



**OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION**

INSPECTION REPORT

ASH GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ash

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125116

Headteacher: Mrs Lyn Richards

Reporting inspector: Mr Selwyn Ward
9271

Dates of inspection: 30 June – 3 July 2003

Inspection number: 248659

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr G Smith
Date of previous inspection:	23 May 2001

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subjects	Aspect responsibilities
Selwyn Ward 9271	Lead inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well does the school make use of information from assessment? How well does the school ensure equality of opportunity and inclusion? What should the school do to improve further?
Viv Phillips 9053	Lay inspector		How good are pupils' attitudes and personal development? How well does the school provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Miriam Harries 32775	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Geography Music	
Marianne Harris 23288	Team inspector	English History Religious education	
Cherry Jackson 5358	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design technology	How well does the school provide for pupils with special educational needs? How well does the school provide for children from Traveller families?
Val Singleton 23044	Team inspector	Information & communication technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed? How well does the school provide for pupils learning English as an additional language?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ash Grange is a primary school for boys and girls aged 3 – 11 years. It includes a Foundation Unit for children in their reception and nursery years that offers the only state nursery provision in the area and so caters for some children that subsequently go on to join other local schools. With 278 pupils, including 41 who are part-time in the Foundation Unit, the school is a little larger than average. Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds but a high proportion of children come from socially disadvantaged homes and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. There are very few children from overseas, and at the time of the inspection there were no pupils in the school at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Around half the pupils are from families of, mostly settled, Travellers, and inspectors were asked specifically to report on the school's provision for its Traveller pupils. Pupils join the school with a wide range of abilities but, taken overall, their attainment when they join the school is low. Their language and communication skills are particularly low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around twice the national average. Around one in twenty pupils has a statement of special educational need, which is a very high proportion. Most of the special needs relate to specific or multiple learning difficulties. A large number of pupils have quite a high level of need. Mobility is high, with an above average number of pupils having their education interrupted by moving school partway through their primary education. Staff turnover has also been high. Although there are several staff who have been at the school for some time and who, with the many teaching assistants, offer stability, over the last two years, there have, been 18 changes of teacher across the school's ten classes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

With its many high need pupils and the difficulties inevitably caused by a high turnover both of pupils and teachers, Ash Grange is a school working in very challenging circumstances. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, it is satisfactorily effective. The leadership and management of the school have been effective in minimising the disruption to learning caused by the changes in staff and in establishing a stable and supportive learning environment for pupils. Teaching is satisfactory and, although standards overall remain low in English and mathematics, pupils of all abilities and from different backgrounds develop a positive attitude to learning and make satisfactory progress. They do very well in science and generally achieve well in practical subjects, such as art. Ash Grange provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Unit.
- Pupils do very well in science and are generally achieving well in practical subjects.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development and, as a result, children behave well, get on well with one another and are keen to learn.
- Ash Grange provides a very caring and supportive environment for its pupils.
- The school is well led and managed.

What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough in English and mathematics.
- Not enough time is given to teaching some subjects.
- Planning is not always focused closely enough on pupils' learning.
- Parents could do more to support their children's learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in May 2001, it was found to have improved to the extent that it no longer required special measures. Standards in the Year 6 tests taken at the time of the last inspection were low in English, mathematics and science. In the Year 2 tests, they were very low. Since then, there

has been some improvement in standards in English and mathematics, although these remain well below average. Standards in science have improved considerably and are now broadly in line with national expectations. The school has made satisfactory progress in tackling the key issues arising from the last inspection. Provision for teaching information and communication technology is much improved and there have been further improvements in teaching, despite the many changes in staff. Although attendance is still lower than it should be, the school has good procedures in place to monitor and promote attendance. There has been satisfactory improvement in the two years since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows results attained at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in national tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	E	E	C	very high (top 5%) A*
mathematics	E*	E	E	D	well above average A
science	E	E	C	A	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E
					very low (bottom 5%) E*

Schools are categorised as similar according to the proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals.

Results in the tests taken at the end of Year 6 show improvement that is broadly in line with the national trend. Because of pupils' low starting point, these results represent satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. In science, the results represent very good progress. Standards seen in the inspection match those attained in last year's tests and are consistent with the appropriate targets set by the school for this year's results. Results in the Year 2 tests were well below average in English and mathematics but this again represented satisfactory progress. Pupils of all abilities and from different backgrounds make similar progress. Although test results over the last three years show that girls of Traveller origin do not do as well as boys in their infant years, the school is successful in raising the confidence of girls so that they catch up during their junior years. Children do well in the Foundation Unit. Although many do not reach all of the expected early learning goals for this stage of their education, they make consistently good and sometimes very good progress in relation to their starting point.

Throughout the school, standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations, but this nevertheless represents good progress. In history and geography, standards throughout the school are well below average and pupils do not make enough progress because not enough time is given to teaching these subjects. Standards in the infants are in line with national expectations in art and design technology. In the juniors, standards are below national expectations in design technology, where there is not enough planning and evaluation of design, but average in art and religious education. Inspectors did not see enough music or physical education to make an overall judgement about standards in these subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. They are interested in lessons and settle to work without fuss. They are keen to please their teachers and the many other adults in the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is good in almost all lessons, in the playground and around the school. Pupils learn to treat each other kindly and with respect, and they respond very well to the school's clear and consistent expectations of good behaviour, so that even pupils with

	behavioural difficulties are not allowed to interrupt the learning of others. There were four temporary and two permanent exclusions last year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships throughout the school are good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. When pupils are asked to work together in pairs or small groups, they do so sensibly and productively. Girls and boys of different abilities and from different backgrounds mix, work and get on well together and are all included in the full range of school activities.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Too much schooling is missed because parents take their children out of school in term time. A number of children also arrive late for school. Pupils' unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality contributes to the school's low test scores.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Quality of teaching	good	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory. The *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* are followed, and the school has supplemented them with much additional teaching time for English but, although standards are a little higher, the *Strategies* have not been effective in significantly raising standards. There have not been enough opportunities taken to teach English and mathematics through other subjects, such as history and geography. Throughout the school, teachers are very effective in managing pupils, so that even where a child has emotional or behavioural difficulties, there is no disruption to the learning of other children. Teachers have good subject knowledge, with imaginative use being made of their individual expertise to teach several classes. Teachers have a good relationship with the children and, as a result, the pupils are keen to please and willing to put effort into their work. In the most effective lessons, teachers gave clear introductions so that pupils knew what they were expected to learn. In some cases, however, there were simply too many learning objectives. A particular strength of science teaching is the expectation on pupils to record their findings in a variety of appropriate ways. This has been effective in giving pupils greater active involvement in their learning rather than passively completing worksheets. Expectations are not always high enough in every lesson, however. In some lessons, for example, pupils are given too much time to complete straightforward tasks. In the Foundation Unit, planning is a particularly strong feature, with teachers and support staff organising their work together. This is not so evident in the infant and junior years, so that the large number of support staff are not always used as effectively as they could. Marking is generally of good quality, giving helpful guidance to pupils on what they need to do to do better, but teachers' comments are not always followed up with sufficient rigour, resulting in children frequently repeating their mistakes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. Legal requirements are met and there are many very good features, including the numerous clubs that enrich the school's provision for its pupils. However, not enough time is given to some subjects, including history and geography, and opportunities are missed for pupils to learn literacy and numeracy through other subjects rather than just through formal English and mathematics lessons. There is very good provision in the Foundation Unit.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and make satisfactory progress. All are fully included in the full range of activities in the school. Pupils' individual education plans, setting the targets on which they need to concentrate, vary in quality. In some cases, they could be more sharply focused.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good and this contributes to the good relationships, attitudes and behaviour seen throughout the school. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development but the currently narrow curriculum limits opportunities to better develop these areas. There is not enough opportunity to learn about and celebrate Traveller culture.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides a very caring and supportive environment for its pupils, many of whom have complex needs. First aid and other welfare issues are dealt with very well and there are good procedures for promoting attendance and very effective systems for encouraging good behaviour.
How well the school uses assessment information	Satisfactory. Good information is collected on the progress pupils are making in English, mathematics and science and the analysis of this data has helped in planning what pupils need to learn. In a couple of classes, teachers have gone on to plan individual learning targets with each pupil, but this is not consistent throughout the school.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents benefit from school reports that give satisfactory information on how well their children are doing and there are regular newsletters, but some school publications could be made more attractive and more easily readable. Although there is a small number of very supportive parents, many parents do not do enough to support their children's education, for example by ensuring that their children attend regularly and on time.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is well led and is effectively managed. The headteacher provides clear educational direction and, with the senior management team, does an effective job in managing the school so that there is a stable and supportive learning environment despite the high turnover of teaching staff. Staff with delegated responsibilities are effective, although inevitably some are quite new to their roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are committed to and very supportive of the school. The chair, in particular, does a very effective job, but many of the governors are relatively new and a high proportion work in the school, and this has limited the opportunities for sharing their responsibilities and workloads more equitably.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are monitored by the headteacher and senior management team but the effectiveness of this has been limited by the high turnover among teaching staff. The school makes sound use of the principles of <i>best value</i> to evaluate the effectiveness of its work.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Spending is tied to an improvement plan, although this only projects ahead for one year and so cannot be used for longer-term planning. The school improvement plan is comprehensive but does not sufficiently distinguish between competing priorities. Funding is used effectively and for the proper purpose, with, for example, the investment in information and communication technology now making an effective contribution to learning. The school is well resourced.

Staffing	Good. Although the high staff turnover has inevitably been a barrier to school improvement, the school has successfully minimised its adverse effect. Even though, during the inspection, one of the classes was without its permanent teacher, the school was able to cope well in her absence. There is a very high number of support staff, many of whom are long-serving and provide further stability to the staffing of the school.
Accommodation	Very good. The school benefits from an attractive and spacious site. There are several spare classrooms which provide valuable specialist teaching areas.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress. • The teaching is good. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. • There is a good range of out-of-school activities • The school is approachable. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour is not good enough.

The number of questionnaires returned was very low, with only about one in ten parents responding. The views expressed in those questionnaires that were returned, and at the meeting which the Lead Inspector held with parents before the inspection, were positive. Inspectors broadly agree with parents' positive views, although teaching and progress were judged as satisfactory overall. Inspectors disagree with parents' negative views on behaviour. These may have been coloured by an incident during the past year which resulted in a pupil being excluded. Inspectors judged behaviour in the school to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Throughout this report, references to *Key Stage 1* relate to the infant years (Years 1 and 2) when pupils are aged 5 to 7 years. The junior years (from Year 3 to Year 6) are referred to as *Key Stage 2*, when pupils are aged 7 to 11. Children in the nursery and reception years (the school's Foundation Unit) are considered to be in the *Foundation Stage*. Schools' test results are compared with the national average, as well as against "*similar schools*". Schools are grouped as similar according to the proportion of children attending who are known to be eligible for free school meals. In judging standards, inspectors analysed results attained in the national standard assessment tests (SATs) taken at the end of Years 2 and 6, both in 2002 and in previous years. At the time of the inspection, results of the 2003 tests were not available but inspectors looked at and judged work currently being done in lessons and at work done throughout the past year. They listened to children read and discussed children's work with them as well as with their teachers. Whereas judgements on attainment relate to comparisons with nationally expected standards, *achievement* relates to the progress pupils make and compares how well children do as against their prior attainment. English, mathematics and science are referred to as *core subjects*, and a degree of priority was given in the inspection to looking at these subjects. Other curriculum subjects are sometimes referred to as *non-core* or *foundation subjects*. When the school was last inspected, inspectors only judged standards in the core subjects and in information and communication technology. As a result, it is only in these subjects that inspectors were able to judge improvement since the last inspection.
2. Although children join the school with a wide range of abilities, overall their attainment when they start school is well below average. Pupils join the school with particularly low language and communication skills. They get off to a good start in the Foundation Unit, where they achieve well - making consistently good, and sometimes very good, progress. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social development and in their creative skills. Despite benefiting from the school's very good provision, many children do not reach all of the expected early learning goals for children of this age because they join the school with such poorly developed skills. The Traveller pupils achieve very well in the Foundation Unit as many are much less well prepared for school learning when they join the nursery.
3. In the tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2002, results were well below average in reading and mathematics. In writing, test results were very low. These results nevertheless represent steady improvement since the last inspection, at the time of which results in reading, writing and mathematics were all among the lowest 5 per cent in the country. There is no national test for science in Year 2 but, in the assessments made last year by teachers, pupils were well below average in science. When compared with similar schools, test results last year were well below average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. Girls did particularly poorly, and recent years' results show that they have generally tended to do less well than boys in the infants. This contrasts with the national picture where girls generally tend to do better than boys. Cultural factors contribute to the low attainment of girls in the infants at Ash Grange. Some girls from Traveller backgrounds are less confident than boys from the same families. The school has been successful, however, in boosting the confidence of girls, so that by the end of their time in the juniors, girls have caught up with boys.
4. Work seen in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 was well below average overall but represented satisfactory progress for pupils in relation to their attainment at the start of Year 1. Pupils of all abilities, including more able pupils and those with special educational needs, all achieve satisfactorily. In science, work seen was below average. It was similarly below average in information and communication technology and religious education. Given pupils' low starting point, this represents good achievement in these subjects. Pupils also achieve well in art and design and in design technology. In both these subjects, they respond well to the practical activities and attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally. It is only in history and geography that pupils are not achieving well enough. Standards in both these subjects are well below average. Pupils have not made enough progress because, with the school's

emphasis on increased teaching time for literacy, not enough time has been given in the timetable to the teaching of history and geography. Inspectors did not see enough music or sufficient range of activities in physical education to make overall judgements about standards in these subjects.

5. In the tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2002, results were well below average in English and mathematics but in science they were in line with national expectations. The trend in results has improved generally in line with that seen nationally, but in science the improvement has been much sharper than seen in other schools. In part, this is because of the generous amount of time given to teaching science in the juniors, but it is also due to revisions made last year to teaching the subject which placed an increased emphasis on learning through practical investigation and recording the results of experiments in a variety of appropriate ways. When compared with similar schools, last year's test results were below average in mathematics, average in English but well above average in science. Pupils of different abilities, including more able pupils and those with special educational needs, all make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. In science, pupils make very good progress. The achievement of pupils from different backgrounds, including Travellers, is similar. Because the school has a high number of pupils who join the school other than at the usual start of their primary education, inspectors analysed the progress of a sample group of pupils in Year 6 who joined the school at different times after the start of Year 3. There was no evidence from this sampling of these pupils doing less well than others.
6. Work seen in English and mathematics in the juniors was well below average, and so of a standard similar to that indicated in last year's test results. It was broadly consistent with the appropriate targets set by the school for 2003 test results in these subjects. Work in science was in line with national expectations, maintaining the very good achievement seen in last year's tests. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology, where good use is now being made of the school's improved facilities, although standards remain below average. They also achieve well in religious education, attaining standards in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in design technology are below average, particularly in relation to pupils' evaluation of their designs, although they achieve well in art and design, attaining the nationally expected standard. As in the infants, it is only in history and geography that pupils make unsatisfactory progress, and this is again because not enough time is given to teaching these subjects. Inspectors did not see enough music or sufficient range of activities in physical education to make overall judgements about standards in these subjects.
7. In their questionnaire responses, a high proportion of the parents who returned their questionnaires expressed the view that their children make good progress. Inspectors found that pupils achieve well in the Foundation Unit and satisfactorily in the rest of the school. There has been satisfactory improvement in standards since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Strengths identified in attitudes and relationships in the last inspection have been built on and improved well. After a long period when the school struggled to deal with high absence rates, better procedures and more support from education welfare services have led to significant improvement in attendance over the last twelve months, although authorised absence levels are still too high.
9. As parents indicated in their questionnaire responses, their children like school and are encouraged to develop into friendly, mature young people. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds, including the many from Traveller homes, are happy to come to school and willing to have a go with the work they are asked to do. They respond well to the many good experiences the school offers and enjoy interesting activities in and out of lessons, including the very lively range of things to do at Breakfast Club, from puzzles to French. The youngest children, and particularly the more able, are curious about the world around them. Others, including older pupils, lack a rich range of everyday stimulation and wide vocabulary to nurture and express curiosity. As a result, pupils are receptive to new ideas and experiences but slow to ask questions or seek new information for themselves. Sometimes they are unsure about sharing

their work and ideas because of their limited self-confidence, in spite of very good efforts by staff to raise levels of confidence and self-esteem. Pupils respond enthusiastically to good teaching, but sometimes become frustrated when teaching lacks sharp enough focus on the steps they need to take next to make progress. This is because they are unsure how to use their own initiative to change the way they do the work set so that they can cope with it and in some cases, they are reluctant to ask for help.

10. Pupils know how they are expected to behave in school and do their best to follow the very clear example set by all adults. Their behaviour is consistently good, which has a positive effect on their achievement. In most cases, behaviour is very good, but a few individuals, who have particular problems in following the school's *golden rules* and doing the right thing, sometimes fail to reach the high standards of behaviour set by the majority of pupils. In lessons, pupils usually co-operate and work hard unless they do not understand what to do or the work is not matched well enough to their particular needs. Inspectors were impressed by the friendly, polite and thoughtful behaviour of pupils who stopped to offer help and open doors without any prompting from staff. The school does all it reasonably can to avoid excluding pupils, but on occasion, it has no choice when extreme behaviour of individuals puts others at risk. There were four temporary and two permanent exclusions in the year prior to this inspection.
11. Very good relationships are crucial to the way children learn to trust and respond positively to the adults in the school and in developing their good attitudes and behaviour. As parents said, *"the headteacher believes that every child deserves a chance to learn and do better"* and takes a very positive lead by listening to pupils, valuing what they say and making them feel special. All adults show pupils how to get on well together through their own teamwork and encouragement. There are few racist incidents because pupils have learned to respect themselves and others. The Traveller pupils are happy members of the school community, respectful and respected.
12. Pupils have increasing opportunities to take responsibilities as they go through the school, and they appreciate this. They are open and willing to consider views different from their own, although their chances to learn about different countries, periods of history and artistic traditions are more limited than usual because too little time is given to teaching some subjects. Occasionally, individuals are slightly insensitive to others because they have not yet learned to see things from someone else's point of view and to recognise when comments are hurtful. With careful guidance from adults, they are less likely to persist with such comments once they know that name-calling such as *"boffin"* upsets others. As a result, although incidents of bullying occur, once children tell adults what is happening, action is swift and the harassing stops. Pupils agreed, telling inspectors that *"bullying is not a massive problem because the school takes it seriously"*. *"People look out for each other: I'd be there for them and they'd be there for me, if there was trouble, even if we're not real friends"*.
13. Attendance rates are unsatisfactory, although they have improved from a level that was previously poor, being well below the national average in 2002. There are still too many children whose parents keep them away from school without good reason, and the number of pupils who have at least one absence has risen. The number of holidays taken during the school term is high. High absence rates and the poor punctuality of a few pupils hold back their learning and sometimes that of other pupils, as teachers have to recap work that has been missed. When children miss key work, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, they fail to make enough progress to achieve the standards of which they are capable. In spite of the school's great efforts to remind them, not all parents recognise their responsibilities for ensuring that their children come to school every day and arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Given the generally low test results, part of the focus of the inspection was on literacy and numeracy, so some priority was given to observing the teaching of English and mathematics, particularly as these subjects account for around half of the school day. Inspectors saw all classes being taught at least one of these subjects. In most cases, inspectors were able to

observe full lessons and, in judging teaching, inspectors sought evidence that pupils were learning and making progress.

15. Inspectors observed 60 full, or part lessons. One lesson in 20 was less than satisfactory. Close to half were good and one lesson in 10 was very good. This represents a picture of satisfactory teaching overall, and similar to the position reported in the last inspection. Teaching in the Foundation Unit was consistently good. There was also a higher proportion of good and very good teaching in the juniors than in Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching has been maintained in the face of very high turnover of teaching staff. Parents' positive views confirm this, with almost all of the questionnaires describing teaching as good and describing teachers' expectations as high.
16. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory. The *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies* are followed, and the school has supplemented them with a considerable amount of extra teaching time, particularly for English. Although standards have improved a little, these initiatives have not, however, made a significant enough difference to raising standards in English and mathematics. On the other hand, changes in the approach to teaching science, coupled with a generous allocation of teaching time, has resulted in very considerable improvement in standards in this subject. Pupils learn well in science because they respond positively to the opportunities they are given to put a practical application to what they are being taught, as well as the responsibility they are given to record their findings in their own way rather than being dependent on the use of worksheets. Similar examples were seen during the inspection of pupils making the most successful progress in their learning through practical applications. In an information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, for example, Year 3 pupils using a Logo program to draw letter shapes on their computer screens estimated and worked out for themselves the 45° angle of turn that would be needed to draw the letter M, achieving a higher standard in this practical use of numeracy in an ICT lesson than was evident from the same children's work in mathematics. There have not, however, been enough opportunities taken to teach English and mathematics through other subjects, particularly history and geography.
17. Teachers generally follow the guidance in the *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies* in discussing with the pupils the learning objectives for each lesson, providing a mix of varied group activities and involving pupils at the end of the lesson in assessing how well they have learnt. In the most effective lessons, this helped pupils to be clear about what they were expected to learn from the tasks they were carrying out, with them each making an honest assessment at the end of the lesson of whether or not they thought they had learnt what they were supposed to. Where this was effective, it enabled the teacher to use the pupils' comments in planning what should be taught next to build on pupils' knowledge and understanding. In some cases, however, learning objectives were too vague or there were simply too many of them so that pupils were left unclear as to what they were supposed to learn.
18. Throughout the school, a notable strength of teaching is the teachers' very effective management of behaviour. In most classes there are several children with quite high levels of need who need to be organised and supported well in order to ensure they remain attentive and concentrate on their work. Teachers take a consistent approach to managing pupils, and pupils confirm in their comments to inspectors that they always feel they are treated fairly. This consistent approach is all the more remarkable given the very high turnover of teaching staff, and is the result of clear guidance and leadership from the headteacher and senior management team. As a result of teachers' very good management of pupils, even on those occasions where a child has emotional or behavioural difficulties, there is no disruption to the learning of other pupils.
19. Teachers have a very good relationship with the children in their class and, as a result, the pupils are keen to please and willing to put effort into their work. Expectations are not always high enough in every lesson, however. In some lessons, for example, pupils are given too much time to complete straightforward tasks. Although, in most lessons, work is appropriately matched to pupils' different abilities, occasionally it is inappropriately pitched at the middle where it is too easy for some and too difficult for others. In several classes there are, in fact, a small number of able pupils, a large number of low attaining pupils, but very few middle ability

pupils. This unusual distribution means that if a lesson is pitched at the class average, it is unlikely to be at an appropriate level for anyone in the class.

20. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and although the school is only a little larger than average, imaginative use has been made of class organisation to enable some teachers to teach subjects in which they have specialist expertise to more than one class. This ensures equality of opportunity and experience among the parallel mixed-age classes. For most of the year, it has also enabled the Year 1 and 2 and the Year 5 and 6 classes to be organised into smaller groups for their morning sessions. This was not, seen in Year 5/6 during the inspection, however, due to the illness of one of the teachers.
21. In the Foundation Unit, planning is a particularly strong feature, with teachers and support staff organising their work together. This is not so evident in the infant and junior years. For the pupils in Years 1-6 who have special educational needs there is a flexible range of extra staff and teaching groups to give support. The part-time teachers who take these groups judge the pace of their lessons well to give repetition to pupils who need it. The teaching assistants who support individuals and groups work well with them, helping them settle to tasks and maintain concentration for the duration of the lesson, but could help more with more specific planning from the teachers. Sometimes when the teacher is teaching the whole class, support staff sit passively when they could be helping, for example by keeping assessment records of pupils' responses.
22. Marking is generally of good quality, giving helpful guidance to pupils on what they need to do to do better, but teachers' comments are not always followed up with sufficient rigour, so that children frequently repeat their mistakes. A number of parents commented positively on homework. Inspectors judged its use to be satisfactory. It is used well for the children in the Foundation Unit and, in the main, increases progressively as children get older.

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

23. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements in that all aspects of the *National Curriculum* and that for under-fives are covered. The curriculum for the Foundation Unit is very well matched to the needs of the children. In, understandably, focusing attention on the need to raise standards in the infants and juniors in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in information and communication technology, the time available for teaching some other subjects has been put under considerable pressure. The result is that not enough time is being given to teaching some non-core subjects. This is most evident from work in history and geography. This narrowing of the curriculum also limits opportunities for pupils to learn English and mathematics through practical application in other subjects. The success the school has had in significantly raising standards in science shows that increased curriculum time and teaching through practical application is particularly effective with the children at the school, including the Traveller children, who respond well to practical activities.
24. Although the curriculum is unsatisfactory because it is too narrow, it does, nevertheless, have a number of major strengths. There is a particularly rich variety of extracurricular activities on offer, further improved since the last inspection, including sports, arts and technology clubs. These include a range of early morning clubs that follow the school's Breakfast Club and give "booster" support to children most likely to benefit from extra help in literacy and numeracy. There is good provision for teaching personal, social and health education. This covers appropriate provision for dealing with sex education and information about misuse of drugs. *Circle Time* sessions provide opportunities for pupils to talk about their feelings and any worries or concerns, and enable teachers to raise issues such as bullying as the need arises.
25. Because some classes include pupils in more than one age group, the curriculum is planned on a two-year cycle. This ensures that topics are not repeated or missed as pupils move through the school. Pupils benefit from good equality of opportunity because teachers with particular expertise teach all of the pupils in the parallel mixed-age classes, for example in information and communication technology and religious education in the older junior classes. Classes in

Years 1 and 2 are arranged into an extra teaching group in the mornings so that classes are smaller and pupils with special educational needs can be given extra teaching support in literacy and numeracy. For most of the past year, similar arrangements have been in place for pupils in Years 5 and 6, with the two very large classes divided into three teaching groups in the morning. This timetabling arrangement had to be altered shortly before the inspection due to the illness and absence of one of the teachers.

26. The planning for the children with special educational needs is satisfactory. They have individual education plans for their learning. At Ash Grange, that means a large number of plans. The plans are intended to be rewritten each term but, as there are many staff changes at the school and as the special needs co-ordinator is very hard pressed, there are often months where plans are not renewed and individuals' progress is not reviewed. The quality of the planning is sound but inconsistent, with some targets clear and useful, some too simple and some not specific enough. The special needs co-ordinator carefully annotates the plans to show what each pupil has achieved. The children have not met their targets in a significant minority of cases and it is not clear from the following plan what is to be done about that.
27. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved since the last inspection, where it was one of the key issues. Good use is made of the ICT suite, with every class having at least one scheduled teaching slot each week. ICT is beginning to be used to support learning in other subjects, although the school acknowledges in its planning that this is an area that needs to be taken further.
28. The school has developed productive links with its local secondary school, with use made, for example, of a visiting specialist physical education teacher who comes in to school to support sports teaching. The Foundation Unit has useful links with local playgroups and with the other local primary schools which some of the children go on to at the end of their nursery year. The school has built effective links with the community, making good use of adult volunteers from a local group who help listen to children read, and working with a local store to celebrate *World Book Day*.
29. In their questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of parents said the school helped their children to become mature and responsible. Inspectors agree. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. The school gives a high priority to this area of its work, as it did at the time of the last inspection. The school continues to offer very good provision for pupils' moral and social development, which has a positive impact on standards of behaviour and pupils' achievements. Support for spiritual and cultural development, though satisfactory, is not as successful because of gaps in what is taught in subjects other than English and mathematics. This means that pupils have a narrower range of experience of different artistic and cultural traditions than usual. They know less than might be expected of other periods of history and places around the world. They have limited opportunities to learn about and celebrate their own and others' different ways of life and heritage. History and geography, in particular, could support understanding of Traveller life better. By contrast, the children in the Foundation Unit have had some good opportunities to learn about the Traveller culture, such as when their teachers borrowed a trailer to show the children what Traveller life was like.
30. Some excellent opportunities are taken for dazzling pupils with moments of pure magic, such as when incubating eggs and seeing the newly hatched chicks and ducklings. In a lesson in the Foundation Unit, the teacher used quick-fire questions and lively text to steer children to rise to the challenge of working out their own sentence containing *n* sounds, resulting in "*brilliant!*" and a glow of pride for "*Jen went to the den*". Teachers are less successful in planning for such moments consistently and in pushing pupils to think for themselves and reflect on their own experiences. Too often when there is a pause for thought, teachers talk across it rather than being quiet and giving enough time for pupils to think, or be moved by stories, art, music or ideas. Assemblies vary in quality and do not always offer meaningful opportunity for calm reflection or collective worship. Occasionally, the usual sense of community is missing because it is hard for one adult to manage a large group of active children without overreacting to any restlessness. Assemblies usually reinforce moral points well.
31. Moral and social development are fostered very effectively through the very positive example of how to treat people set by the staff and careful use of the *golden rules* that are displayed in

classrooms throughout the school. The school's everyday routines and friendly working atmosphere contribute strongly to pupils' trust, confidence, sense of fair play and understanding of right and wrong. Pupils have many, good opportunities to work together, which they use constructively. As a result, as pupils confirmed, they learn to mix very well and work co-operatively, regardless of ability, gender, home circumstances or cultural background. This is because the school expects everyone to be included, to feel special and to be part of its life. It makes its mission statement a reality: *"we aspire to provide a welcoming and friendly atmosphere based on mutual respect and encouragement where each individual is equally important and valued for what they are and what they can become"*. The pupils with special educational needs learn to value themselves and develop their social skills well, alongside their peers, because the school consistently teaches the value of each individual.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school has improved the overall quality of care offered to pupils by increasing the effectiveness of its policies and procedures, particularly in terms of attendance, which it tracks more rigorously than before. As a result, the school has dealt well with the related key issue from the last inspection. Good recording of attendance, careful checks on absence made by efficient office staff and teamwork with the new education welfare officer (EWO) have raised levels of attendance considerably in the last year. After a long period without effective support from outside agencies, the school has worked productively with the EWO, in place since the start of this academic year, to try to further reduce absences.
33. The school has very good arrangements for child protection that are shared clearly with staff and used appropriately when required. The school has a very strong sense of its duty of care to the children on roll and is committed to act in their best interest. It gives an understandably high priority to all aspects of pupils' welfare, health and safety, given the challenging circumstances in which some families live. Staff are well trained to cope with all welfare matters, including first aid. The school is well aware of its responsibilities for ensuring that health and safety are kept under review and required checks, such as fire drills are carried out. The school is also mindful of the need to ensure that internet safety procedures are fully in place. Children are very well known to staff, who take great care to check on their welfare and personal development. All adults expect high standards of behaviour and treat children with the courtesy, kindness and care they want to see in return. Parents said that the school has *"a very caring environment where good work and progress are constantly rewarded"*. They added that the school *"feels like a large family"* and *"makes you feel you matter"*. Inspectors agree.
34. For the children with special educational needs, the co-ordinator liaises effectively with many external agencies and shares the organisation for multi agency meetings to make sure that the pupils have all the support available.
35. The school has good procedures for assessing how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics, science and for analysing and keeping track of their progress. This information is used in conjunction with data provided by the local education authority to compare how well the school is doing in relation to other Surrey schools and to monitor how well pupils from different backgrounds, including Traveller children, are doing. It is also used to identify areas that teachers need to focus on in planning their teaching. In this way, satisfactory use is made of assessment information. Although the school has introduced target sheets in pupils' books to keep track of pupils' progress, these are effectively just ticklists for use by the teacher. Only in one or two classes do pupils have individual learning targets which they are working to achieve. Where these are most successful, they help pupils concentrate on specific areas of improvement that give them a sense of achievement when they have confidently attained them. For example, *to remember to use capital letters at the start of every sentence* or *to learn the 4 times table*. In other classes, teachers do not sufficiently plan for pupils to have their own targets for learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL PROVIDE FOR CHILDREN FROM TRAVELLER FAMILIES

36. Most of the children of Traveller heritage are from families who are housed locally. Relatively few have pre-school or playgroup experience, and so the Traveller children are generally much less prepared for learning at school than the other pupils. The school cares well for the Traveller children and the teachers know them well. The young Traveller children in the Foundation Unit achieve very well there and the older ones make sound progress through the school.
37. Ash Grange Traveller children's performance in the 2002 tests was a little better than for Travellers in Surrey as a whole. Test results suggest that Traveller girls in Years 1 and 2 could achieve more but by the end of Year 6, girls are achieving as well as boys. The many female staff in the school provide good role models for the girls and the care the staff all give to individuals helps the girls to progress by boosting their confidence and self-esteem.
38. The Traveller children enjoy school and know they are valued there. All children are taught to respect people from different cultures so that there were only two recorded incidents last year where pupils discriminated against each other's races. The Traveller pupils behave well and make friends happily. Their attendance and punctuality, like those of the rest of the children, could be better.
39. In the Foundation Unit, the staff know that Traveller children are more used to learning by activity than by listening and talking. The consistently good teaching in the unit means that all the adults talk individually to the children and encourage them to communicate in return. The very good curriculum ensures that children have a wide range of practical activities which help them to feel competent and give them interesting things to talk and write about. The Unit sometimes borrows particular toys and materials which teach about the Traveller culture, help the Traveller children to feel valued and help the other children to respect the culture.
40. The teachers in the rest of the school are also aware of the Travellers' needs and try to meet them. The good science teaching is particularly helpful for the Traveller children as it is based on practical experience but also has a high expectation for writing and mathematics. Traveller children who have special educational needs have satisfactory extra help. The local education authority provides an extra part time teacher for Traveller pupils. She works with a few pupils whose needs have been prioritised and spends some of her time, helpfully, giving training to staff about Traveller needs. The staff and the Surrey Traveller Support Team work particularly closely together to smooth the difficult transition to secondary school for the Traveller pupils.
41. The lesson content in Years 1 – 6 is not made particularly relevant for the Traveller pupils and does not contain enough information about Traveller culture and history. The school has helpfully begun to develop this dimension and intends to do more here. Usefully, the school library has some good quality books about Travellers, which interest parents as well as pupils. The headteacher and senior management team lead the school to have a positive attitude towards Traveller culture. All staff have training, as they join the school, to help them understand the traditions of their Traveller pupils. The school has begun to analyse test results for the Travellers, separately, to check how well they are achieving.
42. The partnership with Traveller parents is increasingly effective. The headteacher, the co-ordinator for special educational needs and all the teaching and support staff give a good deal of time to talking with Traveller parents and helping them with formalities like form filling. Parents have also begun to allow their children to go on school trips. Parents could do more, however, to support their children's education. The school, in turn, could do more to further improve communication with parents by ensuring that all school publications are attractive and readable.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school has struggled to build effective relationships with a large enough group of parents to ensure that they can work together to raise standards. It has done well to build confidence among local families through high quality nursery provision and a warm welcome for all. As a result, parents said that the school is approachable and *“teachers are always, always, happy to see us and the head will always make time at your convenience to see her”*. All the school staff, and particularly the headteacher and the co-ordinator for special educational needs, give good help to Traveller parents with problems and formalities. Traveller parents feel secure with the school and increasingly support it and trust staff to care for their children. A disappointingly small minority of parents took the opportunity to attend the meeting or return the questionnaire. Those who did were pleased with what the school does for them and their children, particularly all the encouragement for pupils to enjoy learning.
44. In the school's everyday life, a lot of good work goes on behind the scenes through the way adults listen to and talk to parents on an informal basis. Information about life at home and at school and any concerns are shared regularly with parents who come in to talk to staff. Contact with other families is more difficult, not least with those whose children miss a lot of school and where use of the telephone is a problem. A handful of parents respond very well to everything the school does to help their children and are happy to be involved in what goes on. They help out in classrooms, hear children read, help with swimming lessons and on school trips and make sure that their children do their homework. Most parents are unwilling or unable, for whatever reason, to help the school and their children, at least by ensuring that they reach school on time every day and have a chance to read at home. This lack of support for their children's education affects the standards that pupils achieve.
45. The overall quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school sends home letters and other information regularly and gives useful information on children's progress. Reports are well received. The best-written examples not only give a good individual profile that parents like, but also include specific comments on what steps the child needs to take to improve, particularly in English. In many cases, however, teachers forget to suggest how parents can help and to give clear, simple ideas of what a pupil needs to do to make better progress in key areas such as reading, writing, spelling and counting. The school misses chances to build better working relationships with parents, particularly those who find it hard to read, by ensuring that all letters and booklets are colourful and use clear type faces, as in the prospectus and, where possible, include examples of children's work to catch parents' interest.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The headteacher offers good leadership to the school, well supported by the senior management team and the chair of the governing body. She has a clear educational vision, securely based on raising academic standards and in maintaining the caring ethos where all pupils, whatever their background or ability, are highly valued and respected. Despite difficulties with the retention of teachers, she has established a committed team with a shared vision, who are actively involved in moving the school forward. The school aims are ambitious, but much is in place, particularly the very good provision for promoting pupils' behaviour and creating a climate where pupils achieve at least satisfactorily year on year. Since the previous inspection, the school has managed to raise standards a little in English and mathematics, though much more remains to be done to reach nationally expected levels. In science and ICT, however, significant improvements have been made, resulting in good and often very good achievement by pupils in these subjects. Satisfactory progress has been made in teachers' assessing pupils' needs, by the daily evaluation of lessons, and the pace of learning has improved also. The school has continued to improve procedures for promoting good attendance, especially through the introduction of the successful and beneficial Breakfast Club. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in the two years since the last inspection.
47. Management has improved since the previous report, and it is now good. All staff have detailed and relevant job descriptions, which include the appropriate delegation of responsibilities. The senior management team and subject leaders are fully aware that they are responsible for the standards of teaching and learning in their subjects, and have received the necessary training and support to enable them to begin to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Difficulties remain

with staff turnover, which means some subjects are without a manager, or senior staff have to take responsibility for several subjects. For example, the deputy headteacher has taken over responsibility for science as well as mathematics and assessment, which inevitably leaves her less time to develop her strategic role. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Unit offers good leadership and management. As a result, children receive a very positive start to their school life.

48. The time allocated to the management of special educational needs is inadequate. The heavy workload placed on a part-time co-ordinator includes liaising with parents and outside agencies, timetabling the work of fourteen teaching assistants and supporting staff in writing and monitoring more than a hundred individual education plans. This leaves little time to check on the quality of pupils' learning, including the implementation of their individual education plans.
49. The governing body fulfil all statutory requirements and have satisfactory procedures for monitoring the work of the school through an effective committee structure. The chair of governors is particularly knowledgeable and is very involved in shaping the direction of the school and acting as a critical friend. She takes an active role in the detailed analysis of data, which is used appropriately to set goals, form decisions and agree targets. Several of the governors are quite new and many work at the school, with relatively few who bring an outsider's independent, dispassionate perspective. They are very supportive of the school but they are currently very dependent on the chair and headteacher and do not sufficiently share responsibilities.
50. The monitoring of teaching and learning has improved and is now good. Monitoring takes place regularly and involves outside advisers as well as the senior management team and subject managers. The strengths and areas for development are honestly appraised and shared with all staff. Goals are set and progress evaluated. Improvements have been affected, however, by the high turnover of teachers, so the impact of monitoring on raising standards has been limited. Performance Management procedures are used well, both to promote the targets set by the school and to enhance professional expertise. The results of annual testing are analysed by gender, background and ability. Any differences are noted and strategies agreed to deal with these, with a degree of success, as, for example over the weak performance of girls, and particularly Traveller girls, in the Year 2 tests. Pupils' work is regularly analysed, but not yet with sufficient rigour against standards reached by pupils in other schools. Much emphasis is placed upon English, mathematics and science, understandably, but as a result, the weaknesses in some other subjects are not always given sufficient emphasis, as, for example, with history and geography, where standards have suffered because not enough has been taught.
51. The results of all the monitoring procedures are used appropriately to identify the targets for the school improvement plan. The present plan is only for a year, however. Although it contains a challenging set of goals, these are insufficiently prioritised. Success criteria are sometimes too vague and not linked well enough to measurable improvements in pupils' performance.
52. Financial planning is well linked to the identified needs of the school. However, there are no formal, systematic approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of the spending in the overall budget so that the best use is made of all the school's resources. For example, the money spent on education support staff is well above average. The effectiveness of the deployment of all staff is not evaluated formally to gauge the extent to which it contributes to the progress the pupils make in key subjects. Financial management is good and the latest audit was very favourable. Careful decisions are made when purchasing services and resources, so value for money is ensured. The headteacher and governors are kept well informed about monthly expenditure and funds are generally used well. Ash Grange regularly compares its performance in the national tests to that of schools nationally, locally and in similar circumstances. It consults its parents each year and takes note of concerns raised, as well as considering issues raised by the pupils. These are used, together with the views of staff and governors, to set and agree targets for school improvement. This good practice results in a shared commitment to improvement and a feeling of ownership by the school community.
53. The school has sufficient, appropriately trained teachers to deliver the required curriculum, though it has had significant difficulties with teacher mobility. The very good arrangements for

preparing and supporting new staff have helped to retain the good sense of teamwork, however, and have ensured what is – given the high teacher turnover – a surprising level of consistency of approach among teachers. Teachers have access to a good level of training and they feel valued and more confident as a result. They are well supported also by the large number of trained and committed support staff, many of whom are long-serving and provide stability to the staffing of the school.

54. The very good accommodation supports all areas of the curriculum well. The many specialist rooms and the spacious outdoor area are used effectively and are attractively resourced. For instance, the library is bright and inviting with a good range of books, and the playground has painted games and designated areas, so pupils can play safely without encroaching on others' games. The corridors and classrooms have colourful and attractive displays and the recently installed Japanese garden offers a haven for peace and reflection. The Foundation Unit is spacious, with good facilities both inside and outside. Resources are good overall and sufficient to support pupils' learning. They are very good in the Foundation Unit. Pupils benefit from the new ICT suite and resources are also particularly good for science, design technology and religious education.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. Inspectors have identified the following interrelated key issues for action. In order to improve the standard of education provided for pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in English and mathematics by
 - (i) further improving the quality of teaching
 - (ii) developing opportunities for pupils to learn literacy and numeracy through practical application through other subjects
 - (iii) ensuring work is always pitched at the appropriate level for pupils
(paras 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 16, 19, 23, 27, 74, 75, 80, 82, 95)
- (2) Broaden curriculum opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 by
 - (i) increasing the amount of time allocated to teaching non-core subjects, including history and geography
 - (ii) developing opportunities for pupils to learn literacy and numeracy through practical application through other subjects
 - (iii) making greater use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects
 - (iv) providing more opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and others' cultural heritage, including that of Traveller pupils
(paras 4, 6, 12, 16, 23, 27, 29, 41, 50, 73, 95, 96, 98, 100, 105, 112)
- (3) Improve planning to ensure that
 - (i) the best use is made of learning support staff
 - (ii) the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs are sharply focused
 - (iii) pupils are always clear about what it is they are expected to learn in lessons
 - (iv) assessment information is used to agree individual learning targets with pupils that help them to improve their work
 - (v) marking is further strengthened by ensuring teachers follow-up their comments to ensure pupils do not repeat their mistakes
 - (vi) the School Improvement Plan prioritises what needs to be done and projects further ahead so that the school can use it as a tool for long-term planning
(paras 9, 17, 21, 22, 26, 35, 51, 74, 75, 81, 87, 88)
- (4) Continue to work to involve more parents in supporting their children's education through
 - (i) ensuring that parents do not keep their children off school unnecessarily
 - (ii) encouraging parents to ensure their children get to school on time
 - (iii) listening to children read at home and helping them with homework
 - (iv) improving communication with parents by ensuring that all of the school's reports and other documents for parents are presented in a more readable and accessible format
(paras 8, 13, 38, 42, 44, 45, 58)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan. *(Paragraph references are in brackets)*

- A. Review the allocation of time for co-ordinating special educational needs to ensure that sufficient support is available. *(para 48)*
- B. Consider arrangements for governors to share responsibilities more broadly so that the governing body is not so dependent on the chair and headteacher. *(para 49)*
- C. Ensure that infants have access to suitable gymnastics equipment. *(para 111)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	21	30	2	1	0
Percentage	0	10	35	50	3	2	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 one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20.5	237
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		86

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	97

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils learning English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	52
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for 2001/02, which is the most recent year for which national comparative data is available.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	20	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	12
	Girls	14	12	16
	Total	25	22	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (54)	63 (63)	80 (66)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	15	17	17
	Total	26	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (63)	83 (63)	83 (68)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	23	21	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	10	21
	Girls	14	13	18
	Total	26	23	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (55)	52 (48)	89 (80)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	21
	Girls	16	15	18
	Total	30	32	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (58)	78 (60)	89 (82)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
164	4	2
1	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
35	0	0
73	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)	10.88
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	479

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.75
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002-03
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	£
Total income	921,314
Total expenditure	943,780
Expenditure per pupil	3,522
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,490
Balance carried forward to next year	-4,976

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	278
Number of questionnaires returned	29

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	43	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	30	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	33	27	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	37	7	7	0
The teaching is good.	57	40	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	57	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	13	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	27	3	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	33	7	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	30	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	27	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	34	3	0	3

(Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Each questionnaire represents more than three percentage points.)

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

56. There are 41 nursery children and 37 reception children whose ages range from 3 to 6. They work together for three hours in the mornings in the Foundation Unit and the reception children stay on for a shorter afternoon. When they start at age 3, most children are very immature, especially at using language. One or two use nudges and grunts to communicate and many speak only simple words and phrases, indistinctly. The children achieve well in the Unit. As they leave for Year 1, they have achieved some of the early learning goals for six year olds although they are still below the expected standard.
57. The curriculum is very rich. There is a wide variety of well presented and resourced activities for the children which covers the full range of learning areas they need. Very good planning ensures that each child covers the range and that all the adults know clearly what they want from the children. Consistency and high expectation combine to produce good teaching for all of the areas of learning.
58. The Unit has a useful level of contact with the playgroup from which many pupils come and with the several primary schools to which they go, although an increasing number are staying on at Ash Grange. A minority of parents support the Unit by spending substantial time helping with specially set homework. The Unit day is specially planned to make the manager available for the parents at the start of the session. The parents respond well and use the time to inform her about their child.
59. The management of the Unit is very good. The manager ensures shared training for all the staff. She works, plans and evaluates alongside her staff all day, and has time for parents and pupils too. Timetabling for children and staff is intricately worked out so that the pace of the day is swift. The children have a secure routine. Well organised prompt cards for all the adults make sure that they know what to ask of the children in each of the many activities set up in the Unit. The very good management and curriculum combined with the consistently good teaching assure the children's good achievement.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. Most of the children achieve very well in this area of their learning and are likely to attain the expected standard. They are co-operative, obedient and peaceable, partly because the high number of adults in the Unit are showing them the best way to behave. The children are motivated to work well because work is made interesting. There is always an adult on hand to help so that the children concentrate and see their tasks through. They have a high degree of trust in the adults in the Unit, and are open and responsive to the opportunities there for them. By the end of their reception year, children settle to a formal lesson, dress, and manage their lives independently. One tiny girl who was walking on a playground bench fell, rolled, rose, brushed herself down and then reported the incident to an adult in a very mature way. She knew the adult would want to know but there were no tears or fuss at all.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Speaking and listening are difficult for the children to learn and, although they make good progress from the very low skill levels with which they start, most are still well below the expected standard for their ages. The children are attentive to stories and follow the sequence of events although some of the vocabulary is hard for them and many struggle to understand what they hear. Teachers judge carefully whether to interrupt the story to explain a word or

leave it till later but that means that although teaching is good, the children's progress can be slow.

62. In spite of the consistent effort of the adults to use clearly enunciated English and to keep the children talking, the children do not retain all the speaking skills that they practise. They use new words but do not retain them. The adults ask stimulating questions and take time to have individual conversations. The children engage with interest and sometimes come up with perceptive, individual language. One girl, asked to say something about chickens she had seen, contributed a vivid "*No teeth!*" The lively language is usually in short sentences or phrases and the children do not produce it without a stimulus and a supporting adult. They do not tend to instigate conversations with adults. Even when adults try to help with questions, repetitive answers are common. An adult asked a boy at the computer if he could print his work: "*Can't*", as he clicked the print button. "*Why not?*" "*Can't.*"
63. The teachers prepare the children carefully for the needs of the infants' *literacy hour*. Even nursery pupils know many letter names and sounds due to short sharp practice sessions and reinforcement from their teacher when they are looking at books together. Reception pupils learn to think of rhyming words, are taught to form letters well. The more able can write short words and phrases correctly by the end of the year, because they are asked to write about exciting things they have seen in the Unit. They like books, are confident that adults will help them understand the print and can recognise a few words.

Mathematical development

64. The children are better at number work than language and come closer to attaining the expected standard. They count spontaneously and accurately in their play. One boy said, as he stuck straws for candles into his "cake": "*I've got three*". His friend, not so accurate, happily said "*I've got hundreds*". Reception children ready for Year 1 are proud to do sums and can show addition and subtraction to ten. They brightly say of the answers; "*I know it in my head*". The teachers helpfully give them plenty of practice at counting, writing and putting their numbers in order, and reception children have a good, formal *Numeracy Hour* where they work well, helped by three adults working concentratedly with them. Good teaching makes sure that they have practical experience before they talk about abstract concepts, so that they had cake to cut up before they learned about halves and quarters.
65. The difficult parts of mathematics for the children are those where language skills are needed. Many children cannot draw a *fat* item and a *thin* item, for example. They do not attain the expected standard because it is hard for them to talk about the solutions to problems, comparisons and locations.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. The children benefit from very supportive opportunities and some very good teaching. They are achieving well but do not meet the expected standard because they need so much help to express themselves. They are learning about life cycles from the excellent provision in their classroom of an incubator where chicks and ducklings are hatching. Their science is helping them develop their communication as they talk and write about chicks. One child tried very hard to write his sentence: "*Bids ley eggs*". Able pupils learn at their own pace. One nursery child showed good attainment when he engaged in a mature conversation with teacher about the likelihood that eggs not yet hatched would eventually do so. An adult supported several children sensitively to use the digital camera to take competent photos of the chicks.
67. Computer skills are coming on well, with many able to control the mouse, use software to help them draw and colour pictures, and word process their names. The children make junk models and, although their skills at joining are not strong, the more able say what they have made and point to features like wheels. Concepts of time and place are not as strongly developed as science and practical work. The children find it hard to talk about what it might be like in a time other than now and a place other than here.

Physical development

68. The children are achieving well but do not quite meet the expected standards. They are carefully taught to use tools and equipment and their co-ordination is satisfactory. The teachers are very supportive, demonstrating technique helpfully and encouraging originality. Children enjoy a stimulating range of outdoor activities, including bikes and climbing frames. They throw balls but are not as good at catching. Some can kick a football across the playground; one or two can quickly invade and take a football from another person. The children are encouraged to use lots of space and begin to do so. Several are timid and they are often not brave enough to be imaginative in their physical play.

Creative development

69. Most reception children are attaining the expected standards and they are achieving very well. They enjoy the plentiful opportunities to explore musical instruments and sound. They sing with unusual pleasure for their ages. Their drawings are individual and purposeful with, often, much detail. The children enjoy a wide range of media including paint, cloth, dough and clay.

ENGLISH

70. National test results in 2002, for pupils in Years 2 and 6, were well below average. Less than half of the pupils in Year 6 last year reached the expected standard, with very few reaching the higher level. Standards of work seen during the inspection reflected these standards. This, nevertheless, represents satisfactory achievement as pupils come into school with skills in language that are very low.
71. Speaking and listening skills are poor when children enter school. They find it difficult to listen for any length of time, and have difficulty remembering what has been said. Discussions are mainly teacher led, with few being started by the children. During Years 1 and 2, much emphasis is put on developing these skills so that pupils begin to learn to listen and make appropriate contributions in lessons. By Year 2, many pupils still have difficulties in listening attentively and many call out in lessons, despite being reminded by the teacher to wait for their turn. During Years 3 to 6, speaking skills are developed well, so that, by Year 6, pupils contribute in lessons, listening attentively to others and taking a full part in discussions. However, standards are still below average as pupils are not very confident when speaking publicly, nor do they have a wide vocabulary to draw upon.
72. Standards in reading are very low, with girls in Year 2 not doing as well as the boys. This is due, mainly, to cultural differences, where girls, particularly of Traveller origin, have not gained the confidence that the boys have. The school has been very successful in combating this, so that, by the end of Year 6, girls do as well as boys in reading. During Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught strategies for reading simple books. Teachers and teaching assistants show the pupils how to follow the text with their fingers so that they do not lose their place on the page. When the pupils' attention wanders, the teacher emphasises the need to look at the words and the individual letters. Some of the time during whole class sessions is spent looking at words, so that the pupils build up an increasing numbers of words that they can remember. By Year 6, standards in reading are still low. Pupils talk about the books they enjoy reading, and many tackle rather difficult, long chapter books, but they lack the skills to read expressively and fluently. Appropriate emphasis has been put on the teaching of reading. In a good Year 4 lesson on reading a variety of poems, pupils were taught how to read with expression, emphasising the rhyme and rhythm of the poem. Pupils then rehearsed their chosen poem and read it out to the class. Although many were hesitant, by the end of the lesson almost all had gained in confidence to read out loud. However, some pupils soon forget these skills and have to be reminded daily about what they have learnt.

73. Standards in writing are very low. Pupils learn to write in a number of different styles, including accounts and stories, but writing skills are not promoted in other subjects, such as history and geography. Handwriting is not systematically taught, and, although a new scheme has been recently introduced, this is not consistently applied throughout the school and the standards in handwriting are very low.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The *National Literacy Strategy* is used throughout the school and, although this has not led to a significant boost in standards, it has contributed to the slow rise in standards since the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and classes are managed very well. The fidgety behaviour of some is rarely allowed to affect the learning of others. Work is well marked, giving encouraging comments and an indication of what each pupil needs to do to improve their work. However, there are many examples of where suggestions are not followed through. This results in spellings remaining uncorrected and pupils making the same mistakes on subsequent pages. In most classes, pupils do not have individual targets telling them what they need to focus on in order to do better. Speaking and listening skills are promoted well in the school. Pupils are reminded about how to listen attentively and encouraged to speak when it is their turn. In a good English lesson in the infants, pupils were encouraged to act out a traditional fairy story. They were given time to practise the words they wanted to say, and to work together sensitively to make a short play. The end result was enjoyed by all of the class and the pupils spoke clearly. However, their short concentration span meant that they had to be reminded to watch and listen to the work of the others.
75. Planning for lessons follows the national guidance for teaching literacy. This is effective in providing a framework for each lesson, but teachers' plans do not give sufficient information on how teaching assistants will be deployed during lessons. This results in many occasions when teaching assistants have no clear role, for example during the introductions to lessons, or during the time at the end of the lesson when pupils are explaining what they have learnt. During activities, teaching assistants are used well. They support pupils with special educational needs so that they can participate fully in the lessons. Planning identifies the learning objectives for each lesson and these are shared with the pupils. Pupils know what they will learn and can revisit this at the end of each lesson. However, there are often several objectives and this is too many for the pupils. This results in some objectives being mentioned in passing and having no relevance to the lesson. An example of this was in a Year 5/6 lesson when pupils were asked about *mnemonics*. Many struggled to explain what this meant and eventually decided that it was a phrase that helped them remember how to spell words. This had no bearing on the poetry lesson that followed and was introduced as something they would explore further later in the week. This was a waste of time as pupils have a short memory span and would have to revisit this again, wasting further time.
76. The leadership and management of English are satisfactory overall. Weaknesses in pupils' work, such as handwriting, have been correctly identified and some strategies have been introduced to raise standards. However, these have not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards, overall, although low, have risen a little. The high turnover of staff has meant that training has been given a high priority in order to ensure consistency across the school.

MATHEMATICS

77. Standards in mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 are well below the national average due to the large numbers of less able pupils in the school. Results in the national tests in both Year 2 and Year 6 have improved since the time of the last inspection when they were among the lowest 5 per cent of schools at the end of both key stages. The *SNAP project* (a mathematics initiative arranged by Surrey numeracy consultants) involved ten Year 2 pupils providing them with extra support and focused teaching. As a result, these pupils achieved the expected level in the Year 2 tests. Specialist teaching in Years 5 and 6 has continued and has enabled pupils to make satisfactory progress, with challenge provided for more able pupils. Despite the low test results, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in both key stages.

78. About three-quarters of the pupils in Year 2 achieve the expected level at the end of the year. Most pupils use and apply mathematics in the context of simple word problems. Lower attaining pupils can order numbers to 20, and although they reverse some digits, they write 'teen' numbers with digits in the correct place. They add and subtract numbers to 10, drawing diagrams or using their fingers. They measure objects using non-standard units. Years 1 and 2 are organised into teaching groups with pupils with special educational needs taught separately. Careful, systematic teaching enables these pupils to make sound progress.
79. In Year 6, most pupils round decimals to the nearest whole number and multiply and divide whole numbers by 10 and 100. They recognise equivalent fractions and calculate percentages. Most pupils use mental methods to multiply numbers by 25 and pencil and paper methods to multiply three-digit numbers by a two-digit number. In work on measures, they recognise different types of angles. Problem solving has been given a higher profile following training from the mathematics subject leader, and pupils in Years 3 to 6 are developing skills of investigation. A few pupils achieve the higher level 5 in mathematics, due to work being matched to pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils from different backgrounds make satisfactory progress due to the good level of support they receive.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with the most effective teaching in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' planning identifies clear learning objectives based on the *National Numeracy Framework*. Teaching and pupils' activities are usually well matched to the objectives and the needs of pupils. On those occasions when independent activities are not closely linked to the main teaching, pupils become confused about what they have to do and learning slows. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and good working routines. Pupils then settle quickly to activities and make a good effort. Lessons are effective when teachers use visual images to make ideas clear and involve pupils actively, for example, turning themselves through quarter and half turns, and moving their hands clockwise and anticlockwise. Mathematical vocabulary is on display in classrooms but teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunity to use vocabulary themselves in context. Open questioning in one lesson encouraged pupils to give good explanations, but too often they are just expected to give one word answers. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own learning, and they are confident explaining what they have understood, and what they need to consolidate. Teaching assistants work competently with individuals or groups of pupils during activities.
81. The subject is well led and managed. Staff are supported well through monitoring, joint planning and team teaching. Test papers are analysed to identify areas of the curriculum causing difficulty for pupils. Levels are predicted for every pupil for the end of each year to help them achieve their target levels in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests. Progress towards these levels is assessed termly, and those pupils who have not made enough progress are identified. Although all pupils have a list of learning targets at the front of their mathematics books, showing what they need to do to make progress, these are largely checklists for the teacher's use and, in most classes, pupils do not have their own individual learning targets spelling out what they need to focus on in order to make progress.
82. Resources for teaching mathematics are adequate and are well organised. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology. ICT was used in a few lessons, for example a *Roamer* robot toy was used by a group of pupils in a Year 1 lesson on things that turn. In an infant lesson on handling data, pupils made little progress using a spreadsheet to create a graph because their keyboard and literacy skills meant that they spent the whole time trying to enter the titles for the graph and the data. Some good individual examples were seen of pupils making good use of numeracy skills in other subjects, but generally not enough opportunities are taken for pupils to learn and apply mathematics in practical activities in other subjects. Breakfast Club "booster" classes provide opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate skills in a relaxed and enjoyable way. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

83. Standards and test results for Year 6 have risen sharply during the last two years. Most of that time the school has had a science specialist teaching the subject, which was clearly successful. Last year the results were particularly successful for the pupils as they were close to the national average. Pupils performed very well when compared with similar schools. Previously, girls at the school had done less well than boys in science but for the last three years their results have been pulling up in comparison. Last year, attainment for both was fairly even. This change is probably due to the fact every member of each class at Ash Grange is expected to do practical experimentation and be involved in the findings. This year the science specialist left the school but the teachers have been making good use of the organisation and the scheme of work the specialist left behind. As a result, pupils in Year 6 are still doing very well in science, attaining average standards, which represents very good achievement because they started from a low baseline of knowledge and skill.
84. Year 6 know how to be scientists and set up experiments. They take fair comparisons seriously. They know that in a fair test you should vary just one factor and keep the rest the same. They predict and make observations to check the accuracy of the prediction. They record their findings individually in mature language. Pupils write informatively when they describe their experiments. Their written science is regular, thorough, and relevant. They use "mind map" idea charts to plan their work, diagrams and tables, which they set up themselves, to explain what they have been doing.
85. During the last inspection, the science curriculum was weak for pupils in Years 1 and 2 but provision is improving with a good range of practical activity. As a result, standards are rising here too. Last year, teachers in Year 2 assessed their standards to be well below average nationally and below average in comparison with similar schools. That was better than the year before and attainment now is better again. The children in Year 2 this year are still not up to the national expectation in science but they are closer than last year's group and they are making sound progress.
86. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from a lot of individual or group help from the teaching assistants and work steadily with understanding. They dictate their experimental findings to an adult if they are unable to write. As a result, they make good progress. More able pupils have enough autonomy to attain highly and do well. The teaching and the learning in Years 1 and 2 is consistently satisfactory with some good features. It is consistently good and sometimes very good in Years 3 to 6. The long science lessons give plenty of time for pupils to experiment, discuss their findings and record them in their own way. Several lessons were punctuated by teachers gathering up pupils at the start, in the middle and at the end to discuss where they had got to and to direct the next stage of the learning. This helped the pupils to remember their purpose and refocused them, keeping them on task, even in messy practical lessons. The teachers' use of questioning prompts and pushes the children to think. Pupils' use of literacy and numeracy skills in their science helps them record their learning clearly. Teachers carefully mark work, posing written questions for older pupils which make them think even further.
87. Lesson plans are sometimes not clear enough about exactly what is to be learned, what vocabulary is to be used and what the teaching assistant is to do. Without this, the teaching assistants have to sit and listen without a focus for their work during whole class sessions.
88. Science is well managed temporarily by the deputy headteacher while another science curriculum leader is being found. The deputy head has been monitoring the quality of the lessons and the teachers' evaluations. Her judgement is accurate and her monitoring is carefully recorded with judgements and recommendations for her colleagues.

ART AND DESIGN

89. At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in art are in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement. Work on display is of a good quality and effectively presented, maintaining the standards described in the last inspection. In Year 2, pupils had painted

pictures of a moon moth, and worked with other media including pastels and paper collage. A Year 4 class had produced dramatic patterns based on a square tile design. They decided which would be the most effective square to use, these were then photocopied and coloured, and the final pattern created by repeating and rotating the squares. In Year 6, pupils had painted effectively with watercolours in the style of Monet.

90. Only two art lessons were observed: not enough to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. In the lessons seen, teachers demonstrated techniques and encouraged pupils to practise until they achieved their desired effect. Pupils worked independently, concentrating well, and some adapted techniques to include their own ideas. In a good Year 2 lesson, a pupil experimented with different combinations of colour to give the same effect as grass in a photograph he was extending. The teacher showed examples of pupils' work, posing questions to encourage pupils to evaluate work and consider how it could be improved. Displays in classrooms include questions about techniques used in finished work, and prompts and examples of *colour, tone, texture* and *pattern*. Art is given a high profile in the school, shown by the quality of display in the classrooms and corridors. There are some innovative ideas, such as a pupil posing as a 'reclining Greek' with digital photographs of the model alongside charcoal life drawings with careful detail of hair and folds in the clothing.
91. The subject is well led and managed, and subject plans correctly identify areas that would benefit from further development, such as pupils' skills in three-dimensional work. Metal sculptures have been acquired to provide examples as a starting point for artwork. The co-ordinator ran a staff workshop on printing which resulted in teachers developing these skills to a higher level with their pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well and attain the nationally expected standard. Although those in Year 6 make satisfactory progress, their standards are below those expected nationally. The difference for the age groups happens because, in the juniors, not enough emphasis is placed on designing for function and too much time is spent on decoration. For example, Year 6 pupils have been designing slippers but their designs are not a sufficient improvement on those of the younger children. The best are labelled and show how the slipper must exist in three dimensions and stay on the foot, but the majority concentrate more on how the front will be decorated than on how it will work. As intentions are not well clarified at the start, pupils' evaluations of their designs are not very clear either. The skills of the older children have not been consistently developed over the years so that they still do not place templates economically on cloth, they pick up needles without checking to see if they are pointed or blunt, and do not know about protecting their fingers with thimbles.
93. Year 2 pupils have recently been planning and developing their ideas for finger puppets. The best designs show how the puppet needs to be double so that it can sit on a finger. One able pupil wrote: *"This is how I will make him move"*. The children have worked hard to sew two thicknesses of felt together securely and have decorated the puppets to a high standard with a variety of scraps of fabric, wool and feathers.
94. Inspectors did not see enough lessons to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, the management of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator is supportive to colleagues. She ensures that they are well resourced and gives them opportunity to discuss the work their classes are doing. She has helped the school recently to do two useful things in adopting a suitable scheme of work and lengthening the lessons to give time for more sustained activities. There is, however, no oversight of standards across the school and not enough monitoring of the lesson plans before lessons are taught.

GEOGRAPHY

95. By the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment in geography is well below the level expected. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop geographical skills and knowledge, evidenced by the small amount of written work in pupils' books, and they are not achieving as well as they should be. Pupils in Year 2 had been learning about the seaside, but only a few pupils could name seaside towns on a map of the British Isles. Work in Year 6 consisted mainly of compiling a list of countries and capitals in Europe and investigating the environment of the school using a prepared questionnaire. There was no difference between the work for pupils of differing abilities.
96. There were examples of good practice in Years 3 and 4. Pupils had produced their own list of questions to ask about the characteristics of places visited on holiday, and had begun to learn about map symbols as they drew their own maps with symbols to represent man-made features, using appropriate colours for roads and rivers. Generally, however, the school does not make best use of opportunities to develop pupils' geographical knowledge and skills. Pupils in Year 3 had been on a residential trip to Caer-Llan in Wales, but this was simply followed up with a display of photographs. Pupils who had been on the trip found it difficult to identify differences and similarities between Caer-Llan and the local area. Year 1 and 2 pupils had taken part in a *Geography Day*, making passports and wearing holiday clothes as they "travelled" to different "countries" in classrooms to take part in a variety of activities, but again this was not adequately followed up.
97. No judgement can be made on the leadership and management of the subject because of staff absence during the inspection and the non-availability of a management file. Not enough geography lessons were seen for inspectors to make an overall judgement on teaching.

HISTORY

98. There were few history lessons seen during the inspection and therefore a judgement on teaching has not been made. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are well below average because there is not enough time spent on history throughout the school. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in this subject.
99. By Year 2, pupils have been taught about Florence Nightingale, but some pupils think that she is famous for being on the television. They have little idea of history and how things have changed over time. Pupils have also looked at toys past and present, and know that they are different now, but cannot give explanations of the differences. They have learnt about Guy Fawkes and know that this historical event is linked to Bonfire Night. By Year 6 pupils have covered the required history topics, but not in sufficient depth. They have limited experience of looking at a variety of historical sources - pictures, for example - and are unable to write accounts using their own words. When talking to pupils, some think that Victorian houses all had straw roofs. Pupils are not particularly interested in history and do not remember much about what they have learnt, or the topics they have covered.
100. Overall, the subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The weaknesses found during the inspection had been acknowledged by the school and the senior management team already has plans to put these right.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

101. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 are below those expected nationally, although pupils are making good progress and achieving well, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This is due to the installation of a well-equipped ICT suite, teachers' increased confidence and expertise, and the very good technical support that is given to both teachers and pupils. The school has made very good improvements overall since the previous inspection, where the poor facilities for ICT were identified as a key issue for action. Standards, too, are higher than those reported in the last inspection.

102. Year 1 pupils use the mouse confidently to click, drag, draw, locate and place items. They write text independently, though showing some confusion between upper and lower case, and create labels when they change the font style and size. Year 2 pupils develop their skills further and write and demarcate several sentences correctly, and create a label by changing the colour and style of the font with greater confidence. They use a simple adventure game to make choices as they explore "another world". As part of their numeracy lesson on shape and space, pupils appropriately program a robot to move forward and turn, but this is only at a simple level. Weaknesses also remain in handling and classifying information using charts and graphs. This was evident in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, when pupils found it difficult to enter data into a spreadsheet.
103. By the end of Year 6, pupils use ICT to organise, refine and present information about Comic Relief, for example, using a mix of text, graphics, animation and sound. The more able pupils confidently and independently create their own multimedia presentation demonstrating a range of skills. In science, pupils collect data about calories in different foods and insert their findings into a spreadsheet. They create a graph and pie chart to illustrate their findings, but have not yet learnt how to question or amend this information to extend their knowledge. Although pupils have had experience of control technology, for instance through drawing a shape by giving a series of instructions, they have not had all the necessary experiences yet to reach the required standard in this aspect of the subject. Pupils say they feel much more confident about ICT since they have had regular access to the new suite and they appreciate the opportunity to use it at other times, for example during Breakfast Club and Computer Club. This is especially helpful to the many pupils who do not have their own computers at home and for whom these Clubs offer good equality of access.
104. Teaching is good, with the pupils in the parallel mixed-age classes all benefiting from specialist teaching. Good use is made in all lessons of the whiteboard to demonstrate new processes and techniques. Sufficient computers mean all pupils are purposefully occupied and engaged in tasks. Teachers plan lessons that complement the work being covered in class, in subjects such as literacy, science and history. For example, Year 5 pupils used the internet to research John Lennon and the Beatles as part of their historical study of the 1960's and 1970's. Year 3 pupils' numeracy skills were promoted very well by using the Logo program to reinforce their understanding of angles. Teaching assistants are trained so they offer good support and have the necessary expertise to deal with pupils' questions and help them when encountering difficulties. Teachers prepare extension tasks for the more able pupils. This means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils of different abilities and backgrounds, now make good progress. In the most effective lessons, the teacher worked very effectively in partnership with the ICT technician so her expertise was fully utilised. The work set was sufficiently challenging to make the pupils think, but, at the same time, the explanation of the processes involved was clear and succinct so pupils could progress independently. During the inspection, teachers did not use the classroom computers sufficiently, either to reinforce the work done in the suite or to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Computers were used to good effect, however, when Year 4 pupils used *Poetry Zone* on the internet during their literacy lesson. They were amazed when the school was welcomed by name and some of the pupils' poetry was displayed. This made a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
105. The subject is led and managed effectively. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work and identifies appropriate areas for development. This has led to improvements. For instance, as a result of the monitoring, teachers' evaluations of lessons are more astute and used more effectively to plan the next lesson. The co-ordinator has introduced useful self-assessment records for pupils to complete regularly as they move through the school. This will help teachers identify whether pupils are making sufficient progress and where there are gaps in their learning. She is also compiling a portfolio of pupils' work, levelled to national criteria, which, when completed, is intended to support teachers in identifying the standards reached by pupils in each strand of the subject. The school is well placed to make further improvements so pupils reach the required standards in ICT.

MUSIC

106. Inspectors did not see or hear enough music to judge teaching or to make an overall judgement about standards in the subject. Most pupils in Year 2 can sing in tune, and know some appropriate vocabulary to describe sounds, for example, *loud* and *soft*. Pupils in Year 6 sing competently in two parts, and know and use vocabulary such as *ostinato* and the *pentatonic scale*. They clap complicated rhythms and identify the musical notation using key words to remember the value of notes. The development of these skills is a result of the effective specialist teaching in Years 5 and 6.
107. In an effective lesson in the infants, the teacher reminded pupils to listen attentively to excerpts of music so that they were able to respond to the music and describe their feelings. The teacher had high expectations and the pupils handled percussion instruments responsibly, playing along with recorded music to maintain a rhythm and produce a pleasant sound. In a rather less effective lesson for similar age pupils, the teacher introduced too many new ideas which were not followed up and the pupils made little progress because they could not contribute their own ideas or experiment with different ways of making sounds.
108. Adequate provision for music is in place, but it is not as strong in Years 1 to 4, where pupils do not have the benefit of specialist teaching. The whole school sings in assembly once a week, although Years 1 and 2 sing more regularly and a choir is in place only when a school production is being prepared. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader has recently taken up the post and plans to introduce ways of recording pupils' progress in music. New computer software has been purchased and is being introduced next term.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. As no dance, gymnastics, athletics or outdoor and adventurous activities were taking place during the inspection, it is not possible to make judgements about standards in these aspects of the subject. Standards in swimming by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above national expectations. Year 2 pupils are confident in the water. The more able swim across the pool unaided and are beginning to use the correct arm and leg movements for the front crawl stroke. All other pupils in this year group, some still requiring armbands, manage to swim halfway across the pool without stopping. With the benefit of an on-site pool, which means all pupils have swimming lessons every summer term, nearly all pupils swim the required distance of 25 metres by the end of Year 6. They also take part in swimming challenges related to speed and learn personal survival skills. The more able pupils take part in the district swimming gala, at which they won the *Small School's Cup* last year.
110. In the four physical education lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in two and good in two. Teachers plan the lessons appropriately to include a warm-up activity that prepares the pupils satisfactorily, they organise the main activity so every pupil is actively involved throughout, and ensure pupils move any apparatus safely. In the most effective lessons, pupils were taught specific skills, techniques and strategies so they made good improvements to their performance. In games, when watching each others' demonstrations, pupils were encouraged to offer constructive criticism to help further refine skills and techniques. Teaching assistants supported pupils needing help with managing their behaviour and those who were less confident. Girls and boys of all abilities and backgrounds took part with enthusiasm and made good progress as a result. Year 1 and 2 pupils find it more difficult to work co-operatively and to work calmly. By Year 5 and 6, pupils operate quietly and sensibly, showing initiative in planning and recording each timed group activity.
111. The subject has been well led and managed. Lessons have been observed, teaching needs identified and the necessary training and support provided. The co-ordinator monitors planning to ensure the subject is being appropriately covered and lessons are evaluated weekly in order to adjust planning where necessary. Teachers are more confident as a result. Resources and accommodation are good overall, with a hall equipped for all aspects of gymnastics, an on-site pool and large field. The gymnastic equipment is less suitable for the younger pupils, however. Games are well supported by the extracurricular activities that are on offer throughout the year, as well as the school taking part successfully in netball, football and rounders competitions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

112. By the end of Year 2, standards in religious education are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils know some stories from the New Testament and they begin to learn about the Jewish faith. However, they have too few opportunities to think about important times and discuss things that are special to them.
113. In the juniors, pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with those expected, and this represents good achievement. Although some pupils get a little muddled about facts, they develop very well personally. Due to good teaching, by the end of Year 6, pupils understand about the importance of meditation, for example, and are very respectful of the customs of others. In a good religious education lesson, pupils made *rakhi* bracelets to celebrate the Hindu ceremony where a sister gives her brother a bracelet and he, in return, promises to protect her. In this lesson, pupils were very keen to make their own bracelet, and when deciding who to give it to made some very thoughtful responses. Some chose to give it to their mothers, others to friends that they could trust. All gave good, mature and sensible reasons for who they would give their *rakhi* to.
114. There were too few religious education lessons seen to make an overall judgement on teaching. However, past work shows pupils make good progress and achieve well. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils carefully explained the importance of a *mezuzah* in the Jewish faith and knew that it was a piece of parchment that contains a prayer. They looked at a *mezuzah box*, and by the end of the lesson, knew where these are put in Orthodox Jewish homes and that the people in the household touched this box as they entered or left a room.
115. The subject is well managed. Religious education is given due emphasis in the juniors and pupils learn a lot during lessons. Teachers make sure they are ready to look at the beliefs of others by reminding pupils of the need for sensitivity and respect. Pupils respond very well. Religious education lessons are particularly good at emphasising the spiritual aspect of people, and pupils are enthusiastic about trying meditation and talking openly about their feelings. In discussion with inspectors, pupils were very enthusiastic about religious education and said that they enjoyed their lessons.