

INSPECTION REPORT

SOMERSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Somersham

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124609

Headteacher: Mr. K. Marrable

Reporting inspector: Mike Capper
23239

Dates of inspection: November 25th – 27th 2002

Inspection number: 248605

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Lane Lower Somersham Ipswich Suffolk
Postcode:	IP8 4PN
Telephone number:	01473 831251
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. D. Thorne
Date of previous inspection:	November 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23239	Mike Capper	Registered inspector	English ICT Physical Education Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9545	Kevin Greatorex	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30717	Gordon Tompsett	Team Inspector	Mathematics Geography History PE Educational Inclusion	How good are curricular opportunities?
23609	Alison Cartlidge	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and Design Design and Technology Special Educational Needs	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Somersham Primary School is situated in a rural location in Suffolk. Pupils come from the local and surrounding villages, and are admitted between the ages of 4 and 11. There are 81 pupils on roll, and they are taught in four classes: a reception and Year 1 class, a Year 2 & 3 class, a Year 4 & 5 class and a Year 6 class. In the reception year, children with birthdays from January onwards attend on a part-time basis for the autumn and spring term depending on their exact date of birth. Pupils come from a mix of home backgrounds although the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are 16 pupils on the register of special educational needs. This is broadly in line with national averages. No pupil currently has a statement of special educational needs. Test results show that pupils' attainment on entering school is broadly average. All pupils have English as their first language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that has maintained a caring, family atmosphere whilst rapidly improving standards of attainment since the last inspection. There is good quality teaching in most year groups and, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well. Pupils are happy at school and learn to become mature and responsible. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, who is supported effectively by the governing body. Although the cost per pupil is above average, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well in National Curriculum tests with attainment well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English.
- The headteacher has taken on a phenomenal workload in the last two years and provides dynamic and purposeful leadership for the work of the school.
- Good quality teaching in Years 2 to 6 means that pupils learn well and make good progress.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work and behave well.
- All members of staff work well as a team and are committed to further school improvement.

What could be improved

- Raise attainment and improve provision for pupils in the reception year and Year 1.
- Spelling skills and the quality of presentation in English and science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in November 2000, when it was found to have serious weaknesses. Since then there has been a very good pace to change and the headteacher has successfully addressed the weaknesses identified at that time. Monitoring and support have helped teaching to improve. As a result, standards of attainment are higher by the end of Year 6. The headteacher and governors have developed the school's long-term planning, with governors now taking a more active role in deciding priorities for the future. The teamwork and shared sense of purpose is a strong feature of the school's work, with all members of staff having the pupils' well being and education at the forefront of their planning. This means that the school is in a very strong position to improve further in the future.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	D	B	C
mathematics	D	B	A	C
science	E	B	A	A

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

Standards of attainment inevitably vary greatly from year to year because of small group sizes and variations in the number of pupils with special educational needs in different classes.

Inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is weakest in the reception year and Year 1. In the reception year, children are not on target to achieve expected standards for the end of the year and their achievement is unsatisfactory in all areas of learning. This is largely due to inadequacies in the curriculum and difficulties in meeting children's needs fully in the mixed age class.

Pupils in the present Year 1 are working below national expectations in all subjects because they did not make the expected progress in the reception year when they were taught by a teacher who is no longer working at the school. As a result, these pupils are not achieving as well as they should and this has a significant impact on National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2.

Pupils make good progress in Year 2. However, despite this, National Curriculum test results in 2002 were below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The current Year 2 is on target to achieve slightly higher results in end-of-year tests but their attainment is below average overall in English, mathematics and science.

The good rates of progress evident in Year 2 are maintained throughout Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. This is confirmed by the most recent National Curriculum tests.

In literacy, there are strengths in pupils' attitudes towards reading and their use of expression when reading aloud. Pupils write for a good range of purposes, showing increasing awareness of the audience in their use of vocabulary and punctuation. Weaknesses in literacy are evident in pupils' spelling and their presentation of work.

Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with national expectations in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT and physical education. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards of attainment in music although singing was generally weak in lessons and assemblies during the inspection. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2, but below expectations by the end of Year 6. This reflects previous weaknesses in provision, which have left gaps in the knowledge of older pupils.

The school makes good use of assessments of pupils' work to help set statutory targets for achievement at the end of Year 6. These targets are based on a good knowledge of pupils' prior learning and are realistically challenging. The school successfully achieved the targets set for 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show great enthusiasm for what they are asked to do and apply themselves well to work. Teachers work hard to make

	sure that girls participate fully in discussions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and courteous. They move around the school in an orderly manner and behave well in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils happily work and play together and take responsibility well. Older pupils help younger pupils at playtime.
Attendance	Very good, with attendance rates well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, with frequent examples of very good teaching in Years 4 – 6. A particular strength throughout the school is the very good relationships that develop between members of staff and the pupils. In addition, effective teaching of literacy and numeracy has resulted in much high attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.

Whilst there is no unsatisfactory teaching, it is less effective in the reception and Year 1 class where it is more difficult to provide appropriate activities for both year groups. This is particularly evident in literacy and numeracy sessions when older pupils need to carry out more formal tasks than the younger children. Nevertheless, the teacher and the nursery nurse have a good understanding of the needs of young children. They are caring and patient and work together well, making good use of their specific expertise. However, the use of assessment information and the quality of lesson planning are insufficient to ensure that all pupils are given suitable work in all lessons. This limits pupils' progress, especially in developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

In Years 2 – 6, teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well by making learning exciting and challenging and by maintaining a crisp pace in lessons. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils should achieve and, as a result, pupils are keen to try hard. Effective use is made of probing questions to encourage girls and boys to take a full part in lessons and work is carefully planned to meet pupils' individual needs.

Throughout the school, teachers are successful in using a wide range of resources and teaching methods to make learning meaningful and fun. The quality of teachers' marking has improved, with all teachers writing comments to help pupils improve their work. These comments are very good in Years 4 to 6.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall, although there are important weaknesses in the curriculum for children in the reception year. Throughout the school, the curriculum is made purposeful and relevant to pupils by the good use of real situations, visits and visitors to bring subjects to life.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision is well managed. Weekly meetings led by the special educational needs co-ordinator ensure that teaching assistants are well informed and able to give good support to pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall, with good provision for the pupils' moral and social development. There is a carefully planned programme for personal, social, citizenship and health education, with skills taught well through specific lessons and across the wider curriculum.
How well the school cares	Good. The school provides good quality support and guidance for

for its pupils	pupils. Good use is made of assessment information in Years 2 to 6 to help teachers decide what needs to be taught next. This is less evident in Year 1.
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The headteacher has been successful in establishing good links between parents and the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The many changes since the last inspection have been a result of the headteacher's very strong commitment to improving the school. His philosophy, ' <i>Let's do it well</i> ', means that development has been carefully planned and successfully implemented.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have been especially successful in ensuring an improvement in accommodation since the last inspection. Their involvement in the monitoring of the curriculum and standards is an area that requires further development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Strategies for monitoring the work of the school are very good, although there have been recent limitations due to the teaching commitment of the headteacher. The headteacher has established thorough procedures for analysing test data to identify where improvement is necessary.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Budgeting is systematic and based on a good understanding of the needs of the school. The school applies the principles of 'best value' to its work when making large expenditure. However, the school is not yet formally evaluating the effectiveness of spending on standards of attainment.

Staffing levels are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, there has been a high turnover of staff as well as a long-term absence. This has meant that the headteacher has taken on a full time teaching role and, until the start of this academic year, other teachers have had few management duties. Teaching assistants and the nursery nurse make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The hardworking secretary and a clerical assistant give the headteacher very good support in the day-to-day management of the school.

Accommodation and resources are now satisfactory overall. Facilities have improved significantly since the last inspection. Weaknesses in accommodation that still remain are the lack of a suitable outdoor area for children in the reception class and the limited amount of space within their classroom. This means that it is difficult to teach the full reception year curriculum. The school has already identified the need to improve outdoor play areas, and work to do this was due to start shortly after the inspection. The school is well looked after by the conscientious and hard working caretaker.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Recent improvements in the school. • The leadership of the headteacher. • Children are expected to work hard and learn to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities. • Provision for homework.

Parents are highly supportive of the school and feel that it has many strong features. Inspection evidence confirms the positive views of parents. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for its size, although there are few opportunities for pupils to take part in out-of-school music activities. Plans are in place to address this issue. Homework provision is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards of attainment inevitably vary significantly from year to year because of small group sizes and variations in the number of pupils with special educational needs in a year group. Nevertheless, pupils' attainment has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now well above average by the end of Year 6 in science and mathematics, and above average in English.
2. Inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is weakest in the reception year and Year 1. In these year groups, pupils are not achieving as well as they should and this has a significant impact on National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2. In the reception year, children are not on target to achieve expected standards for the end of the year and their achievement is unsatisfactory in all areas of learning. This is largely due to inadequacies in the curriculum and difficulties in meeting children's needs fully in the mixed age class. In Year 1, pupils' poor literacy skills have a major impact on their learning across the curriculum.
3. The weak attainment by the end of Year 1 has a significant impact on National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2. These show that in 2002 pupils' attainment was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was well below average in reading and very low in writing and mathematics. The results in writing and mathematics place the school amongst the lowest 5 per cent of similar schools in the country. Nevertheless, inspection findings confirm that pupils in Year 2 benefit from good teaching and are making good progress, with the current group of pupils on target to achieve slightly higher results in end of year tests. In the current Year 2, pupils' attainment is below average overall in English, mathematics and science.
4. The good rates of progress that are evident in Year 2 are maintained throughout Years 3 to 6. Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 is on target to achieve similar standards to those reached in 2002 tests, when pupils' attainment was well above average compared with all schools in mathematics and science, and above average in English. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was well above average in science and broadly average in English and mathematics.
5. In National Curriculum tests, girls generally do not achieve as well as boys. The school has identified the limited involvement of some girls in class work as the cause of this variation, and has worked hard to address the issue. As a result, during the inspection, both boys and girls participated well in all activities and there was no evidence of girls achieving less well than boys.
6. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well developed by the end of Year 6 and they use them well in different curriculum areas. In literacy, there are strengths in pupils' attitudes towards reading and their use of expression when reading aloud. Pupils write for a good range of purpose, showing increasing awareness of the audience in their use of vocabulary and punctuation. Weaknesses in literacy are evident in pupils' spelling and their presentation of work.
7. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with national expectations in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. These subjects have not been priorities since the last inspection. In ICT, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils have good word-processing skills.
8. During the inspection, only one music lesson in Year 1 was timetabled. This means that there is insufficient evidence to judge standards of pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, in the Year 1 lesson, pupils' singing was weak, with very few joining in with the

nursery nurse as she sang different number songs. This weak singing was also evident in assemblies where pupils needed a lot of encouragement from teachers to join in with singing to a taped pop song.

9. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2, but below expectations by the end of Year 6. This reflects previous weaknesses in provision, which have left gaps in pupils' knowledge.
10. Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs receive good quality support from teaching assistants, and they make good progress overall. They are given detailed individual education plans, which help to ensure that their needs are met. More able or gifted pupils are well supported in lessons, with a good number of pupils achieving higher levels in end of Year 6 tests.
11. The school makes good use of assessments of pupils' work to help set statutory targets for achievement at the end of Year 6. These targets are based on a good knowledge of pupils' prior learning and are realistically challenging. The school successfully achieved the targets set for 2002.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The very positive attitudes to learning, the high standards of behaviour and the very good relationships throughout the school are important strengths and have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning.
13. When children first start school in the reception class, they quickly learn class routines and show independence by helping to tidy up at the end of sessions. However, several children are immature and two bring comfort blankets to carry around the class and school. Whilst children behave well most of the time, their frustration at the lack of space and the limited range of practical activities is sometimes evident when they do not play sensibly with the resources or each other. Children often prefer to play quietly on their own rather than sharing games because they have limited opportunities to work independently and learn to work together without adult supervision.
14. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils in Years 1 to 6 have very positive attitudes to the school and their work. They often volunteer to do extra homework and make good contributions to voluntary items, such as the 'geography news-board'. Pupils show enthusiasm for what they are asked to do and apply themselves well to their activities, as shown by the Year 4/5 pupils during a history lesson. They showed throughout the lesson that they had listened very attentively to the visiting speaker the week before and had retained almost all the information that he had given them. Pupils sustain good levels of concentration, particularly when teachers plan tasks that challenge and motivate them. They take great pride and enjoyment in producing high quality work and are keen to share their results with others and adults. However, there are occasions, especially in Years 2, 3 and 4, when some pupils do not participate fully in activities without great encouragement from the teacher. This applies particularly to girls in these classes. It is also evident in the pupils' limited ability to evaluate their own work, with most being very reliant on teachers telling them how to improve. This leads to some presentation not being as neat as it should be.
15. In Years 1 to 6, behaviour is good. When they come to school, in assemblies, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, virtually all pupils achieve very high standards of behaviour. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner, despite the narrow corridors and the cramped cloakroom areas in the mobile classrooms, and have a clear understanding of the standards expected of them. In lessons, pupils behave well and almost all conform to the high expectations even when not closely supervised. There are no recent exclusions at the school.
16. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying. The school's own records show that there are occasional incidents of a lack of respect being shown to pupils from different backgrounds. Inspection findings confirm that such incidents are dealt with fairly but firmly.

17. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into school life and are supported effectively. However, pupils with specific behavioural needs make great demands on teachers and other pupils, and their behaviour can slow the pace of learning. This is only evident in the reception/Year 1 class.
18. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils form extremely constructive relationships with each other and with adults. They work and play co-operatively together, demonstrating that they will listen to each other and will try to understand the other person's point of view. This was demonstrated many times during the inspection when the older pupils were seen to include and protect the younger ones in the confined playground area. Pupils show genuine pleasure in the achievements of others. Throughout the school, nearly all pupils act in a mature and responsible way. They show respect and courtesy to each other, to staff and to other adults. Pupils consistently demonstrate patience, tolerance and understanding for others.
19. Pupils' personal development is good. The school provides a good range of opportunities for the pupils to show initiative and take responsibility and they demonstrate that the trust is well placed. From the earliest stages of their time in school, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development as they perform jobs within the classroom. As they progress through the school more opportunities are provided. The school council is effective in promoting the pupils' personal development. Councillors are enthusiastic about the achievements of the previous council and their intention to further improve the school through their own input. Pupils are involved with fund raising for various charities.
20. Attendance is consistently well above average and is very good. There is no unauthorised absence. Nearly all pupils are punctual and many arrive early. They come happily to school ready to learn, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching is good overall, with frequent examples of very good teaching in Years 4 – 6. Whilst there is no unsatisfactory teaching, it is less effective in the reception and Year 1 class where it is more difficult to provide appropriate activities for both year groups. This is particularly evident in literacy and numeracy sessions when older pupils need to carry out more formal tasks than the younger children. These difficulties were also evident at the time of the last inspection. Nevertheless, the overall quality of teaching has improved significantly since then when it was satisfactory with some unsatisfactory teaching and few very good lessons. Ninety-four per cent of parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching at the school is good and all parents find members of staff to be approachable.
22. In the reception and Year 1 class, the teacher and the nursery nurse have a good understanding of the needs of young children. They are caring and patient and work together well making good use of their specific expertise. For example, the nursery nurse provides good teaching of music and leads exciting story sessions whilst the teacher supports groups of pupils with their reading effectively. There are some well thought out and stimulating play activities linked with literacy lessons, such as a fun role-play area set up as 'The House of the Three Bears'. These provide pupils with good opportunities to share resources and to learn to co-operate with each other. However, the use of assessment information and the quality of lesson planning are insufficient to ensure that all pupils are given suitable work in all lessons. This limits their progress, especially in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
23. In Years 2 - 6, the quality of teaching is often very good with an example of excellent science teaching in Year 6. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well by making learning exciting and challenging and by maintaining a crisp pace in lessons. Teachers have generally very high expectations of what pupils should achieve and, as a result, they are keen to try hard. Teachers are beginning to encourage pupils to edit their written work and to improve their presentation. On occasions, both teachers and pupils could have higher expectations in these aspects of the curriculum.

24. Teachers make effective use of probing questions to encourage girls and boys to take a full part in lessons and work is carefully planned to meet pupils' individual needs. At the time of the last inspection, pupils, especially girls, were often passive in lessons and teachers have been successful in largely changing this behaviour. Effective teaching of literacy and numeracy has resulted in much higher attainment by the end of Year 6.
25. Throughout the school there is a greater consistency in the way different teachers work with the pupils than at the time of the last inspection. All teachers are now successful in using a wide range of resources and teaching methods to make learning meaningful and fun. For example, in a design and technology lesson in Year 6, pupils carried out a role-play activity to convince the 'head of a department store' to purchase their designs for slippers. The quality of teachers' marking has improved, with all teachers writing comments to help pupils improve their work. These comments are very good in Years 4 to 6.
26. The enthusiastic way in which teachers share their knowledge with the pupils has resulted in much greater participation than at the time of the last inspection when many were reluctant to apply themselves fully. A particular strength throughout the school is the good relationships that develop between members of staff and the pupils. Concerns about the quality of teaching of information and communication technology and the provision of homework found at the time of the last inspection are no longer evident, and teachers now demonstrate good subject knowledge. Teachers' particular strengths are used very effectively in Years 4 – 6 to teach science, history, design and technology and art and design. The provision of homework is satisfactory, with suitable work being provided especially in English and mathematics.
27. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively in most lessons, with teaching assistants providing helpful guidance. Weekly discussions between the co-ordinator for special educational needs and these assistants ensure that valuable information about the pupils' progress and changing needs are shared. However, the lack of specific support for a pupil with emotional and behavioural difficulties in the reception and Year 1 class means that learning is often disrupted when either the teacher or the nursery nurse needs to deal with specific incidents.

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

28. Overall the quality and range of learning opportunities are good, which is an improvement on the previous inspection when they were judged to be sound. Nevertheless, there are important weaknesses in the curriculum for children in the reception year. The school has also identified weaknesses in the music curriculum and, again, plans are in place to improve provision by introducing a scheme of work and giving greater opportunity for the teaching of skills. At the moment, there are missed opportunities for musical development. For example, pupils do not learn new songs in assemblies.
29. The curriculum in the reception class lacks balance. There are insufficient opportunities to work outside due to limitations in the accommodation. Cramped conditions in the classroom mean that activities are not always made available because children need to be quiet so the older pupils in the same class can carry out more formal work. There are no separate long-term plans for reception children and they often take part in the same activities as older pupils. The quality of lesson planning is not sufficient to ensure that all children are given suitable work in all lessons. This limits progress overall, including that in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Whilst some activities include fun, practical tasks, children spend too much time sitting with the Year 1 pupils in the class, listening to the teacher. The school is aware of these issues and is developing strategies to rectify the situation.
30. All subjects meet statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. They are having a good effect on teaching and learning, particularly in numeracy from Years 2 to 6. Similarly, the curriculum is made purposeful and relevant to pupils by the good use of real situations, visits and visitors to bring a subject to life. This is particularly evident in science lessons where there is a hands-on approach to all activities, with pupils encouraged to learn through

practical investigations. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply the skills that have been taught in literacy and ICT across the curriculum.

31. Long and medium term plans are made for all subjects and give a clear indication of what is being taught and how the needs of the different ability groups are being met. However, planning in Year 1 is not modified enough to reflect the attainment of pupils. This means that work is not always closely enough matched to their needs, and this limits their achievements.
32. In most of the aspects of school life, there is full inclusion and equality of opportunity for all. However, the reception year children who come to school only in the morning do not have full access to all aspects of the curriculum. This applies particularly to mathematics because all numeracy lessons are timetabled for the afternoon. Although there are some planned mathematical activities in the morning, these are not enough to ensure that there is a balance to the curriculum.
33. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator and teachers work together closely to produce detailed individual education plans that clearly identify short term targets for improvement in pupils' attainment. There is a strong focus on improving the literacy skills of pupils with special educational needs, with a high amount of teaching assistant time allocated to this purpose. This additional input has a good impact on standards. Teaching assistants are kept well informed. They meet weekly with the special educational needs co-ordinator to share information and review the progress of individual pupils.
34. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils, including some sports activities. However, there is a lack of musical opportunities. Those clubs that are in place include ICT and football. They are well attended and have a positive effect on the pupils' learning.
35. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory, with visits from the local community providing valuable links and enriching the curriculum. There are good links with the local secondary and primary schools, with teachers from one of the secondary schools visiting and observing teaching within the school. This helps ensure good transfer. The pupils have an opportunity to attend a residential centre for a variety of good educational, social and cultural experiences.
36. Provision for personal, social, citizenship and health education is good. There is a carefully planned programme, with skills taught through religious education, science, designated lessons and opportunities across the wider curriculum. This includes good opportunities for sex education and drug awareness.
37. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development. All pupils have a daily act of worship. Assemblies provide an opportunity for learning about the world and moral issues, and they contain a moment for spiritual reflection. In an assembly on *'What is the feeling of joy?'* the pupils were given a good insight into this spiritual aspect. The spiritual nature of love and the priceless nature of family and having someone special were well explored and appreciated by the pupils.
38. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The adults in the school set a very good example to the pupils and there are clear codes of behaviour. Pupils are taught to know right from wrong through their day-to-day interaction with staff and through lessons and assemblies, which indicate examples of very good moral practices. A strong moral dimension is seen in most lessons, where teachers constantly emphasise good behaviour so pupils understand what is acceptable conduct. This is reflected in the pupils' very good attitudes to school and their good conduct and behaviour. Adults in the school also set a very good example by their courtesy, care and respect for pupils. Pupils respond well to this and, in turn, relate well to others and respect their views.
39. There is good provision for pupils' social development. Teachers plan opportunities in many lessons for developing pupils' social skills such as working together, taking turns and sharing. There is a range of visits during the year, providing good opportunities for pupils to extend

and develop social relationships with each other and with their teachers and other adults. The work seen on the village and local environment greatly enhances the pupils' awareness of social and moral issues and responsibilities. The sense of care, purpose and harmony in the school as a community is strong. There are many good planned opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in all aspects of the life of the school.

40. The provision for pupil's cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils have opportunities to study the richness of both their own and other cultures. History and geography provide links with pupils' own and other ancient cultures, traditions and the past. The good range and provision for extra-curricular visits and visitors, planned as part of the curriculum, enriches pupils' understanding of their local culture. There is now a need for the multi-cultural provision to be reviewed and increased, for example by making more use of music and art to teach about the range of cultures reflected in our multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school continues to provide good quality support and guidance and effectively promotes the welfare, health and safety of its pupils in a warm, caring and secure environment. In this small school, all members of staff know their pupils well and have a very clear idea of their personal strengths and weaknesses thus enabling them to offer effective support. Members of staff regularly share updated information, for example about pupils with special educational needs, to ensure that there is a consistent approach throughout the school. All members of staff show great concern for the well being of pupils and a range of measures exists to promote their development. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and consistently monitor well their personal development and their ability to cope on a day-to-day basis.
42. The school continues to have good quality and effective systems to monitor and promote attendance. Registers are marked speedily, correctly and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. All absences are properly noted and contact made with parents to explain the absence. Attendance figures are properly collected and emerging patterns of absence are noted for follow up. There was no unauthorised absence recorded last year. The system for recording and collating attendance figures is secure and effective. The school consistently achieves very high levels of attendance.
43. Members of staff are very good role models in promoting high standards of good behaviour. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are in place. The school's rules are displayed throughout the school and are clearly understood by all pupils. The consequences of unacceptable behaviour have been made clear and are readily accepted. All members of staff consistently apply the behaviour policy. They were seen to prevent incidents of possible misbehaviour with firm, calm intervention, helping to maintain good control.
44. Child protection issues continue to be handled effectively. Members of staff understand their roles and responsibilities and are aware of the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused. Health and safety issues are handled effectively in the school. Regular inspections are carried out to identify and remedy potential hazards. All members of staff are safety conscious and watch for the health and safety of the children. They work hard to maintain an environment in which the well being of pupils is promoted effectively.
45. Assessment procedures have improved considerably since the last inspection. There are now effective systems for tracking pupils' progress from year to year, with good use now being made of a variety of tests to measure pupils' attainment over time. The school is making good use of this information to analyse the progress of different year groups and to set targets for the standards that pupils should attain at the end of each year.
46. The school has good procedures for assessing learning. Appropriate use is made of end-of-topic tests and teachers also regularly mark work. Good use is made in Years 2 to 6 of this assessment information to help teachers decide what needs to be taught next. However, planning in Year 1 does not take enough account of pupils' attainment and is not, therefore, aimed at the right level of difficulty. This has a negative impact on learning in this year group.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Almost half the parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most have a good opinion of the school and confirm that it has many strong features. All those responding to the questionnaire would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. Virtually all those responding to the questionnaire agree that their children like school. They believe that the teaching is good, the school expects their children to work hard and the children are making good progress. They also believe that the school is well led and managed and is helping the children to become mature and responsible. Inspection evidence confirms these positive views of parents.
48. A very few parents are concerned about the amount of work that their children are expected to do at home and the range of activities provided outside lessons. Inspection evidence does not support these concerns. The amount of homework is appropriate for children of this age and the school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for its size.
49. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at home and at school is good. Parents and other adults are encouraged to involve themselves in the life of the school and many respond very positively. They help in the classroom and around the school, particularly with the younger children, as well as on the school trips. In addition, parents are very supportive of the work that their children are expected to do at home. There is an active Friends' of Somersham School that raises substantial amounts of finance in support of the school. The school values highly their contributions, which enhance the children's learning and personal development.
50. Information to parents is good overall. The new procedures introduced immediately before the last inspection have been further refined and improved. Parents continue to have very good access to teachers. As well as the day-to-day contact when delivering or collecting their children, regular newsletters are sent to parents giving much useful information.
51. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are informative and meet statutory requirements. Reports to parents on their children's progress vary in quality from satisfactory to good. They are now computer generated and, in the best examples, contain much very good information about what the pupils know and can do and the progress that they are making. This high level of detail was not evident in all reports completed at the end of the last academic year. Nevertheless, all reports contain good information for parents so that they can compare how well their children are performing against national standards. They also contain information about future targets for improvement. This information is well supplemented by the regular meetings held each term to give parents the opportunity to discuss their children's progress and any concerns that they may have.
52. The school is committed to further improving the partnership with parents so that they are even more successfully involved in their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher had only recently been appointed and the impact of his leadership was limited. Since then there has been a very good pace to change in the school, and the headteacher is now providing very good leadership. He has taken on a phenomenal workload over the last two years, with the focus of all of his work on the need to raise attainment. Parents are very happy with the quality of his leadership and feel that the school has improved significantly whilst he has been in post. The many changes since the last inspection have been a result of the headteacher's dynamic approach to improving the school. The headteacher's approach to his work - *'Let's do it well'* - means that development has been carefully planned and successfully implemented.
54. There is a very clear, shared vision for the future of the school that is based on a very good understanding of how the school could improve. The headteacher has maintained the caring ethos that was evident at the time of the last inspection, and has successfully addressed

weaknesses identified at that time. He has enabled all members of staff to become more involved in the management of the school, both in their developing roles as subject leaders and as class teachers. The school has identified the need to now give subject leaders to have a greater responsibility for monitoring teaching and learning in their curriculum areas. The teamwork and shared sense of purpose that is apparent throughout the school is a significant feature of its work, with all members of staff having their pupils' well being and education at the forefront of their planning. This means that the school is in a very strong position to improve further in the future.

55. Strategies for monitoring the work of the school are very good, although there have been recent limitations due to the teaching commitment of the headteacher. This has restricted the extent of recent monitoring of teaching and learning, especially of younger pupils. Nevertheless, the impact of school self-review over time is very evident. Monitoring and support has helped teaching to improve and, as a result, standards of attainment are higher. Training for teachers and other members of staff has been given a clear priority and has helped to develop teachers' confidence in subjects such as ICT. Taken together, these strategies have had a very good impact on the quality of teaching throughout the school and have helped teachers to become reflective about the effectiveness of their own teaching.
56. The headteacher has established thorough procedures for analysing test data to identify where improvement is necessary. Detailed records of pupils' individual test scores are kept and used very effectively to set targets for improving pupils' attainment. This information is used very effectively to identify areas where further intervention is necessary. For example, at the start of the last academic year, the school's own testing identified weaknesses in the then Year 2 group. The school reacted to this by working with the local authority to provide additional support for this group of pupils. This was one of the key factors in the good progress that they made last year.
57. The involvement of governors has increased significantly since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The headteacher and governors have developed the school's long-term planning, with governors now taking a more active role in deciding priorities for the future. The school development plan is very good. It is detailed and sets a clear and appropriate agenda for school improvement.
58. Governors are supportive of the school's work and committed to developing the school further. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although their involvement in the monitoring of standards is an area that requires further development. Governors are given detailed feedback on test results, and they use this data effectively to gain an understanding of what could be improved. However, they are, as yet, over-reliant on the headteacher for information. As governors, they need to take more of the lead for themselves in identifying areas for improvement. For example, until very recently there were no governors to oversee literacy and numeracy. This limits the governors' understanding of how the school currently operates.
59. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and publish a prospectus and report to parents. These documents meet almost all the requirements but do not include all the required data on national tests.
60. Governors have been especially successful in ensuring an improvement in accommodation since the last inspection. As a result, accommodation is now satisfactory overall. New building projects have been successfully funded and the overall fabric of the school improved significantly. These developments have had a good impact on school effectiveness, for example by giving the local community more pride in their school.
61. Weaknesses in accommodation that still remain are the lack of a suitable outdoor area for children in the reception class and the limited amount of space within their classroom. This means that it is difficult to teach the full reception year curriculum. The school has already identified the need to improve outdoor play areas, and work on this was due to start after the inspection.

62. Day-to-day management of the school is very good, with the headteacher very effectively supported by a hardworking secretary and a clerical assistant. Budgeting is systematic and based on a good understanding of the needs of the school. Decisions are properly made on the basis of; 'Will this help the school to improve?' For example, the contingency fund is maintained at a slightly higher than average level so that the school can maintain good staffing levels and small class sizes. The school successfully seeks additional funding from a range of sources and applies the principles of 'best value' to its work, for example by ensuring that competitive bids are sought for all large purchases. However, there is little evidence of governors formally evaluating the effectiveness of their spending on standards of attainment. Parents make a significant contribution to the financial security of the school. The money they raise is spent well to improve resources or accommodation.
63. Staffing levels are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, there has been a high turnover of staff as well as a long-term absence. This has meant that the headteacher has taken on a full-time teaching role and, until the start of this academic year, other members of staff have been asked to take on few management duties. Teaching assistants and the nursery nurse make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly when working with pupils with special educational needs or supporting children in the reception/Year 1 class.
64. Resources are satisfactory overall. There have been good improvements in resources for information and communication technology, science and mathematics since the last inspection and these are now good. English resources have also improved, especially in the range and quality of books that are available to pupils. However, not all resources are used efficiently. For example, good quality chime bars have never been taken out of their boxes so that they can be used in music lessons.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. To improve the school further the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- ◆ Raise attainment and improve provision in the reception and Year 1 class by:
 - reviewing the curriculum so that all children get a balance of experiences each week;
 - making greater use of assessment data to ensure that work is matched to the needs of pupils of different ages and ability;
 - ensuring that there is appropriate planning in place for both year groups in the class that clearly identifies expectations of what pupils should achieve;
 - working with the local authority and other interested parties to improve accommodation, especially outdoors;
 - looking at strategies for giving pupils more opportunities to be taught in a single age group.
 (Paragraphs 2, 21, 22, 29, 32, 44, 61, 68-70, 72, 73, 96, 101)
 - ◆ Improve spelling skills and the quality of presentation in English and science throughout the school by:
 - teaching pupils editing skills and giving them more opportunities to use these skills in order to avoid careless spelling errors;
 - raising both teachers' and pupils' expectations of how well work should be presented.
 (Paragraphs 6, 23, 93, 121)
66. In addition, the following areas for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:
- developing the role of subject leaders so that they are fully involved in monitoring teaching and learning; (Paragraphs 54, 63)
 - carrying out plans to improve provision in music; (Paragraphs 8, 162)
 - ensuring that religious education lessons have a clear focus on the religious aspects of the adopted syllabus; (Paragraph 178)
 - making more use of the library to develop pupils' individual research and library skills. (Paragraph 94)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

31

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

18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	16	8	0	0	0
Percentage	3	19	52	26	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	81
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5
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	16
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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	5	4	9

Test results for the end of Year 2 has been omitted because of the small number of pupils taking the tests.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	7	6	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (78)	85(83)	92 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	11	11	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (67)	85 (83)	100 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	81	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	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	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

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.7
Average class size	21.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	64

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	256035
Total expenditure	245932
Expenditure per pupil	2733
Balance brought forward from previous year	17860
Balance carried forward to next year	27963

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.6
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	81
Number of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	25	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	29	3	0	14
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	41	10	5	5
The teaching is good.	65	29	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	51	7	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	29	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	52	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	34	48	10	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	55	37	5	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	37	3	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	51	12	5	12

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

67. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average overall, although it varies from year to year depending on the number of children with special educational needs. Children with birthdays from January onwards are part-time for the first or second term, depending on their exact date of birth.
68. Children in the present reception year are not on target to achieve the nationally expected early learning goals by the end of the year and their achievement is unsatisfactory in all areas of learning. This is largely due to inadequacies in the curriculum and difficulties in meeting children's needs fully in this mixed-age class. No children have been identified as having special educational needs in this year group. At the time of the last inspection, attainment and progress were also weak in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Pupils in the present Year 1 are working below national expectations in all subjects, because they did not make the expected progress in the reception year.
69. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some examples of good teaching. The quality of teaching is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff since that time and the present teacher is new to the class this term. The teacher and the nursery nurse have a good understanding of the needs of young children. They are caring and patient and work together well, making good use of their specific expertise. Teaching is at its best at these times and when working with a smaller group when it is easy to meet the needs of all the children. However, the quality of lesson planning is insufficient to ensure that all children are given suitable work in all lessons, which limits progress overall, including the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Whilst some activities include fun, practical tasks, children spend too much time sitting with the Year 1 pupils in the class, listening to the teacher.
70. The curriculum for the reception year is unsatisfactory because it lacks breadth and balance, especially for part-time children who miss the same activities every week because they go home towards the end of each morning. There are no separate long-term plans for reception children and they often take part in the same activities as older pupils. In addition, the lack of a secure outdoor area limits opportunities for children to work outside. Cramped conditions in the classroom mean that activities are not always made available because children need to be quiet so that older pupils in the same class can carry out more formal work. The curriculum is not as good as at the time of the last inspection when it was considered to be good though with some weaknesses in the afternoons. The school is aware that the policy document is out of date and does not reflect current practice.
71. The subject leader for the reception year is well aware of shortcomings in the current provision for reception year children and has clear and feasible plans for bringing about the necessary improvements in lesson planning and the outdoor accommodation.
72. There are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring children's attainment and progress, although there is no overall assessment of children's attainment when they first start school to help the teacher assess what needs to be taught. Assessments are not consistently maintained for all areas of learning. The best records are kept in communication, language and literacy, with fewer comments being made for mathematical development and no comments being recorded for creative development.
73. Resources are satisfactory overall although there is a limited range of large construction equipment. However, the lack of space indoors and outside means that these are not always accessible to the children.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. Children are quick to learn class routines, know that they belong in Somersham School and show independence by helping to tidy up at the end of sessions. However, several children are immature and two bring comfort blankets to carry around the class and school. Whilst children behave well most of the time, their frustration at the lack of space and practical activities is sometimes evident when they do not play sensibly with the resources or each other. Children often prefer to play quietly on their own rather than sharing games because they have limited opportunities to work independently and learn to work together without adult supervision.
75. Members of staff act as good role models by being polite and patient. However, older pupils in the same class sometimes fight or snatch things from each other and this does not set the right example for personal development. In addition, members of staff are good at acknowledging hard work and good behaviour, but they are sometimes too liberal with rewards and so do not set high enough expectations.
76. Children are given a good opportunity to share their likes and dislikes at school by completing a simple survey. However, there are limited opportunities for them to learn how to search out and use resources because of the lack of space in class.

Communication, language and literacy

77. Children have well developed listening skills and sit quietly for a very long time. However, several have immature speech and are reluctant to join in with spoken rhymes. None of the children are reading simple texts although those with higher attainment know some letter sounds and guess correctly when a word is read in context. Nevertheless, children love listening to stories and are very attentive at these times. They are keen to talk about pictures in books and all understand that writing and pictures are different. Children write some recognisable letters but few write their own name or recognisable words. Lower attaining children have weak hand control and find it difficult to trace over an adult's writing.
78. Children have appropriate opportunities to tell each other about what they have been doing at home. Story telling is a considerable strength in teaching. Both the teacher and the nursery nurse are skilled at maintaining the children's interest by using dramatic voices and asking probing questions such as *'Where do polar bears live?'* This has enabled children to develop a love of books and they enjoy sharing books with adults. However, there is limited opportunity for children to sit and enjoy books independently. There are some well thought out and stimulating play activities linked with literacy lessons, such as a fun role-play area set up as 'The House of the Three Bears' and a similar set up in the sand tray. These provide pupils with good opportunities to retell well-known stories and some older children are starting to co-operate with each other with these tasks. There is an area in the classroom for children to practise their writing, although access to this area is limited.

Mathematical development

79. Children are able to count reliably to 10 and those with higher attainment count up to 20, but children do not recognise written numerals and some have a weak knowledge of geometric shapes. Higher attaining pupils add and subtract using numbers up to 5 by counting objects on a page and are beginning to write numerals correctly.
80. All numeracy lessons are timetabled in the afternoon. This means that there is weak provision for part-time children in this subject, with number rhymes, videos and homework being the extent of their curriculum. There are too few opportunities for pupils to explore mathematics when choosing their own activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the World

81. Older children know the name of the village the school is in and where they live and can describe their route to school. They are aware that fruits and vegetables are healthy foods

and that tadpoles change into frogs.

82. Older children have some good opportunities for taking part in science and history lessons with Year 1 pupils. Younger children miss many of these activities because they attend school part-time. For example, children had an exciting opportunity to sort a range of materials and looked to see how these materials had been used in and around the school. Children are given effective support in these activities when several adults are available. There is a computer with suitable games available in the classroom but there are limited occasions when this can be used freely.

Physical Development

83. Some children move along gymnastics equipment with support and can crawl, walk sideways and hop and skip around the hall. All children are enthusiastic when taking part in such activities. However, they are not good at watching each other at work and quickly lose concentration.
84. As at the time of the last inspection, there is no opportunity for children to choose physical activity or move freely in or outside the classroom due to a lack of space. The nursery nurse provides helpful demonstrations to show children how to learn new ways of moving.

Creative development

85. Several children have immature drawing skills and their self-portraits do not all include bodies or limbs. There are very limited opportunities for children to explore materials by mixing colours or for them to make up their own songs and stories. However, they make attractive collages using a range of materials and use sticky tape and glue to join reclaimed materials in their models of robots.
86. The nursery nurse provides children with good teaching in how to make different sounds and to enjoy performing with other children. However, many children have weak singing skills and are slow to join in with well-known rhymes. There are no opportunities for children to take the initiative and experiment with instruments and practise skills learnt at other times of day. Nevertheless, older children keep a steady beat when playing simple home-made instruments and learn to play loudly and softly.

ENGLISH

87. Pupils' attainment has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now above average by the end of Year 6. Teaching is of higher quality and the literacy strategy has had a good impact on standards achieved by pupils.
88. Standards of attainment inevitably vary significantly from year to year because of small group sizes and variations in the number of pupils with special educational needs in a year group. Inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is weakest in Year 1. In this year group, pupils are not achieving as well as they should, and their writing skills are particularly weak. Even the most capable pupil is not yet writing in simple sentences. Spelling is poor, as is the pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make. In Year 1, pupils' poor literacy skills have a major impact on their learning across the curriculum.
89. The weak attainment by the end of Year 1 has a significant impact on National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2. These show that pupils' attainment in 2002 was well below average in reading and writing when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was well below average in reading and very low in writing. In writing, this places the school amongst the lowest 5 per cent of similar schools in the country. Nevertheless, inspection findings confirm that pupils in Year 2 benefit from good teaching and make good progress, with the current group of pupils on target to achieve slightly higher results in end-of-year tests. In the current Year 2, pupils' attainment is below average overall.
90. The good rates of progress evident in Year 2 are maintained throughout Years 3 to 6, so that

there are significant improvements in overall attainment by the end of Year 6. In 2002, National Curriculum test results show that pupils' attainment was above average when compared with all schools and average when compared with similar schools. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that an equal number of pupils achieved Level 4 or above in both reading and writing. The development of writing skills had been a major focus since the last inspection and this has helped to raise standards. Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 is on target to achieve similar standards to those reached in 2002 tests.

91. In National Curriculum tests, girls generally achieve lower standards than boys. The school has identified the limited involvement of some girls in class work as the cause of this variation and has worked hard to address the issue. As a result, during the inspection, both boys and girls participated well in all activities and there was no evidence of girls achieving less well than boys.
92. In Year 2, pupils are becoming confident readers. A strength is the good expression they use when reading aloud. The need to do this is consistently emphasised by members of staff during 'guided reading' sessions. Pupils are given good opportunities to write for a range of purposes and this helps them to quickly improve their writing skills and their confidence. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to write accurately in sentences, although their knowledge of common punctuation rules is variable. Whilst higher attaining pupils use full stops and capital letters accurately most of the time, this is less evident amongst average and lower attaining pupils. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary in their work and produce some good quality poetry showing a clear understanding of rhyming words. A weakness in Year 2 is the quality of spelling and presentation, with pupils making careless errors and not giving enough thought to how they can make their work look neater. These are both important aspects of learning that need further improvement in order to raise overall attainment by the end of Year 2.
93. In Year 6, pupils write in a range of styles, with teaching focusing on improving content and presentation. Biographies of Florence Nightingale and various play-scripts are well written. Their stories, such as those about 'The Selfish Giant', are well structured. They include good vocabulary and show a good sense of audience. From the start of Year 6, pupils have made particularly good progress in their spelling and use of punctuation. Nevertheless, spelling is still a weakness in everyday work, with pupils making careless errors. They do not always write neatly and would benefit from greater training in how to edit and improve their work. The teacher has spent a lot of time helping pupils to appreciate that there are different styles of writing and has given them good support in developing their use of characterisation and descriptions in their work.
94. The high amount of time given to the teaching of reading has a good impact of skills, so that by the end of Year 6, pupils read confidently from a range of texts. They talk confidently about books that they have enjoyed. In discussions, they show a good understanding of what they have read. A weakness in reading development is that pupils are given few opportunities to use the well-resourced library, other than to borrow a book once a week. The library is not yet used effectively as a place for research. As a result, older pupils lack basic library skills, such as an understanding of how library books are categorised.
95. Pupils listen well throughout the school. They are very good at listening to each other's views, showing good levels of respect for different opinions. Speaking skills are satisfactory, but could be improved further. Older pupils often lack confidence about speaking to the whole class, although they happily participate in small group discussions. The school has not yet identified a clear sequence for how speaking skills should be developed throughout the school, which means that expectations from year group to year group are not clear. In addition, in the past there have been few opportunities for pupils to take part in activities where they might develop confidence in speaking to an audience. For example, there are no class assemblies.
96. Teaching is now good overall. It is satisfactory in Year 1 and good in Years 3 to 6. In the reception/Year 1 class, the mix of year groups limits the effectiveness of teaching. Pupils are sometimes expected to sit too long at the start of lessons and work is not always matched

closely enough to individual needs. For example, pupils were unable to complete a writing task that they had been given because they could not read the captions on the worksheet. As a result, the pace of learning was too slow. In contrast, during guided reading sessions where the teacher is working with only one year group, pupils are given good quality support, so that they make good progress in using their knowledge of letter sounds to work out how to read unknown words.

97. In Years 2 to 6, learning is made fun and purposeful. Teachers have high expectations and ensure that pupils make at least good progress. Teachers follow the literacy strategy carefully, giving a good amount of time to 'guided writing' when they work with groups of pupils to help them improve writing skills. This has had a very good impact on learning. Teachers consistently challenge pupils, showing a good awareness of the need to make sure that more passive girls participate fully in activities. For example, in a Year 4 and 5 lesson, the teacher planned a very challenging activity where pupils wrote their own versions of part of a Shakespeare play. The teacher supported a group of lower attaining girls effectively, ensuring that they made good gains in knowledge. Pupils participated well in these activities, which had been carefully planned as part of a week's work designed to improve the writing of play-scripts. The use of a real playwright as an example made the activity relevant to the pupils and promoted good learning.
98. Lessons are well resourced and pupils are given good opportunities to apply their literacy skills in different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 developed their note taking and research skills in a literacy lesson where they were beginning to produce writing about Roman clothes. Pupils carried out these tasks enthusiastically, with both boys and girls participating well. In this lesson, there was good use of ICT, with pupils using information from the internet to carry out their research.
99. A good feature of teaching throughout the school is the support given by teaching assistants, who are extremely valuable members of the teaching team. They are well trained and well informed. They often work with pupils who have special educational needs, helping them to make good progress and to attain standards that are appropriate to their prior attainment. Individual education plans are detailed and provide clear support to teachers in identifying what pupils need to learn next.
100. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection and are now good. The school makes good use of a range of assessments to monitor pupils' learning from year to year and to set targets for both individuals and year groups. Pupils' work is regularly marked, with very good quality comments from teachers helping pupils to understand what they need to improve.
101. The school makes good use of tests to assess learning over time and to identify weaknesses in attainment. For example, at the start of the last academic year, the school's own testing identified weaknesses in the Year 2 group at that time. The school reacted to this by working with the local authority to provide additional support for these pupils. This was one of the key factors in the good progress that they made last year. Teachers generally make good use of assessment information to help identify what needs to be taught next. This is less evident in Year 1, where some work is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs.
102. The curriculum is broad and balanced and, under the dynamic leadership of the headteacher, there have been very good improvements in provision since the last inspection. The literacy strategy is now firmly embedded in school practice and the curriculum is thoroughly planned. Resources have improved. They are stored so that pupils can easily access them and are now of sound quality overall. There are more books in classes and the library. This has helped to develop the positive attitude towards reading that is now evident throughout the school.
103. The recently appointed subject leader has already identified some key areas for further improvement, including improving pupils' presentation and spelling. These are appropriate priorities for the immediate future as they were also weaknesses at the time of the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

104. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, especially by the end of Year 6, where pupils' attainment is now well above average. The school's very thorough and extensive assessment data indicates that the pupils are making very good progress in Years 2 to 6. The teaching and learning that was seen during the inspection confirms that such progress is still being made.
105. Pupils' attainment is weakest in Year 1. In this year group, pupils are not achieving as well as they should given their prior attainment. This low attainment has a significant impact on National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2. Results in 2002 showed that pupils' attainment was well below average when compared with all schools and very low compared with similar schools. This places the school amongst the lowest 5 per cent of similar schools in the country. Nevertheless, inspection findings confirm that pupils in Year 2 benefit from good teaching and are making good progress, with the current group of pupils on target to achieve slightly higher results in end of year tests. In the current Year 2, pupils' attainment is now below average overall in mathematics.
106. In Year 2, few pupils can count up and down in twos and know their odd and even numbers to 100 and beyond. Some pupils are able to count in tens and fives. The pupils are starting to be able to explain the stages of their thinking in working out a problem. Work was also seen on measurement, shapes and their properties, coins, time and place value to 1000. Higher attaining pupils are able to add and subtract 3 digit numbers and know simple fractions. They are beginning to understand how to multiply numbers by using strategies such as repeated addition and doubling.
107. Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 is on target to achieve similar standards to those reached in 2002 tests, when pupils' attainment was well above average when compared with all schools and broadly average when compared with similar schools.
108. The oldest pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of fractions. The properties of fractions and equivalent fractions are clearly understood, with pupils making good use of the correct mathematical vocabulary. They also understand the links between fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils are able to add, subtract and round up and down decimal calculations to 3 places. Most of the pupils know their tables and have a sound grasp of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. This enables them to be able to calculate long division and multiplication successfully. Good work was also seen on solving problems with time, using real life situations with timetables and the 24-hour clock. They use the correct mathematical language when dealing with practical problems in the subject.
109. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good, with teachers mostly employing a good variety of teaching techniques. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with three out of the four observed being very good and one satisfactory. Where teaching is very good, the mental sessions are lively, have a sense of urgency and all pupils participate fully. In the best lessons, the teachers have a clear idea of their objectives, use the correct mathematical language and set realistic, achievable and challenging targets. In these lessons, the higher attaining pupils are given good extension work that takes their learning a stage further than other pupils. There is a good range of resources that are well used and this has had a good impact on teaching and learning.
110. All the pupils in the school complete a good quantity of work in lessons and the standards of presentation are good. The numeracy strategy has been satisfactorily implemented and all teachers have received effective training. Numeracy lessons are organised effectively according to the recommendations of the strategy. Teachers ensure that each session starts with a well-paced mental mathematics session and most have an appropriate review section at the end. All of the pupils are very aware of the purpose of each activity, with lesson objectives being made clear at the start of each session. Homework is set and supports learning satisfactorily. There is good use made of ICT to support pupils' learning in this subject.

111. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with good emphasis being placed on their understanding and ability to explain and apply their calculations. Teachers' planning in Years 2 to 6 is very good. Teachers have adopted an extensive system of assessment for tracking and targeting pupils' progress. There are frequent assessments that are used effectively to support teachers in identifying what needs to be taught next. This is less evident in Year 1, where the needs of pupils are not always met effectively.
112. Throughout the school, assessment information is used successfully to identify targets for individual pupils. This is something that is helping to raise standards and is involving pupils' in their own learning.
113. Management of the subject by the headteacher has been effective in helping to improve provision and to raise standards. The headteacher has monitored teaching and learning and implemented changes where necessary. The local authority has supported him in this, and is the major reason for the rise in standards since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

114. Pupils' attainment is below national averages by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Attainment in Year 2 is better than in the previous year. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall, with very good progress being made in Years 4 - 6. Pupils develop a very good scientific vocabulary and knowledge and have a good understanding of the importance of carrying out a fair test. Attainment has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection when it was well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Differences in attainment and progress between older girls and boys are no longer evident, and members of staff are very aware of the need to encourage girls to contribute in answering scientific questions.
115. In 2002, National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 were well above average, with a very large number of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5). National Curriculum teacher assessments in the same year showed attainment to be well below average by the end of Year 2.
116. By the end of Year 2, pupils are building knowledge about various types of movement and know that some objects need a source of power in order to work. They describe what they have observed during investigations, although many of these descriptions lack scientific content and are related to the colours of objects or difficulties encountered. In Year 1, pupils sort objects into sets according to the materials from which they are made. However, there is little evidence of written work and pupils' weak literacy skills in Years 1 and 2 have a significant impact on how these pupils can present their knowledge and findings.
117. By the end of Year 6, pupils make sensible predictions about what might happen in their investigations and they design and run their own tests, modifying their ideas as they work. For example, pupils learn that some tests need to be repeated to ensure validity and that sometimes fair testing is unnecessary when designing for a specific purpose, such as making a periscope. They have a very good understanding of scientific facts. They are competent at expressing possible reasons for their findings during discussions, although they do not include many of these reasons in their written work.
118. The quality of teaching is good overall, with an example of excellent teaching in Year 6. In the excellent lesson, the teacher's love of the subject held the pupils' interest throughout the session and a perfect balance was provided between taught facts and opportunities for pupils to explore for themselves. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was found to be satisfactory. Effective training has enabled members of staff to improve their subject knowledge and the provision for the subject. Good use is made of a subject specialist to teach Years 4 to 6.
119. Teachers make learning meaningful and fun by providing real life scenarios for investigations, such as testing the suitability of various materials for a fictitious swimwear manufacturer.

Pupils are developing a better understanding of their own learning, especially in Years 4 to 6, because individual targets are being set and teachers share the purpose of each lesson with pupils. In addition, the quality of teachers' marking helps pupils to improve their work.

120. Effective use is made of probing questions to encourage pupils to think about what they are learning and to revise previously learnt facts. For example, pupils in Years 4 –5 were asked to consider what the purpose of skin was when discussing how much water is present in the world and whether fruit and vegetables without skin were likely to dry out more quickly. All teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. A voluntary helper provides some effective support in Years 4-6 by sharing ideas, helping to prepare resources and being available to support learning when needed. The open-ended nature of investigations and the depth of study means that pupils' differing needs, including those with special educational needs, are met well and there is a good level of challenge.
121. Pupils in Years 4 – 6 are very enthusiastic and well behaved in lessons. However, they do not present their work neatly and their spelling skills are weak, resulting in a number of errors in their recorded work. These weaknesses in writing skills limit the time available to present findings, especially for lower attaining pupils, and their work is often unfinished. Pupils who carry out additional research work at home are praised well to encourage further interest in the subject.
122. The curriculum is very thoroughly planned by the subject leader and there is a very good emphasis on learning through practical investigation. This is a vast improvement since the last inspection when little time was allowed for practical work. Parents are particularly pleased with the 'hands on' approach in lessons. The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development by providing good opportunities for them to appreciate natural wonders such as the beauty of magnified sugar crystals.
123. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support learning in science lessons. For example, pupils in Years 4 –5 used a web-site to find out more information about how the heart works. In Year 6, a microscope and computerised projector were used very well so that the teacher could demonstrate how some substances dissolve in water. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills by taking accurate measurements and displaying information in graphs. For example, pupils in Year 1 learnt how to form inter-linking sets when sorting a range of materials.
124. The subject leader has a very good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has ensured that gaps in pupils' knowledge evident at the time of the last inspection have been filled. There are very clear plans for maintaining the high standards evident in Years 4 – 6 and for improving standards in Years 1 – 3. All members of staff are very committed to improving the subject further.
125. As at the time of the last inspection, there are good resources for the subject. These are now used more effectively, enabling all pupils to take part in investigative work by using a wide range of equipment or to bring added information. For example, short extracts from videos are used well to support learning.
126. There are effective links with the local senior school, and the subject leader works with other neighbouring schools by running a shared science day for all pupils. New procedures for assessing pupils attainment and progress were started this year to increase information on pupils' progress further. National Curriculum test results are monitored to help plan for future needs.

ART AND DESIGN

127. No lessons were on the timetable during the inspection so it was not possible to form a judgement on the quality of teaching. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Judgements on pupils' attainment and progress have been made by scrutinising displays of work and photographs.

128. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly in line with national expectations and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection when attainment was below average. In Years 3 – 6, there are some good examples of drawing and printing following specific training sessions. For example, pupils developed some very attractive press prints using dramatic geometric designs by building up their work to include up to three presses of colour. These pupils are also able to carry out simple evaluations of their work enabling them to refine their skills further. There is clear evidence in pupils' sketchbooks of specific skills being taught, and pupils in Year 6 show good shading and perspective in their drawings following a visit to the local church. At the time of the last inspection, pupils in Years 3-6 produced a limited range of work. This is no longer the case.
129. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. It is now broad and balanced and a suitable scheme of work is being modified to match the school's needs more closely. Pupils are given a satisfactory range of opportunities to work in two- and three- dimensions and with various materials. Effective use is made of contemporary art to inspire pupils, such as the colourful tissue paper overlays pupils made in the style of Chris Ofili. The subject alternates with design and technology to allow sufficient time for topics in each subject to be studied in sufficient detail.
130. The subject leader has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has started to compile an attractive portfolio of 'best work' to inspire teachers and pupils and to help monitor pupils' progress. New procedures for assessing pupils attainment and progress were started this year, although they have not been in place long enough to have an impact on learning. The subject leader has clear plans for developing the subject further, with a continuation of the focused training for teachers and greater opportunities for visits and visitors. Other members of staff are keen to improve provision in the subject further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

131. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly in line with national expectations. Although there are some gaps in pupils' skills due to weaknesses in provision in the past, they are now making satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils and have access to all the activities available. At the time of the last inspection attainment was below average throughout the school.
132. By the end of Year 6, pupils are aware that products are designed for specific purposes. They consider the differing needs of potential 'customers' taking account of their ages and interests. They develop appropriate designs, showing materials to be used. Some of their designs make good use of basic structures. For example, pupils made strong structures from papier-mache for their hat designs. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 explore the attributes of a range of commercial packaging before designing and making their own containers for carrying two chicken nuggets. Pupils in Year 1 are successful in joining a range of reclaimed materials together when designing their own robots, and they design lunches as part of their science work on healthy lifestyles.
133. The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed in Year 6 was good. The teacher provided pupils with a purposeful task and explained clearly what they needed to learn. Pupils were very attentive in this lesson and enjoyed the role-play activity of trying to sell their designs to a 'commercial buyer'. Pupils make effective use of numeracy skills in some design and technology projects. For example, older pupils indicate on their designs the dimensions for their models. Pupils have some good opportunities to evaluate commercial products but make limited evaluations of their own work.
134. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection when it was found to be unsatisfactory. It is now satisfactory overall, with a suitable scheme of work providing the basis for lesson planning. The subject alternates with art and design to allow sufficient time for topics in each subject to be studied in sufficient detail. There are effective links with the local senior school, and pupils in Year 6 designed decorative bags during a recent visit.

135. The subject leader has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses and there are clear plans for improving the subject further. Members of staff are enthusiastic about the subject and are working together to ensure gaps in pupils' skills are filled. Limited time has been allowed to monitor new developments. The new procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have not been in place long enough to have a significant impact on teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY

136. Due to the nature of the timetable, only one lesson of geography was seen during the week of the inspection. Judgements are based on work seen in the pupils' books, displays and discussions with the pupils and staff.
137. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make progress in their learning, especially those in Years 2 to 6.
138. Pupils in Year 2 are studying the weather and world climates and looking at the effects on peoples' lives all over the world. They displayed some good geographical knowledge when talking about how the weather varies from place to place.
139. Work seen in the books, particularly in Years 4 to 6 and around the school, indicates that much work on environmental, local and international issues has been completed to a satisfactory standard. It is linked well to map-work skills and history.
140. Teaching was good in the one lesson timetabled during the inspection. The management of pupils and time was good. The work was challenging, with correct use of geographical language, and the pace of the session was brisk; consequently the pupils learnt well. They were attentive and well behaved, which meant that the lesson objectives were achieved with pupils increasing their knowledge of the effects of the weather on peoples' lives.
141. Teachers' planning indicates that good use is made of local resources, visitors and visits, and these opportunities enrich the curriculum. The residential visit to Kent is an important element in the geography curriculum, giving pupils good opportunities to study a contrasting area.
142. Good links are made between geography and other subjects. For example, pupils learn about co-ordinates when looking at maps and use ICT to present their findings or to photograph the local area with a digital camera.
143. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with good use made of a scheme of work to support teachers in their planning. There is a good balance between the various elements of the subject. Appropriate time is allowed for teaching the skills of geographical interpretation and the use of source materials, as well as for assessment opportunities. The pupils enjoy their geography and work well together in groups.
144. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural development by extending their knowledge of the world and its peoples. Their awareness of social and moral issues is being very well developed through the subject, particularly in their local environmental studies.

HISTORY

145. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Both boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory gains in their learning. The school has maintained the standards seen at the last inspection.
146. Pupils in Year 2 have been learning about Remembrance Sunday. They have visited the local parish church and its memorial, helping them develop a good understanding of how to find and use local source material to find out about different generations and past times.
147. By the end of Year 6, the pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past by using a good range of evidence. For example, they look at clothes worn in the past and go on visits to local places of historical importance. They look at houses, transport, schools and household objects from long ago. Pupils confidently use photographs

to make comparisons with today's lifestyles. They have a satisfactory knowledge of key dates, periods and events in British history. They are currently studying Romans in Britain and developing their research and interpretation skills. They are well taught and so have good skills in interpreting photographs of objects from the past to find out what they tell us, while questioning their reliability as sources of accurate information.

148. Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching. Teachers successfully motivate the pupils who, in turn, apply themselves very well, completing a good quantity of work and showing much interest in history. This was well illustrated in both of the very good lessons seen, where the teachers focused the pupils very well on the task of looking at sources of evidence. This developed their sense of time and the position of well known events on a time-scale.
149. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Work includes the teaching of the skills of historical interpretation and the use of source materials. As part of the planned curriculum, the pupils have many good opportunities to visit local places of historical interest, and this greatly enriches and adds to their knowledge of history. Pupils enjoy history lessons, work well together and no bad behaviour was seen.
150. History lessons make a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development. It extends their knowledge of their local heritage and of its peoples' present and past, and develops their awareness of social and moral issues. The level of resources is satisfactory, although more use could be made of the local museum service through loans of artefacts and visits by museum staff.
151. The subject is led by a keen, enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. However, opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning have been limited.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

152. At the time of the last inspection, no judgements were made on the standards achieved by pupils but the report identified important weaknesses in provision for ICT. These weaknesses are no longer evident. Good leadership by the headteacher and the subject leader have brought about a good rise in standards of pupils' attainment, which are now in line with national expectations overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has improved resources, further developed the ICT suite, and is now making effective use of a nationally recommended scheme of work to help teachers in planning activities. This has significantly improved the rate at which pupils learn new skills. Teachers make more use of ICT to support learning in other subjects than they did at the time of the last inspection, although this is largely limited to times when pupils are working in the ICT suite. Although there is now good use of ICT in other subjects, the computers in each classroom continue to be under-used.
153. By the end of Year 2, pupils still lack some basic skills. For example, their control of the 'mouse' to move a cursor on the computer screen is comparatively weak and they do not yet know their way around the keyboard. Nevertheless, good quality teaching is helping these pupils to improve quickly. They are given good opportunities to develop, practise and refine new techniques. They are increasing their confidence in using computers to record their ideas. They can type in simple texts using the keyboard and know how to draw and alter pictures using on-screen 'buttons'. Most pupils can explain how they will save this work and understand how to print it.
154. By the end of Year 6, pupils have improved their ICT skills and are able to apply them to a wider range of tasks. They have good word-processing skills, knowing how to change the colour and size of font. When writing on the computer, they show a developing awareness of how they can alter the way that their work is presented so that it is more attractive to an audience, for example by adding clip art pictures to their work. This is seen to good effect in various poems and stories that they have written.
155. Throughout the school, pupils understand that ICT can be used as a method of communication and investigation. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils use these skills in

a purposeful way. Internet access is carefully supervised, and pupils are beginning to use it to carry out their own research. For example, pupils in Year 6 used the internet to find out about different types of Roman clothing.

156. The quality of teaching is good, and the use of the ICT suite is a significant strength. The ICT suite is used both to teach specific skills and also to give pupils opportunities to apply their skills to purposeful tasks in different subjects. For example, in an excellent science lesson in Year 6, the teacher made very good use of electronic microscopes and a white board to help pupils understand how different substances dissolve. Pupils enjoy using the computers and respond well to whatever work that they are given on them.
157. Teachers take care to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the curriculum and work is planned for these pupils at an appropriate level. Learning is made fun and pupils with weaker skills are supported individually when necessary. In a good lesson in Years 2 and 3, pupils made good progress in learning how to use an art programme to paint different shapes. Pupils who do not have a computer at home showed weaker skills than other pupils. The teacher showed a good awareness of this, supporting these pupils effectively and enabling them to quickly develop the skills that they previously lacked.
158. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with pupils benefiting from the good quality and well organised resources. The recently appointed subject leader has continued the good work started by the headteacher, and has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in provision. She is aware of the need to improve the use of classroom computers to enhance learning. A recently developed procedure for assessing pupils' attainment is being piloted by the subject leader. In its present format, it produces useful information on pupils' progress and attainment in the year groups where it is being used.
159. Pupils' learning is significantly enhanced by well-attended computer clubs that take place on two evenings each week. At these, pupils are able to learn new skills. For example, during the inspection, pupils were learning how to make simple multi-media presentations about themselves.

MUSIC

160. During the inspection, there was only one music lesson in Year 1 timetabled. This means that there is insufficient evidence to judge standards of pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
161. In the Year 1 lesson, pupils' needs were met effectively through good teaching from a nursery nurse. Pupils were given good opportunities to experiment with the sounds made by various plastic objects. This led into a purposeful activity, where pupils learnt to keep a steady beat using different types of beaters. However, pupils' singing was weak, with very few joining in with the nursery nurse as she sang different number songs. This weak singing was also evident in assemblies, where pupils needed a lot of encouragement from teachers to join in with accompanying a taped pop song.
162. The school acknowledges that there are weaknesses in the way that music is taught across the school, and the curriculum currently lacks balance. Although pupils get some opportunities to sing and to use untuned instruments in lessons, there are missed opportunities to develop music skills. Pupils have no opportunities within school to learn to play instruments, such as the recorder, and they do not sing in every assembly. When they do, the lack of a musician to play the piano hinders learning. Although the school uses taped music to make up for this, it does limit the range of music that can be used.
163. The recently appointed subject leader and the headteacher have ambitious plans for improving provision in music. These include raising teachers' confidence, purchasing a new scheme of work that will support teachers more effectively in their planning, and starting various after-school music clubs.

164. Pupils have some opportunities to perform in public. They sing at Harvest and Christingle services in the village church. Parents report that they thoroughly enjoyed last year's Christmas play, which included songs and simple musical accompaniments. This was organised with the help of a parent, who provided additional support to teachers in producing the play.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

165. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. At the last inspection, there was no judgement on attainment so no comparison of standards can be made.
166. Pupils experience the full National Curriculum programmes of study. In gymnastics, movement and games lessons, all pupils make good progress in the development of their skills. They are taught to improve their skills, and work collaboratively throughout the school. Swimming is part of the curriculum; pupils make good progress and enjoy the sessions. The school reports that 75 per cent of pupils achieve the national expectation of being able to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6. However, there is a need for the school to review the current provision as a short session of swimming takes nearly all afternoon to achieve, due to the distance that is travelled to the pool.
167. The pupils in Year 2 are learning to control a football, dribble and pass. They are able to do this with increasing control and accuracy. Pupils in Year 6 are studying dance. Both the boys and the girls are learning to move around the hall with increasing poise and control. The very imaginative 'robbery and chase' scenario set by the teacher has grasped the pupils' attention. Consequently, all of the pupils are displaying good dramatic interpretation of the music for the scene set by the teacher. They are starting to learn how to improve their performance by evaluation and discussion, though this area needs further development.
168. Three lessons were seen and the quality of teaching observed was always satisfactory or better, with one example of very good teaching. In all lessons, pupils are encouraged to warm up and they are aware of the importance of exercise and safety. They are also taught to cool down correctly at the end of a period of exercise. All of the teachers provide good role models by changing for the lessons; all of the pupils change into suitable clothing.
169. Teachers encourage the pupils to take part in all activities with enthusiasm. They challenge them to think about their performance and how to improve. All pupils enjoy physical education. Their response is very good and no bad behaviour was seen. Lessons are carefully planned and gradually develop the skill or sequence that is the lesson objective. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They give clear instructions, emphasising how improvements can be made, and give encouraging and appropriate praise. However, there were times in the satisfactory lessons when the pupils were not physically involved enough and the pace of the session was too slow.
170. The school has a satisfactory range of resources and equipment that are well used. The school holds an annual competitive sports day that is thoroughly enjoyed by all.
171. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There is an appropriate number of after-school sports activities, with competitive matches in which the school has been successful.
172. The headteacher, who is the subject leader, has clear priorities for improving provision. The most important of these is implementing the plans to develop a 'multi-use outside games area' which could be used throughout the year for physical activities. This would also relieve the problems caused by the relatively small size of the school hall, which is crowded when the Year 6 class is working in there. There is now a need for time to be allocated for the monitoring of the teaching and standards throughout the school. At the moment, this is limited by the headteacher's current workload.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

173. During the inspection, only lessons in Years 1, 2 and 3 were timetabled. Inspection judgements have been made by looking at available lessons, as well as by talking to teachers and pupils and scrutinising pupils' previous work.

174. At the time of the last inspection, the school had only just started to teach religious education. The subject is now taught thoroughly across the school, with teachers following the local authority agreed syllabus. However, the lack of provision prior to the last inspection means that there continue to be gaps in the knowledge of older pupils, with attainment by the end of Year 6 being below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In contrast, by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment meets the expectations of the agreed syllabus. These pupils have benefited from the more consistent approach to the teaching of the subject over the last two years.
175. A strength in attainment is the pupils' good levels of empathy with different beliefs. In teaching, there is a good emphasis given to pupils thinking about each other's beliefs and opinions. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their feelings and relate this knowledge to spiritual and moral dilemmas. Pupils in Year 2 learn about a range of festivals from different faiths and can retell confidently different Bible stories.
176. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of Judaism and Christianity. However, they have very little understanding of Islam. This is an aspect of the agreed syllabus that has been missed due to previous weaknesses in provision.
177. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with an example of good teaching in a Year 2 and 3 lesson. In this lesson, the teacher helped pupils to think about how each of us can belong to different groups. The lesson was well resourced, with good use made of a football team example, helping pupils to understand that even a very skilled person may not be effective without the support of teammates. Pupils took a good part in the activity, showing good levels of interest and making some very interesting contributions. For example, a pupil suggested that one of the groups that they belong to is *'God's family'*, leading to an interesting discussion about *'How God depends on us'*. Pupils suggested that God is important because *'He gave us our life'*, indicating a good understanding of key Christian beliefs.
178. The headteacher has identified the need to ensure that lessons contain sufficient religious content, rather than focusing largely on personal and social education as they often do at the moment. This is a weakness of both the curriculum and teaching. A scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows that there are missed opportunities in many lessons to develop pupils' religious education, with too much of an emphasis being given to the personal and social aspects of the scheme of work. For example, at the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were following a unit from the scheme of work about the 'Christian Community'. Despite this, most of their learning focused on the social and moral aspects of 'communities', with no mention of God, the Bible or Christianity in any of their written work.
179. The subject is well managed, with significant improvements in provision since the last inspection. Religious education is now taught systematically to all pupils. The subject leader is trying out a new assessment procedure and has worked hard to ensure that curriculum coverage is adjusted from year to year as the make-up of mixed age classes changes. There continues to be a good range of resources to support learning about Islam, Judaism and Christianity.
180. The school is developing links with local churches. The local vicar and a Baptist minister take assemblies. Pupils regularly visit the local Church of England, both to take part in services and to look at how the church is used as a place of worship. These activities contribute well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.