessons in Years 5 and 6, the activities are not closely linked to the learning that is going on and so have little impact on pupils' skills of information and communication technology.
3. Children in the reception class make satisfactory progress and achieve the early learning goals in all the areas of learning except personal, social and emotional development and creative development. In personal, social and emotional development, children make good progress and most exceed expectations by the time they start Year 1. Limited opportunities to work sufficiently independently in their creative activities mean that most children do not reach the expected levels in creative development.
4. Pupils reach broadly average standards in mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. Standards in reading are above average, while in speaking and listening and writing, they are at expected levels. Standards in religious education are above those expected for seven-year-olds.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets because adults know them well. Carefully constructed individual education plans help in the planning of appropriate work, which matches the pupils' needs. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are particularly well supported and some make very good progress. A significant number of pupils, who join the school during Years 5 and 6, have special educational needs and behavioural difficulties. This inevitably has an effect on the percentage of pupils achieving well in the national tests. Other pupils, including higher attainers and pupils identified as being gifted and talented, make satisfactory progress. However, higher attainers are not always challenged sufficiently by the work set for them.

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

6. These aspects generally remain as strong as they were at the time of the last inspection and continue to contribute greatly to standards achieved and to pupils' personal development. The school is a happy, caring place, where pupils have positive attitudes towards each other and their work. When asked what they most like about their school, Year 6 pupils commented upon the friendliness of the teachers, and the help that they and the support staff give them with their work.
7. Right from the outset in the reception year, staff encourage the pupils to listen carefully to explanations and instructions, and share resources sensibly. Reception pupils are particularly good for their age, on coming indoors, at removing and hanging their coats by themselves and without fuss. They relate positively to their teacher, the support staff and students, helped by the trusting relationships that are established.
8. As they get older, the pupils remain keen to learn and eager to do their best. In general, they are attentive during lesson introductions, settle down to tasks quickly and work hard to complete them. They show good levels of interest and work well co-operatively. Pupils tend to lack independent learning skills because teachers, on the whole, do not expect them to find enough out for themselves, for example, through personal research.
9. Many parents have concerns about the standard of behaviour in school. Some rightly perceive that these relate to a very small number of pupils, who sometimes behave unacceptably. Behaviour is usually good in lessons and this enables pupils to concentrate on their work. On occasions, however, the challenging behaviour of just a few pupils disturbs learning because teachers have to break off what they are teaching to check them. These pupils are not allowed to set the tone.
10. In the playground, friendship groups abound and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds integrate well. Pupils of all ages generally play amicably together, older pupils taking good care of the younger ones. Sometimes the pupils exhibit boisterous behaviour at break and at lunchtime, but impromptu games such as football and tennis help to channel their energies. Intimations of some parents that bullying takes place were unsubstantiated. There was no verbal harassment during the inspection and none of the pupils appeared intimidated or isolated. The school suitably records, reports and appropriately deals with any incidents of racism. There were no exclusions from the school last year.
11. Relationships are good throughout the school and most aspects of pupils' personal development are satisfactory. In assembly, pupils are reverent and respectful during prayers and all ages sing joyfully and uninhibitedly. Older pupils enjoy helping out around the school by preparing the hall for worship, for example, but there are too few

opportunities for them to take responsibility or show initiative. Pupils are not given enough say in the school, either to find out their opinions, or to help shape its development. This limits the contribution that they can make to school improvement.

12. Attendance is good, being above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is not an issue in the school, the small amount being caused by very few families who fail to respond to the school's requests for explanations regarding absence. Pupils generally arrive at school punctually.

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

13. Whilst many lessons are well taught, with pupils learning at a reasonable rate, the overall quality of teaching and learning through the school is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Monitoring and evaluation systems have not been systematic and rigorous enough to identify and address some areas for development; consequently, the school has not been able to maintain the good quality of teaching found at the previous inspection. Pupils continue to progress at a satisfactory rate and reach standards similar to those found previously, but it is clear that in some subjects, pupils, particularly the higher attainers, are not reaching the above average levels of which they are capable.
14. The most effective teaching is seen in mathematics, largely due to the way in which the school has established the national numeracy strategy. Lessons are marked by detailed planning and activities which build well on what pupils already know. Introductory mental sessions are brisk and challenging, helping to improve pupils' speed of thought. Teachers deal well with the mixed age group classes and make good provision for pupils who are at very different stages. Lessons usually end with teachers and pupils discussing and solving problems that have arisen during the group activities, helping to reinforce the learning that has taken place. The consequence of this system is that pupils achieve well through the school and by the time they leave, reach above average standards. The teaching of reading is also thorough and well organised, with an appropriate emphasis on teaching pupils through the sounds of letters, which helps them to build new words and raise their reading standards above the average.
15. A positive feature is the quality of relationships developed between adults and pupils. A very apparent level of care permeates the school and any issues are dealt with in a positive manner. Resulting lessons are usually calm and purposeful, with confident pupils interacting sensibly with one another and with adults. This provides a good atmosphere for learning and helps pupils to achieve well. A religious education lesson for junior age pupils exemplified this approach and, as a result, pupils gained an appreciation of the meaning behind the crucifixion and in a discussion about right and wrong actions, demonstrated a maturity and understanding beyond their years.
16. The help provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are well constructed with clear and relevant targets, providing the basis upon which approaches and activities are established. Teachers know the pupils well and understand their needs, so that the pupils receive consistent and appropriate help. This level of support, along with regular reviews, ensures that pupils progress well towards their targets. The school is particularly successful in dealing with pupils who have behavioural problems. Teaching assistants are well briefed and make a significant contribution to pupils' development by supporting and motivating them to achieve well.

17. In mathematics, science and English, teachers make regular assessments of pupils' progress. This helps to ensure that new work is planned to match the stage that has been reached. In mathematics, pupils receive stickers to indicate when they have achieved one of their targets and teachers make clear written comments, all of which helps pupils to appreciate how well they are doing. Similar targets are used successfully to help improve pupils' writing.
18. Some weaknesses in teaching and learning are evident, not only in lessons, but also in the school's sample of previous work. There is insufficient evidence in, for example, art and design and design and technology, of pupils producing work of good quality. There are too few opportunities for pupils to make decisions, think creatively and research their own solutions to problems. Their work, particularly in art and design, is sometimes dominated by adults with pupils simply following a template or outline provided. Design and technology, whilst clearly providing opportunities for pupils to learn to deal with different materials, does not give pupils sufficient chances to operate as individuals, so that models are all very similar; this particularly inhibits the progress of the higher attainers.
19. In planning lessons, teachers do think carefully about activities which will meet the needs of pupils who are at different stages of development. Often this preparation results in lessons that serve the pupils well and promote their acquisition of new skills and knowledge. There are times, however, when teachers do not ensure that the pace of learning is sustained. The atmosphere of a lesson can become too relaxed and pupils coast, failing to gain full benefit from the well sequenced activities.
20. The teachers have positive attitudes to their work and make significant efforts to try to ensure that all pupils progress, even in the demanding situation of mixed age classes. They are successful in helping pupils to attain standards in line with what would be found in most schools. Their willingness to seek to improve their skills bodes well for the future.

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

21. The school provides a curriculum which is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Steady progress has been made in addressing the curriculum shortcomings identified in the previous report. The school has policies in place for all subjects and continues to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The implementation of the policies in some subjects has yet to make a full impact on standards. The three-year plan to develop the curriculum has assured a better series of activities for most subjects, across the mixed aged classes. However, this is not the case for art and design, design and technology and physical education, which remain to be developed. Subjects other than English, mathematics and science are planned into topics and delivered over a two-year period each half term. Some topics are not sufficiently carefully planned to ensure that the knowledge and skills of each subject develop and pupils gain a deeper understanding. Provision for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not have enough learning opportunities because of the delays in the installation of the computer suite. This is seriously hindering progress and is the main reason why standards in the subject are below average.
22. The school has rightly focused on literacy and numeracy skills in its effort to raise standards. Good use of the national strategies has borne fruit. Where literacy is planned into subjects such as science, pupils make good progress in both subjects.

However, insufficient emphasis is placed on the creative and aesthetic aspects of subjects such as art and design and design and technology and too few opportunities are planned in other subjects to inspire pupils to express themselves imaginatively.

23. In the reception class, the school provides a suitable curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage of their education. The children are involved in activities that are realistically linked across the six areas of learning as they move towards the early learning goals expected for their age. They gain from learning alongside Year 1 pupils in the first parts of lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy. However, children are not given enough opportunities to explore creatively and investigate for themselves. There is not enough emphasis on creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The provision gives children a sound start for the next part of their education.
24. The sound provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 receive sex education and are made aware of the effects of drug misuse. In particular, religious education contributes much to pupils' awareness of these life decisions and of their social responsibilities.
25. Provision for meeting pupils' special educational needs is good. The curriculum provided for these pupils enables their access to all the school has to offer. They are fully involved in all activities because teachers are well aware of their needs and levels of development.
26. Higher attaining pupils are generally soundly catered for, though not as precisely as pupils with special educational needs. Activities with generally appropriate levels of challenge are often planned but not always put into practice energetically enough. In some lessons, such as science in Years 5 and 6, pupils are not always challenged or stimulated enough in the activities planned. No specific provision is yet made for the very few pupils identified as being gifted and talented, but teachers know their pupils well and recognise the gifted pupils' needs sufficiently by targeting challenging questions and tasks.
27. The school has maintained a modest range of extra-curricular activities during the period since the last inspection. Included are sports, such as tennis, which has a good number of pupils attending coaching sessions and which is effective in improving pupils' ball skills. The small selection of other activities includes sewing, chess clubs and visits to the theatre; the pupils' take up for the chess club is small. Pupils have good links with the local high school and there are valuable links with the community, through, for example, a local study in history and geography, and the local cluster of small schools, all of which add relevance to pupils' learning experiences to an otherwise satisfactory curriculum.
28. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, representing little change since the previous inspection.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There has been limited improvement in this important aspect of pupils' lives since the last inspection. The strengths of religious education continue to develop pupils' awareness of the ideas and beliefs of other communities. Lively singing and moments of prayer in collective worship are the main opportunities for pupils to join together in harmony. There is, however, little time for pupils to reflect for themselves about a shared story, for example, and for some pupils, the implications of the story are missed. Visits from

local clergy help pupils to gain further insight into the Christian faith. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the beliefs of pupils from religions other than Christianity and this contributes effectively to the promotion of cultural and racial awareness. However, in lessons there are only a few planned occasions for pupils to grapple with big religious or philosophical ideas which fuel the imagination.

30. Provision for moral development is good. The school has clear expectations of how pupils should behave and they are generally aware of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils understand that respect is a central element in day-to-day life in the school because adults provide good models. In addition, pupils are encouraged to help others less fortunate than themselves, around the school and by reaching out beyond the community they know, through charitable donations and events. The calm management of pupils by teachers who consistently apply the expected code of behaviour brings a growing understanding of the need for order and responsibility. As a result, pupils understand the effect of decisions they have made and show an increasing understanding of right and wrong. Religious education contributes much to development of important moral values in the way in which it examines the rules and laws that underpin religions such as Judaism and encourages the pupils to apply them to their own lives and experience.
31. Opportunities for social development are well planned and effective. Good relationships in the school are at the core of this work. Pupils gain in confidence as they learn to work in pairs and groups in their activities. Early in reception, pupils work alongside Year 1 pupils and many of them negotiate with each other from the earliest opportunity. Pupils are interested in and welcome visitors to the school. Also, pupils benefit from this school community where their views are valued. Those pupils who demonstrate difficult behaviour are well supported in non-judgemental ways so that they understand the effect of their actions and take responsibility for the decisions they have made.
32. Provision for pupils' cultural development continues to be satisfactory. Provision is slightly better than this in history and geography where the local area is used to develop pupils' understanding of local traditions and important cultural features of the area. Again, religious education plays a valuable role in promoting pupils' personal development by fostering an understanding of other faiths. For example, Year 1 pupils were very interested in the garments and objects of Judaism. Good use of these resources such as these helps to prepare pupils for living in a multiethnic Britain, but there are few objects and images from other cultures used in art and design, mathematics and geography.

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

33. Teachers and support staff get to know the pupils well and take good care of them. Parents appreciate the sensitivity with which they meet their children's individual needs, whether educational, medical, or emotional and behavioural. There are still weaknesses relating to the assessment of pupils' work which formed a key issue at the time of the last inspection.
34. The school has established effective links with the local playgroup that enable the reception year teacher to visit the children and build trusting relationships before they start school. This helps to ease them smoothly into school life. The adults in the mixed reception and Year 1 class are careful to ensure that the children continue to develop their confidence and feel comfortable in school.

35. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is closely monitored. Individual education plans are thoughtfully constructed with clear and appropriate targets, which are regularly reviewed and amended. The systems in place help to ensure pupils' good progress.
36. Attendance is checked and promoted satisfactorily. Lateness and unauthorised absence are appropriately recorded in the registers which are monitored weekly. Parents are contacted if they fail to explain their child's absence upon return to school. They are insufficiently encouraged to inform the staff about absence on the first day. This is important so that the school is clear about their child's whereabouts and safety. The prospectus does not emphasise this clearly enough.
37. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Staff are consistent in their expectations that pupils behave well in lessons, helped by the recently strengthened code of conduct. There are suitable guidelines on behaviour that seek parents' support in working with the staff to provide a happy, productive and safe environment for the pupils. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour, including racism, are suitably logged and dealt with. Midday staff see to the pupils' needs well and communicate effectively with teachers about accidents and other incidents but they have not had any recent training in their important role. This is needed to enable them to maintain the same atmosphere at lunchtime as the pupils' experience during the rest of the school day.
38. Matters relating to welfare, health and safety are suitably outlined in the useful staff handbook and practice is satisfactory. However, the health and safety policy is in need of updating, as is training in child protection issues for the designated teacher and other staff.
39. The school has made considerable headway over the last five years in establishing a consistent approach to assessing pupils' work in English, mathematics and science. Teachers track pupils' progress better now in these subjects throughout the school and set suitable targets for their development. This tracking process is helped by regular assessments of pupils' reading, spelling and number capabilities, and by pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 undertaking optional standardised tests. Teachers scrutinise the school's results better in compulsory national tests for seven and 11-year-olds and use the findings satisfactorily to guide future curriculum planning. Consequently, standards are improving, particularly in reading and mathematics. A whole-school approach to assessing pupils' progress in other subjects is planned for but not yet implemented fully. As a result, standards in some subjects are not as high as they should be. Pupils' personal files suitably record achievements of all kinds, both in and out of school, such as their certificates of merit for good work or sustained effort.

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

40. The school continues to maintain a sound partnership with parents and carers. Since the last inspection, it has taken suitable measures to explain policies, such as that relating to homework expectations, more clearly to parents. This was one of the key issues for action five years ago.
41. Parents' views on the school are reasonably positive overall, but there has been a downturn in levels of parental satisfaction with some aspects since the last inspection. Parents rightly believe that their children are happy at school. They are pleased that teachers expect them to work hard and that they make good progress.



Parents' divergent opinions on other issues largely centre around perceptions that the school has not taken a firm enough approach to behaviour and discipline over the past year. Some parents believe that the inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, of a very small number of pupils is not tackled effectively. Discussions with pupils and staff revealed no concerns about bullying, and none was seen during the inspection. There were, however, several instances of challenging behaviour in lessons and during pupils' free time. These, in the main, were dealt with well by the staff. The school rarely canvasses parents' opinions and had not picked up on the depth of feeling on these issues.

42. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. Some parents indicated that they would like to be better informed about their child's progress. The school offers good opportunities for parents to discuss progress, and the targets set for their child's development, at the open evenings and annual formal consultation. The open evenings, however, are poorly attended by parents. Typically only about half of the children are represented. Parents are welcome to contact the staff at any time if they have concerns. The annual written reports on pupils' progress are generally satisfactory. They report reasonably well on attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science but focus too heavily in other subjects upon what has been taught. A good feature of these reports is the inclusion of the child's individual targets.
43. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved at each stage of the processes affecting their children. They are invited to attend meetings and consulted and informed to make sure that they understand and approve what is happening. The good partnership between home and school helps to promote pupils' good progress.
44. Homework makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning and parents are satisfactorily involved in this, helped by initiatives such as the scheme for families to loan mathematical games. Parents are right to point out that their ability to help their children to learn at home is hampered by lack of information about the work and topics undertaken in lessons.
45. Parents and other adults are welcomed as volunteers to assist with a wide variety of tasks and their efforts are much appreciated by the staff. These helpers receive useful guidance, suitable training and a mentor to talk them through any difficulties. This very good practice helps the volunteers to fulfil their role safely and effectively. The thriving parents' association successfully organises much enjoyed social events, such as discos and quizzes, and raises substantial funds for the benefit of the pupils. This involvement of parents makes a positive impact on the work of the school.

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

46. The leadership and management of the headteacher and teachers with subject and other management responsibilities are satisfactory, as they were at the last inspection. In such a small school, staff responsibilities are many and the teachers have made sensible decisions in prioritising their efforts so that leadership and management in key areas such as mathematics, English and special educational needs are well led and managed and standards are improving as a result. The school's strategies for numeracy and literacy have been successfully established and it is gaining a well-deserved reputation for successfully incorporating pupils with behaviour and other learning difficulties into school life. The school has an appropriate set of aims, which are for the most part reflected in its life and work. However, there is sometimes a lack of rigour and urgency in following priorities through. While many

of the difficulties that are holding back the development of information and communication technology are out of the school's control, more could have been done to develop the subject further. The monitoring of teaching and learning, too, sometimes lacks rigour. In some areas, such as the education of young children, the monitoring and evaluation have been effective in providing suitable learning opportunities for them in a mixed age class. The monitoring of teachers' planning, too, has ensured that the tasks set cater for the full age and ability range in each class. Overall, however, the school has not pushed hard enough to ensure that the planning is always put into practice rigorously so that teaching provides the consistent level of challenge that develops pupils' independent and creative skills and drives higher attainers to achieve what they are capable of.

47. The provision for pupils with special education needs is well managed. The co-ordinator has set up effective systems for identification and support which help to ensure that pupils' needs are quickly recognised and focused upon by all staff. The governing body monitors the work done and two knowledgeable governors offer support and advice which helps to ensure that pupils receive appropriate guidance. Money for special needs is well spent on staffing and learning resources.
48. The governing body is committed and hard working and knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Individual governors work effectively with subject co-ordinators and often provide a knowledgeable source of information about parents' views, for example. There is an efficient committee structure that enables the governing body to give careful consideration to school policies. Governors play their part in school development planning along with the headteacher and staff. The school development plan is a sound one that identifies appropriate priorities, many of which grow out of the action plan from the last inspection and show a steadily phased response to it. The pace of this response, while it needed to take account of other important developments, such as the numeracy and literacy strategies, was not as urgent as it should have been. Developments are suitably linked to the budget and financial planning is sound, taking appropriate account of obtaining the best value possible.
49. The accommodation is very cramped, even when it is in good repair. The teachers successfully do the best they can to provide stimulating classrooms and corridors. However, repairs and improvements have, through no fault of the school, taken much longer than they should have done. Consequently, it is not possible for displays to be mounted in one part of the school, which consequently does not provide an attractive learning environment for the pupils. More importantly, the planned development of a computer suite, for which funding has been available for over two years, is held up by leaks in the roof. Again, the school has pushed hard for speedy action, to no avail. The lack of a computer suite is a major factor in the unsatisfactory standards reached by the older pupils in information and communication technology. There is also a lack of outdoor play provision for the youngest children. Plans are in place for the development of a play area in order to improve children's creative and physical development.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. To improve standards and the quality of education in the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (a) Improve pupils' standards of attainment in information and communication technology by:
- ensuring that the computer suite is completed;
  - incorporating in teachers' planning the systematic development of pupils' skills through using the computer suite and the computers in the classrooms;
  - developing procedures for assessing pupils' progress in the subject and putting them into consistent practice.

(paragraphs 69, 99 – 102)

- (b) Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning more systematically to ensure that lessons present more opportunities for pupils to develop more independent learning and creative skills and that lessons consistently proceed with more rigour, challenge and pace.

(paragraphs 13, 18, 19, 46, 66,68. 69, 81, 82, 84, 85 )

- (c) Consistently implement the planned assessment procedures for art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education.

(paragraphs 39,90, 98, 108)

- (d) Urgently seek to improve the quality of the accommodation to promote pupils' learning by:
- Implementing the existing plans to develop outdoor play provision for children in the reception year;
  - Putting right the poor state of repair in the school that is inhibiting the plans for a computer suite.

(paragraphs 49, 53, 99)

The headteacher, staff and governors should also take account of the following minor issue:

- Build key skills more systematically in design and technology by providing more progressive opportunities for pupils to plan, design and evaluate projects.

(paragraphs 91 – 94)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	11	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	10	52	38	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	70
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

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

The table of standards achieved by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, based on National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments, is omitted as there were less than 10 pupils in the year groups.

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	51	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

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

### ***Financial information***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	23

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

Financial year	2002
----------------	------

Total income	217500
Total expenditure	218760
Expenditure per pupil	3081
Balance brought forward from previous year	5700
Balance carried forward to next year	1260

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

#### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	69
Number of questionnaires returned	26

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	23	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	46	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	38	27	4	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	46	15	12	0
The teaching is good.	50	38	12	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	38	8	15	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	38	12	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	31	8	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	42	12	15	0
The school is well led and managed.	19	23	35	23	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	58	12	4	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	27	15	50	0

*Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.*



## **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**

51. Children begin their reception year at the end of the term in which they are four years old. At the time of the inspection, 11 children attended. Adults work well together to provide a warm and lively place that nurtures children's confidence very well. Children settle readily into the stress-free climate which fosters early relationships and caters well for their needs. Children with special educational needs are identified very early and the high quality sensitive care is reflected in the good progress these children make. The school is preparing to develop a 'profile' for each child as they start the National Curriculum, in line with national requirements. The school's observations indicate that children enter Year 1 broadly in line with national expectations in the six areas that make up the Foundation Stage curriculum. The inspection judgement is that children are better than this in personal, social and emotional development and below average in creative development. Children make sound progress towards the early learning goals by the time they leave reception and have the added bonus of confidence and enthusiasm for work. Plans for teaching reflect these six areas and are suitably inter-linked for young children but not as exploratory and investigative as they could be so that children's creative development is hampered, to some extent.
52. Children soon get used to the teaching approaches used for the Year 1 pupils. This advantage of the joint reception and Year 1 class smoothes the reception children's move into National Curriculum work and maintains their confidence so that they feel secure in the classroom they know and have grown to love. Different levels of ability are catered for in the literacy and numeracy sessions as children work with Year 1 for brief and often stimulating activities. Most children achieve well in these energetic introductions to formal activities. However, the school does not provide enough play-based activities to entice the youngest children into learning for themselves. The school recognises that there is some way to go to enrich the activities for the youngest children, even though provision is satisfactory and teaching is lively and stimulating. Plans are underway to develop outdoor play provision to help broaden the curriculum for these children.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

53. Most children start reception class with the expected skills for their age. They form relationships well and feel that the classroom is part of their natural place to belong. Most of the children are well on their way to meeting the early learning goals in self-help. Many can organise their coats and belongings without a lot of help. The secure routines each day mean that they are confident and eager learners who respond well when given the opportunity to organise themselves and make their own decisions. For example, when they attend 'Jack and Jill' to deal with the disaster, they sustain their play scenes for some moments, negotiating and pursuing the next idea with delight. The children behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They are well placed to achieve and even exceed the early learning goals in this important area of learning by the time they complete their reception year.
54. The quality of teaching is sound and sometimes better. Children are generally eager to take part in activities and learn to handle resources with increasing thought. There is great emphasis on care for the children by all adults and some quite sensitive handling of children with individual needs to enable them to participate equally with the

other children. Children are helped to choose activities, to be sensible and to persevere with their chosen task. However, some over-direction in learning activities reduces the chance for these capable children to develop independent skills as learners as quickly as they might. The early boost to children's confidence prepares them very well for learning initially, but reaches a plateau. Children do not respond as well when teaching is over-directed and lose concentration.

### **Communication, language and literature**

55. By the time they enter Year 1, most of this small number of children will have achieved the early learning goals in speaking, listening, reading and writing. This represents sound progress from average starting points on beginning reception. Because children have opportunities to chat and negotiate with each other in purposeful play settings, most will exceed the expectations in speaking. Warm encouragement in teaching sessions helps children to concentrate. Often, they will edge closer and closer during carpet time during rhymes, songs and stories, as adults encourage them to build on their ideas and extend their phrases into sentences.
56. Teaching is sound. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has worked hard to develop appropriate provision for this mixed aged class. Achievement in reading and writing reflects the good opportunities provided where adults promote reading and writing in unthreatening ways. Enough weight is given to children's own early writing, even though in their own writing books, children generally are guided to write by an adult. The confidence and skills they gain are reflected in their self-chosen activities where they make their jottings in the 'Doctor's book', mimicking paramedics to record events following 'Jack's broken crown.' Greater emphasis on writing information using labels and lists and for sequencing events would add further momentum for those children capable of achieving more.
57. Well planned reading and writing opportunities link well with the speaking and listening activities and are a significant factor in helping children make good gains in learning. Carpet time galvanises children's ideas and responses into animated learning sessions, where these young children learn to handle books correctly, share them with friends and absorb stories with delight.

### **Mathematical development**

58. By the end of their reception year, most children achieve the expectations set out in the early learning goals. They deal well with numbers to nine and some go beyond. They make sound progress overall, learning faster when experiences are demanding enough to test their understanding. For example, some children confidently count on to 14 and backwards. They gain from the variety of number rhymes and songs they enjoy on the carpet with Year 1 pupils.
59. Teaching is sound. Children take part in the first part of the numeracy lesson with the Year 1 pupils and thoroughly enjoy the lively singing and counting. They move to adult supported or self-chosen activities and refine their mathematical ideas by filling and pouring water, handling two and three-dimensional shapes, sorting them into groups with similar properties. Outside mathematical activities provide the chance to explore space and shape and adults are perceptive in using children's phrases to move the learning on. In one such moment, children delightedly pushed a sphere to the edge of a slope and used their mathematical knowledge to explain what had happened and why.

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

60. On entry to reception, some of the children have limited general knowledge of the world but show interest in new things. By the time they enter Year 1, most meet the expectations for their age, having made satisfactory progress. Planning links learning into each topic appropriately but is generally related to only one or two aspects of this area of the curriculum. Although there are some opportunities for investigation, involving pouring, spilling and rolling shapes on a slope, there are not always enough chances for children to forge connections between their existing ideas and those of the wider world. Children develop their scientific knowledge and understanding and know some events of the past and some characteristics of the wider world.
61. Children regularly choose the computer and move the cursor, clicking and dragging images of animals well. They show interest in headphones and other technological equipment. They have a growing awareness of routes around the building and play area. Teachers effectively use good resources, including books, to widen children's experience and understanding of time and where they live.
62. Teaching is sound. Activities absorb children's interest and invite some investigation and construction but there is too little use of prisms, magnifiers, coloured lenses and natural forms to encourage curiosity and observation. Children are encouraged to work together to construct and sometimes they compare structures. Good use is made of adults, including students, to support this learning.

## **Physical development**

63. Teaching is satisfactory. Daily opportunities to climb, race and scramble allow children to explore space and develop steadily and with increasing control as they manoeuvre round each other and negotiate the slope. Being outside is a delight for the children and they respond eagerly, learning to move safely with others in mind. By the end of reception, most children use scissors well and can use glue and tools with skills better than most children their age. However, they do not demonstrate increasing strength as they manipulate materials and would benefit from more opportunities to develop greater strength and control so that they can twist and push materials. Early awareness of healthy food is thoughtfully drawn into children's snack time. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in their physical development.

## **Creative development**

64. The quality of the teaching and provision is satisfactory overall but, in many lessons, it lacks the qualities seen in other aspects of the curriculum for reception children. Teaching is better where the children are stimulated to respond with imagination to the clever use of resources, including clothes that make up the Jack and Jill theme. Here children delight in the story, mimic familiar scenes and link it with their own lives very well. However, activities designed for children to explore paint and different media are too prescribed by adults. Children are given shapes and templates where their own drawings and experiences would make richer achievement possible.
65. Children sing with delight each day. They take a lead from an adult and everyone joins in. No musical instruments were seen in use during the inspection but most children can follow a rhythm though not all can clap to the beats. Where adults involve themselves in children's play, the quality is lifted because further ideas are generated. Opportunities are created for children to use language imaginatively. Good resources

enrich the experiences and nurture children's vocabulary well. Although children are encouraged to examine colour, texture and pattern as they work with adults to make a 'crown,' they have little opportunity to select tools or materials for themselves or to estimate the length of the card needed to fit their head. Too often, adults draw shapes for the children to fill in. These missed opportunities reduce some of the natural creative energy and abilities of these children.

## ENGLISH

66. Pupils' standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and their overall achievement is satisfactory. This is a similar situation to that at the last inspection. Because the numbers involved in the national tests are very small each year, with one pupil making a significant difference to the percentages, the interpretation of these results needs to be taken with caution. However, the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2002 showed a very strong performance, particularly from the boys. The trend over the past three years has shown boys performing better than girls in English and there has been a positive overall trend in the results for all pupils. The results in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 involved such very small numbers that interpretation is even more uncertain. The fact that the results were well below the national average in reading and above average in writing is less important than the fact that no pupil achieved the above average level in either reading or writing. This matches the pattern seen during the inspection when, although teachers planned well for the wide range of age groups in each class and provided work that was mostly well matched to the abilities within each age group, there were times when the higher attainers were not challenged enough by the way in which the good planning was put into practice. There was no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Overall, however, most pupils make steady progress and pupils who have special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they receive and the work that is adapted to meet their needs.
67. The school's view that it is stronger in reading than in other areas of English is borne out by the fact that standards in reading for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. Pupils read fluently, accurately and often with good levels of understanding and expression. The skills of reading are taught systematically and pupils are successfully encouraged to enjoy the books they read. Consequently, by the time they leave the school, most pupils read books of their choice and have a good range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words and for understanding the implications of what they are reading. Pupils from Year 2 onwards are taught to use books efficiently to find the information they require and, by Year 6, pupils use contents and index quickly and effectively. They can also find books quickly in the school library, though even the older pupils tend to use the labels to find the right category rather than the numerical system that they will need to use in the secondary school. There are too few opportunities for pupils, particularly the higher attainers, to use books and the Internet to investigate projects independently.
68. Standards in writing are average overall. Pupils are given opportunities to write for a variety of audiences and purposes in other subjects as well as in English lessons. There are too few opportunities to use information and communication technology to compose, draft and edit written work. Computers, when they are used, are used largely for simple word-processing and providing a fair copy. The decision to adapt the literacy strategy to provide a weekly session for extended writing for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is proving successful and standards in writing are improving as a result. There is generally a sensible balance between the development of pupils' technical skills in writing and more creative work, though too few challenging written

tasks are set for higher attaining older pupils. Teachers pay good attention to handwriting skills and to the development of pupils' spelling and punctuation, particularly in Years 1 to 4. However, while teachers' marking in general is helpful, constructive and sometimes challenging, in Years 5 and 6, the handwriting of one of the teachers does not provide a good model for the pupils. Pupils are generally articulate but teachers tend to focus their planning on literacy skills and do not plan sufficient structured opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. In the most successful lessons, the teachers and other adults question well to make pupils explain more clearly or develop their argument further. However, often, adults are satisfied with one word answers and, in some lessons, the adults do too much of the talking.

69. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall though much of the teaching of pupils in Years 1 to 4 is good. The enthusiasm of the teacher carries pupils along very well in Year 1. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 sometimes lacks urgency and pace. Teachers' planning, particularly for average and lower attainers, is effective in enabling pupils to develop basic literacy skills in the mixed age classes. The organisation of learning and the management of pupils in these classes, which present particular difficulties for the teachers, are good. Relationships are constructive and tasks interesting. The use of support staff is most effective when they are used to support individual pupils, often those with special educational needs, or small groups. There are times in whole class sessions when the support staff are too passive and opportunities are missed for them to play a fuller part in pupils' learning and its assessment. Homework is used soundly.
70. The subject is enthusiastically and effectively led and managed. The school has worked well to implement the literacy strategy in a form that is appropriate for the mixed age classes. There are good assessment arrangements that enable pupils' individual progress to be tracked and individual targets are now set and checked for pupils' writing. National test results and other assessments are analysed and used to make curricular decisions such as that to make guided writing a priority.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. Pupils in Year 2 are on course to attain standards similar to those found in most schools. Those in Year 6, however, are doing well and are likely to reach standards above average by the time they leave. This marks an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils' standards in Year 6 were average. The school's successful implementation of the national numeracy strategy is clearly having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for the older pupils. The co-ordinator works hard to ensure a consistent approach through the school and, by careful monitoring, identifies and addresses areas for development.
72. The good rate of achievement is exemplified by pupils' knowledge of number systems. In Year 2, pupils know about odd and even numbers, they can order numbers involving hundreds, tens and units and carry out addition, subtraction and simple multiplication, applying these operations to solve problems. In Year 6, pupils' confidence has grown to include the four operations of number, including division. They understand numbers to three decimal places, calculate means and perform long multiplication. They also apply their knowledge when solving problems and finding patterns in sequences of numbers.
73. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and of how pupils learn; consequently, their questioning is focused on the important aspects of mathematics that pupils need

to know. The level of challenge in discussion sessions is high. Pupils are required, not only to provide answers, but also to explain how they worked them out. They are rarely daunted by this demand because they are used to it and will launch confidently into quite complex discussions, which help them to develop their ideas and keep teachers informed about their levels of understanding. Teachers also use the effective strategy of asking pupils to explain their ideas to a partner; for example, Year 5 pupils had to discuss the processes used in developing complex sequences of numbers. This helped to develop their own and their partner's understanding and raised the level of their work above what would be expected.

74. In the mixed age classes, teachers have to cater for a very wide range of attainment; from pupils with special educational needs to those who are capable of operating at an above average level. They meet this challenge well and, through systematic planning, focus on key objectives. By the effective use of teaching assistants, teachers manage to provide pupils, including those with special educational needs, with appropriate work which builds well on what they already know and can do.
75. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive and mutually respectful. As a result, lessons proceed in a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils concentrate well and behaviour is good because teachers set clear expectations and provide interesting activities. There are, however, a few occasions, even in lessons that are otherwise good, when the atmosphere is too relaxed and the pace of learning slows, so that pupils do not achieve as much as they could.
76. Praise is used to help pupils appreciate what they have done well and what needs to improve. This carries through into the marking of pupils' work, including regular homework, where teachers often write clear advice about key points of learning. This day-to-day assessment and feedback is supplemented by the school's system of stickers; pupils have their mathematics targets fastened in the front of their exercise books and new stickers indicate when a target has been achieved. The system helps pupils realise the importance of making progress and demonstrates to them that teachers also take a pride in what is being achieved.
77. Another positive feature of the teaching is the good use made of initial oral sessions in numeracy lessons. For example, a lesson for junior pupils was marked by the way in which the teacher varied the questions to cater for the wide range of attainment in the class, yet managed to keep up a rapid pace. Pupils responded with interest and were keen to show what they knew. The higher attainers were extended and became involved in a friendly competition to see who could answer the most challenging questions involving the sequence: percentage ? fraction ? fraction in its lowest form ? decimal fraction.
78. Learning resources for mathematics are appropriate and well prepared for lessons, helping to maintain the flow of learning. Suitable published schemes are used; for example, infant age pupils use attractive workbooks, which are well designed to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum. Computers are used to provide extra practice for pupils learning number operations, but there is insufficient evidence to suggest that full use is made of the power of information and communication technology to extend and reinforce mathematical learning. Similarly, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the use of their mathematical skills in other subjects.

## SCIENCE

79. Standards of work are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, reflecting a steady improvement in standards since the previous inspection. The 2002 test results for Year 2 and Year 6 are a fair reflection of pupils' achievement, even though there were few pupils in Year 2. A reasonable number of Year 6 pupils attained the higher level in 2002 but higher attainers in the present Year 6 are not likely to do as well. The subject has been led well by the subject co-ordinator who has raised the profile, raised standards and dealt with the previously identified shortcomings. Improvements in the subject include these features:
- a relevant policy and range of planned activities to meet the needs of the mixed age groups;
  - the development of experimental and investigative science approaches;
  - improved teacher knowledge;
  - better use of information about pupils' attainment and progress;
  - a better range of resources with improved storage arrangements.
80. Pupils across the school make sound progress overall. Year 2 pupils achieve slightly better because of the variety of opportunities for them to observe, investigate and respond. Some exciting opportunities encouraged questions to establish what might happen and what makes a difference. For example, by observing melting ice, pupils considered the likely effect of the surrounding temperatures in different places. They begin to record their scientific observations in a way that helps them probe the evidence they gather, in the format of a scientist. Where pupils are given the chance to write for themselves, they are able to draw out key findings and write with some clarity and thought. However, even though pupils know how to investigate in a step-by-step way, these skills are not built on evenly as they move up the school. Not all the worksheets provided enable pupils to record their own findings and deepen their understanding. This is one of the reasons why pupils make a steady rather than an accelerated rate of progress.
81. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers or classroom assistants and this helps to develop greater confidence for these pupils to express their ideas. There is no difference in attainment of boys and girls.
82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teaching team, led by the co-ordinator, has made a huge and mostly successful effort to develop the subject and to develop a good range of activities and resources. The openings of lessons are thorough and often lively because teachers' questions are clearly focused on new knowledge so that pupils understand the terms used. This helps pupils to make connections between ideas such as 'evaporation' and 'condensation.' However, the school does not use additional adult support sufficiently in the Years 2, 3 and 4 mixed age class where many pupils lack the necessary skills needed to pursue the tasks for themselves or with others. Teachers use a range of CD-ROMs for finding information but as yet there are no opportunities for pupils to transform their findings into graphs and charts using a database or to use sensors to observe and record events. Activities do not always make best use of lesson time. Often, there is over-consolidation of known facts rather than challenge. In one lesson seen, the tasks that pupils were given did not build on the rigorous question and answer session to galvanise their interest or further understanding, particularly for those pupils with the capacity to achieve more. Discussion with these pupils indicates that they do not always enjoy lessons in the subject because, too often, the emphasis on rehearsing facts is at the expense of stimulating scientific probing.

83. There is some way to go to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. Planning for mixed aged classes is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. However, when topics are revisited as pupils move through the school, activities do not always build quickly enough on existing knowledge or bring greater depth to pupils' understanding. There remains too much emphasis on developing knowledge rather than enquiry for pupils in Years 5 and 6, even though teachers assess pupils' work well. This tends to reduce the positive impact of the often well planned, hands-on activities where pupils do set out to find out for themselves.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. By the time they leave the school, most pupils reach average standards. Too few attain above average levels. This is because, whilst the overall standard of teaching and learning is satisfactory, there are too few opportunities for pupils to make choices, explore their own ideas and experiment with a wide range of media. Teachers make assessments of pupils' progress and report this to parents but the system is not yet fully developed, so that they are not always aware of areas where improvement is needed.
85. Effective work was seen, based on studies of the sculptor, Henry Moore. Pupils explored his style of sketching and then used each other as the basis for further sketches and clay models. This increased their appreciation of how ideas and techniques develop before a completed piece of work is achieved. Some interesting portraits were done in the style of Picasso and older pupils have done pencil portraits of each other, which demonstrate satisfactory awareness of line.
86. Links to other subjects are made when pupils study the art of Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt. Studies of Greek urn patterns and Egyptian death masks help pupils to appreciate the beauty of ancient design and the skill of the craftspeople.
87. Teachers are aware of the importance of providing pupils with art and design experiences and the opportunities offered help pupils to achieve at a satisfactory rate through the school. Much of the work produced, particularly with younger pupils, is very similar. There is little evidence of work initiated by preliminary sketches, developed through experimenting with media, leading to a finished product.
88. Pupils are provided with a reasonable range of media. There is paint, crayon, collage, print, for example, which they use mainly in two-dimensional work. The use of computer programs results in some pleasing and individual pictures but this strand of art is not fully explored.
89. Art and design has not been a priority for development. As yet, there is no school scheme of work to provide pupils with a developing experience of media and technique. Consequently, little progress has been made since the previous inspection.



## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

90. It was not possible to make judgements about either standards in the subject or teaching and learning. No lessons were observed during the course of the inspection. What little evidence there was indicated that, overall, pupils show average skills when they use tools but the narrow range of opportunities provided limits their achievement in the subject.
91. Some improvement has occurred to deal with the previously identified shortcomings in planning for the subject. However, planning still does not consistently ensure that pupils record their plans and evaluate their finished products. The school has a policy in place but little headway has been made to ensure that pupils' skills develop steadily as they move through the year groups. Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory, largely because other school issues have taken priority.
92. Year 1 pupils do make a sound start to understanding how designs help the making process. In their drawings for a village in the snow, for example, they used labels to show what was needed to make the plan. Although Year 2 pupils construct individual 2D pictures using construction straws and cogs, the very few examples of work indicate that there are not enough opportunities for creativity and imagination.
93. Year 6 pupils understand that design ideas are moved on from the initial stage through the sequence of making, modifying and adjusting, but they relate this sequence to one design that everyone makes. The projects they undertake do not always develop an understanding of the properties and suitability of different materials for the products they make. For example, all Year 5 and 6 pupils made a Greek temple from the same template and opportunities for pupils to write their findings in a report or a set of instructions are missed, even though pupils can describe the cause and effect of problems encountered in the making process.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

94. No geography was taught during the inspection and only one lesson of history. Pupils' standards in both subjects are at an average level by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. There are also indications from teachers' planning and from the lesson seen that these levels of attainment result from teaching which is satisfactory overall.
95. In discussion, Year 2 pupils demonstrated good recall of their work on the Ancient Egyptians, recalling aspects of the burial practices in some detail. They were also able to discuss old and new toys describing some changes over time. They have drawn maps and know some of the main cities in the United Kingdom. Year 6 pupils remember some of the main people and events from different periods of history that they have studied, such as Victorians, Anglo Saxons, Tudors and Ancient Greeks, but their appreciation of chronology is weak. They have studied other countries and have done significant work on a local traffic issue. The latter has clearly caught their interest and given them opportunities to practise their geographical skills in a real-life situation. However, their general knowledge of European and World geography is insecure.
96. A history lesson for younger pupils was well taught, using toys, which effectively caught the interest of all pupils and developed their appreciation of 'old and new'. Relationships were positive and caring, so that pupils behaved well and were

confident to raise questions and make comments. The teacher's clear focus on important vocabulary also contributed to the improvement of pupils' oral skills.

97. Pupils are involved in a good range of educational visits to places of historical and geographical interest, helping to bring their learning to life. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 go to a residential centre, which offers good opportunities for a range of environmental experiences. There is some use of computers; CD-ROMs and the Internet are used in pupils' studies but this aspect is not fully developed, largely because of a lack of sufficient computers. Consequently, pupils are not sufficiently experienced in researching for themselves and there are limited opportunities for higher attaining pupils to become involved in studies at greater depth. Teachers make assessments of pupils' progress but the system for this is not yet sufficiently developed to allow weaknesses to be identified and addressed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

98. By the end of Year 2, standards of pupils' work are average. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average. Overall provision for the subject is unsatisfactory.
99. In response to the findings of the last inspection, the school has planned appropriate activities for each year group in the mixed age classes that take account of the very limited provision for the subject. A policy is now in place and is beginning to inform planning; it includes safety guidelines on the use of the Internet and electronic mail. The range of software now provides better coverage. However, when set against the national background of expectations and development, improvements the school has been able to make are not enough to ensure that pupils keep pace with those in other schools. Significant delays and setbacks to repairs to the school building have adversely hindered the standards pupils attain in Years 2 to 6. Pupils experience too narrow a range of opportunities in information and communication technology. Their learning is limited even further by the lack of technical support to keep the computers active; what support there is not well organised. Teachers manage to support learning with the resources they have, particularly in Years 1 to 4 where there is some access to the Internet.
100. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sound progress, including those with special educational needs, who show as much interest as others in using 'paint' tools to try out different colours and lines to create effects. Most pupils show average skills as they write their names, use a line tool and navigate around the screen. Satisfactory teaching ensures that these pupils can use a familiar CD-ROM and understand that information can be retrieved from a variety of sources, including the television and videos. They understand how to control the floor 'turtle' in sequences of instructions and clearly pick up new skills with ease when they have the opportunity.
101. Pupils in Year 6 are not on target to reach the required standards because there is a deficit of skills and knowledge. No lessons were seen during the inspection. It was not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching for Years 3 to 6. However, limited range of evidence in pupils' work does show that the co-ordinator for the subject has made satisfactory improvement to meet national requirements for the subject. Discussion with Year 6 pupils reveals that they can use clipart to enhance their work in other subjects. They have also amended their writing using word-processing skills and used computers to collate data for a bird survey.

## **MUSIC**

102. The previous music co-ordinator taught music to all classes and, when she left the school two years ago, the subject went into a decline. The recent appointment of a visiting music specialist, shared with another local school, is beginning to raise the subject's profile again. Because music lessons take place on a Friday, when the specialist music teacher is available, no lessons were seen and it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' standards or the quality of teaching and learning. However, the quality of singing in assemblies is whole-hearted and tuneful and indicates that the teaching is at least satisfactory in that area. There is a satisfactory policy and a scheme of work that covers the National Curriculum requirements adequately.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

103. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils of all levels of ability make satisfactory progress. This is similar to the situation at the last inspection. There is good provision for swimming and pupils achieve well, with most being able to swim the expected 25 metres by the time they leave the school. Teachers' confidence in using the apparatus for gymnastics is increasing as a result of training. No judgement is made on the overall quality of teaching because only one lesson was seen. In this satisfactory lesson, the teacher focused appropriately on safety issues and worked hard to develop pupils' independence in assembling the apparatus safely. Pupils' skills in developing a sequence of movements and balances were at expected levels for their age and they were able to evaluate one another's efforts sensibly.
104. The satisfactory but enthusiastic leadership of the co-ordinator is developing the subject well by seeking to extend the range of sports provision. This is greatly needed because, while the tennis club is successful in attracting good numbers of pupils, the take-up for several other sporting clubs has been disappointing. The school has over the years been quite successful in tournaments for small schools in cricket, football and rounders. It also takes part in a swimming gala, area sports events and cross-country races that catch the interest of pupils and helps to develop their skills.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

105. Pupils' standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6. This marks an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers choose topics that are seen by the pupils to be relevant to them and present the material in ways that pupils can relate to their own lives. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, were able to point out the different kinds of life change undergone by Zacchaeus and Paul and discuss changes in their own lives perceptively. They were able to explain what a vision is and how it related to Paul's experience. Pupils in Year 1 were intrigued by the Jewish and Christian artefacts that were revealed from the teacher's bag and keen to understand their significance in worship. They showed a good knowledge for their age of the two religions and were interested in finding out more. Pupils in Year 2 showed a good understanding of the symbolic significance of the cross in the Christian religion. The pupils' levels of insight and understanding in all classes are above average and pupils consequently achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because tasks are adapted to meet their needs. Higher attainers have extension activities set for them but the tasks are not always challenging enough.

106. The quality of teaching and learning is good and teachers are confident in teaching the subject. They plan interesting tasks and make stimulating use of a variety of learning resources that are often of good quality. Pupils consequently work hard and with concentration. Because they are interested, their behaviour is good. Teachers are adept at linking religious education with personal and social education and consequently the subject makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development. The locally agreed syllabus focuses on Judaism and Christianity and there are also occasions when pupils have an opportunity to learn about other great religions as when, for example, a pupil told them something about his own Islamic religion. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about the other religions that are represented in nearby cities. Visits to local buildings are restricted to Christian churches. Teachers assess pupils' work informally and, because assessments are not systematically recorded, it is difficult to track pupils' learning and progress accurately.