

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THAKEHAM FIRST SCHOOL**

Thakeham

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125856

Headteacher: Mrs. Moira Millerchip

Reporting inspector: George Derby  
25349

Dates of inspection: April 2003 7 – 9 April 2003

Inspection number: 248715

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 10
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Street Thakeham Near Pulborough West Sussex
Postcode:	RH20 3EP
Telephone number:	01798 812133
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Barry Laker
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25349	George Derby	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics. Science. Information and communication technology. Religious education. Foundation Stage. Special Educational Needs. Educational Inclusion.	The characteristics of the school. The pupils' results and achievements. The quality of the teaching. Leadership and management. What the school needs to do to improve.
10329	Brian Sampson	<i>Lay inspector</i>		The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. The care the school has for its pupils. The school's partnership with parents.
32142	Beryl Richmond	<i>Team inspector</i>	English. Art and design. Design and technology. Geography. History. Music. Physical Education.	The pupils' opportunities for learning including provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Thakeham First School is situated in the village of Thakeham to the north of Storrington in West Sussex. Pupils come from Thakeham and the area surrounding it, which includes Storrington, Sullington, West Chiltington and Ashington. Twenty per cent of pupils come from outside the school's catchment area. The school is small in size when compared to other primary schools and the roll represents a wide socio-economic mix. There are 71 pupils in total (from the ages of four to 10) which includes nine full time children in Reception. The numbers in each year group are small (about 12 on average). The school is popular with parents and requests for places are usually greater than those available. Only one pupil is in receipt of free school meals, although the school believes that there are more eligible. There are 12 pupils with special educational needs but no pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school has no pupils who are learning English as an additional language and there are none from minority ethnic groups. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to Reception; this varies from average to below average each year. In the last two years there has been one new teacher appointed to fill a vacancy. Pupil turnover affects the school and, although numbers are only small (five left and one joined other than at the usual times last year), this can have a significant impact as there are only three classes in the school. Reception children enter the school at the start of each term and most pupils transfer at the end of Year 5 to Rydon Community College nearby. The school is a grade II listed building, sited in a conservation area; because of this, there is limited scope to make alterations.

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

Thakeham is an effective first school which provides good quality education for its pupils. It has some very good and excellent features to its work. Staff have a high regard for pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils achieve well by the time they reach Year 5 and their progress over their time in the school is good. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good attention is given to pupils' individual needs, especially those who have some difficulty with learning and those who attain highly. Pupils' personal development is also very good; by the time they are due to leave the school they are very well adjusted individuals, highly prepared for the next stage of their education. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well during their time in the school.
- The quality of teaching is good overall; the highly competent support staff enhance pupils' learning well.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development is very good because of the school's highly supportive ethos and the very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The support for pupils identified as needing extra help, either because they find it hard to learn or who need their learning extending, is very good.
- The leadership by the headteacher is very good and the work and support by the governing body is excellent.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and support it very well.

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

- An increased sharpness in assessment procedures and the recording of pupils' progress.
- Further development of the role of subject co-ordinator.
- Continuing the development of the new provision for ICT and improving pupils' attainment.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1997. Many aspects of the school's work have improved. Standards in many subjects have been raised and teaching is now good overall with a significantly increased proportion of very good teaching. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Provision for mathematics has improved well. Mathematical targets have been set for individual pupils, although some pupils do not always know what they are. There is a high degree of challenge in most numeracy lessons and teachers make learning fun. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is sound and helpful written and practical guidance is given. The headteacher and local education authority staff have rigorously undertaken the monitoring of teaching. Very perceptive evaluations have led to improvements in teaching quality. The provision for pupils in Reception has improved and much attention, within the confines of the alterations the school is allowed to make, has been given to the layout of the accommodation.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	A	B	C
writing	A	A	B	C
mathematics	A	A	B	C

**Key**

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

The pupils' **performance in the national tests** at the end of Year 2 in 2002, taking reading, writing and mathematics together, was well above average. The grades above show the performance in the individual subjects. The teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment in science was average. The attainment of the different year groups of pupils varies each year but the school's own data and pupils' work shows that overall pupils make good progress over their time in school. From the **evidence from the inspection**, pupils' attainment is average in English, mathematics and science for the current Year 2 pupils and above average in those subjects for pupils in Year 5. The group of pupils in the current Year 2 were a lower attaining group of pupils on entry to the school and have achieved well to attain average standards. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are particularly well developed throughout the school. Overall the numbers of pupils who arrive and leave the school, other than at the usual times, affects attainment. The school monitors and analyses pupils' progress well and has set realistic and challenging targets to be achieved at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 (for pupils' new school), reflecting staff's clear understanding of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Inspection evidence suggests that targets for 2003 are likely to be reached. Pupils have only just begun to be taught ICT in a systematic way. They are making good progress but their skills and knowledge are below what they ought to be for children's ages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the support they receive. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are 'hungry' to learn. They concentrate well and rise to the challenges set for them by their teachers. They listen very carefully, watch intently and try their hardest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in and out of classrooms. The pupils are very polite and well mannered. They always help younger pupils and act very sensibly when around school during less well supervised times and during break and lunchtime.
Personal development and relationships	Very good overall. Relationships in the school are very strong and pupils readily undertake any responsibility they are given.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with figures nationally.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 5
Quality of teaching	good	good	good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and it strongly promotes the progress and attainment of all pupils. The pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by the high quality teaching assistants. This is particularly the case during introductions to lessons, where assistants provide clear explanations and simplified activity, mirroring the class teachers' demonstrations. Work is very well matched to their needs and rigorous individual and group work focuses particularly well on their key targets, helping them to learn particularly well. The school's programme of 'enrichment' (such as for extending the thinking skills of higher attaining pupils and extending the learning of lower attaining pupils) is very well taught with challenging and thought provoking activities, superbly designed by the teacher. Teachers plan their lessons well, although occasionally what pupils are to learn could be clearer. However, there are three other significant features which have an important effect on pupils' learning: the high expectations teachers have, the very good way they manage pupils through the very close relationships and the way they use all time to the full for learning. These result in pupils' very good interest, concentration and the high degree of effort they put into their work. The different parts of lessons are generally carried out well, although some teachers spend not enough time on plenary sessions and miss the opportunity to reinforce and assess what pupils have learned. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. Only two science lessons could be seen but the quality of teaching in those was very good. Although the systematic teaching of ICT is relatively new, teachers tackle this well and the teaching seen on the inspection was good.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. A very rich range of activities is provided, both in school time as well as outside lessons. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught as required and there is a very good programme of activities for the youngest pupils in Reception. The provision for religious education is strong. Work in subjects is well planned and studied to a considerable depth which encourages exploration and research. The school is very successful at enriching pupils' experiences in order to extend their learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are particularly well supported and, as a result, make good progress. The programmes provided are based on a thorough knowledge of the pupils' needs and very clear, detailed individual education plans. The school is clear that it is only the things that are distinct and different about pupils' needs that are fully represented in these.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils' spiritual development is very strongly supported by the excellent assemblies and acts of worship and the very strong links with the church. Staff are very good role models who provide really good opportunities for pupils to work together, discuss collaboratively and share ideas. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced by work in religious education and geography as well as by music in assemblies when pupils have the opportunity to listen to a range of music from different cultures. Cultural opportunities are good and the school is aware of the need to develop further pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural society of Britain today.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There is great care and concern for pupils. The pupils are always well supervised but also allowed a certain freedom to work independently at times outside lessons. Older pupils care for younger ones. Child protection procedures are very good, as are those for health and safety. Assessment is satisfactory but could be enhanced by a more systematic approach to collecting information. The school monitors well the progress that pupils make and how they develop personally. The school's portfolios of work give a very good insight to the work of the school and pupils' progress over time, although work samples in these could be more systematically assessed and annotated.

Parents view the school's work and the care it has for children very positively. Many parents help in the school and there is a very strong commitment to improving resources. Overall, the school is very much at the heart of the community and fosters a very strong partnership with its parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher very strongly leads the school and has a very clear view on how the school should move forward. She has built a very strong and committed staff team. She takes an active role in developing initiatives and inspiring staff, but also strongly encourages others to take part. Management is good. The headteacher makes the best use of the skills of her staff and communication in the school is strong. Co-ordination of subjects has improved but could be even further developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school and work extremely well in partnership with the headteacher. They bring with them a wealth of expertise and knowledge which benefits the school. Governors hold the school very well to account for what it does and the standards reached. They also have a detailed knowledge of the variations in performance which can occur from year-to-year and the reasons why. Overall, they have an impressive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher thoroughly monitors teaching and provides perceptive analysis which helps teachers improve their performance. Co-ordinators look at planning and pupils' work and produce action plans to aid the development of subjects. However, they could be more involved in evaluating the quality of teaching in their subjects. Good use is made of information from evaluations of performance to set targets. The school development plan is a comprehensive document which guides the school's work very well.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The governors, through their thorough monitoring of the budget and regular review of school development priorities have a clear view on how spending is proceeding and are able to assess the cost-effectiveness of actions.

The level of staffing and resources is good. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school has made imaginative use of all space and provided a very attractive environment for learning. The school makes very good use of best value principles, especially in comparing itself with others and in challenging itself to improve further.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The close contact they have with school and the ease with which they can ask questions.</li> <li>• The leadership and management.</li> <li>• Pupils are well taught.</li> <li>• Their children enjoy school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they receive on their child's progress.</li> <li>• Activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agree with parents' positive views. They cannot substantiate the concerns that the small number of parents had. The range and quality of activities outside lessons are very good.

Parents have many ways of receiving the good quality information that exists about their children and school activities, including a well presented school website and email facilities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils achieve well and make good progress during their time in the school. The rich range of experiences they receive through the wide variety of opportunities they have to learn and the good quality of teaching ensures that pupils make the progress they can. The level of attainment of the small number of pupils who enter the school in Reception at the beginning of each term is generally at a similar level when compared with pupils entering other schools, although it is occasionally below those levels. By the time they leave the school in Year 5, their attainment overall is generally well above average but varies according to the make-up of the group each year and the abilities of each individual pupil.

#### ***The pupils' results in the recent National Curriculum tests***

2. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the level expected for their age (Level 2 and above), was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, taking reading, writing and mathematics together, their attainment was well above average because of the strong results at the higher range of attainment at Level 2 and Level 3 in the tests. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels (Level 3 and above) was well above average in mathematics, above average in writing and average in reading. The assessments made by teachers in science indicated that the pupils' attainment was average for those reaching Level 2 and for Level 3. This was because of the ability of some pupils to explain their findings and give reasons for why things happen in science.
3. Although attainment on entry to school for these pupils in 2000 was as expected for their age overall, this was a group of pupils who entered the school with about a half of the children attaining below the expected level for their age and nearly a third of whom designated as having special educational needs. The remaining pupils' attainment was above average. The pupils, therefore, have achieved well in relation to their starting points.
4. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the pupils' attainment was average overall in the tests. This reflects the wide range of pupils' abilities and the small size of the group of pupils taking the tests.
5. As pupils leave the school in Year 5, they do not take the Year 6 National Curriculum tests at Thakeham. However, the school sets targets for the receiving school which are then adjusted in the light of the whole cohort and in response to how pupils settle at their new school. Thakeham staff monitor the pupils' progress through the very strong communication with the STARS (Storrington Area Rural Schools) group of schools. This helps the school evaluate the value it adds to pupils' progress. The school exceeded well its targets set for pupils in Year 2 in 2002 and is on track to exceed the targets set for 2003. Realistic, but challenging, targets for Year 6 have been agreed (for the current Year 5) with the receiving school in 2004 and inspection evidence suggests these are likely to be achieved.

#### ***The pupils' attainment over recent years***

6. At the time of the last inspection, in December 1997, standards were deemed to require some improvement. Since then, through the headteacher's strong determination to improve the quality of education, standards have risen considerably.

7. Results in the National Curriculum Year 2 tests have improved significantly from 1999. High standards have been maintained since then, although there was a very slight dip in 2002 because of the wide range of ability of the group of pupils taking the tests. These high standards are as a result of the headteacher's determination to maintain the high quality of provision which she has developed over her time in the school. It is also a result of her closely monitoring the progress that pupils make and the very good support provided when pupils have difficulty with learning or need pushing to higher levels.
8. Over the past three years, there has been no significant difference in the performance of Year 2 boys and girls compared to the national picture. Nationally, girls do better in reading and writing, although there is no difference in mathematics. This school's results show a similar pattern.

### ***Standards in the work seen during the inspection***

9. In the work seen on the inspection, pupils' attainment is average in English, mathematics and science for Year 2 pupils. These pupils entered the school with lower levels of attainment for their age and many receive much support for their special educational needs. Year 5 standards are above average overall in English, mathematics and science and some individual pupils show high levels of attainment for their age. Standards in lessons, and in pupils' previous work, are promoted through good provision and teaching overall, which is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. In addition, the school provides additional support which enhances pupils' thinking and reasoning skills through challenging activities provided in English, mathematics and science. These 'enrichment' sessions are very well planned and taught by the school's specialist teacher.
10. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class (which includes Year 1 pupils) is usually close to the national average. The range of attainment can, however, be very wide. The attainment of the nine pupils currently in Reception was fairly typical for their age on entry to school. The support they receive in Reception is good and the effective teaching, coupled with the skilful planning to ensure the needs of Reception pupils, met in a mixed age class, ensure that the children make good progress. The pupils are on course to exceed the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Although the school has limited external facilities for Reception children, it does its best with the limited space available. Pupils build well on their experiences at nursery at the village site. The very good links between Thakeham First and the staff at the nursery mean that pupils' needs are well known and their progress is tracked well, by Reception staff who continue the assessment and recording profile started in nursery.
11. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. The well targeted support given by teaching assistants in class generally, and the support given to individual pupils specifically, helps those pupils who find it difficult to learn to make good progress generally and work towards the targets in their individual education plans. These are clear, specific and achievable and focus on the pupils' most important needs. The school's good focus in literacy and numeracy is also having a positive effect on learning and standards. There is a comprehensive policy to guide the identification and very strong support for pupils designated as gifted and talented. These pupils, like their peers, make good progress.
12. By the end of Years 2 and 5, standards in all other subjects except information and communication technology (ICT) are above that expected nationally. Pupils study the topics presented by teachers providing work in these subjects to a considerable depth. Good support for literacy, numeracy (and increasingly ICT) is built into the activities that pupils undertake, and especially for research or recording.
13. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' standards by the time they leave the school in Year 5 are below what is expected for pupils' ages, although younger pupils in

Year 2 are showing a better level of attainment (although still slightly below the level for their age). The school has begun, through the use of its relatively new ICT suite, to teach the subject systematically and pupils are beginning to make better progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding in ICT.

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

14. The pupils have very good attitudes to the school and their behaviour is very good. These are strengths of the school and compare well with the previous inspection. In lessons and during other activities, such as at assembly, the pupils concentrate very well and show very good interest in whatever they are doing. When spoken to, pupils from all classes emphasised unanimously how much they liked their school and teachers and how interesting lessons were. During an assembly/hymn practice the gusto with which hymns were sung was infectious. Pupils have an overwhelming enthusiasm for school and for all activities.
15. No unruly or oppressive behaviour was witnessed during the inspection. The pupils respect their school and keep it tidy. No litter, graffiti or vandalism was seen around the school. The pupils are extremely polite. They open doors for visitors, step back and often ask if visitors need help. At break time, although the playground is quite small, all ages play together well. Older pupils support the younger pupils very well. There have been no exclusions in the 12 months prior to the inspection.
16. The personal development of the pupils is good, comparing well with the previous inspection. The pupils respect each other and know that usually people will 'treat you as you treat them'. Through their learning about other cultures, they are aware that not everyone has been brought up in the same way and, therefore, has different feelings, values and beliefs. The pupils carry out, conscientiously, the various responsible tasks allotted to them. For example, older pupils act as 'buddies', particularly in reading, for younger ones. They do this particularly effectively, being helpful and offering positive support. Some prepare the hall for assembly and use the overhead projector for showing hymns. Others collect and return registers and keep the library tidy. Relationships between pupils and pupils and staff are very good within the school and there is a very strong 'family' atmosphere which pervades the school.
17. The attendance figures are similar to the previous inspection (when attendance was judged to be good) but because they have not increased in line with the national rate they are satisfactory. However, being a small school only a small drop in attendance, due to one persistent absentee, can affect the figures considerably. Unauthorised absences are below the national average. Most pupils come to school on time and the majority of lessons commence promptly.
18. The attitudes, values and personal development of the pupils, so clearly linked to the school's very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities, contribute significantly to the success of their learning.

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

#### ***The quality of teaching across the school***

19. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the teaching was judged to be 'sound overall'. At that time, the teaching in one lesson in eight lessons was less than satisfactory. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and the amount of teaching which is good or very good has significantly increased.

20. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage (children under five in the Reception class) is good. This is because the teacher manages the group well and plans systematically so that Reception pupils' follow a programme which is based well on children making progress towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning. The teaching in Year 1 (pupils taught alongside Reception) and in Year 2 (pupils taught with Year 3) is also good. The teaching of pupils in Years 3 to 5 is good; pupils rise very well to the increasing challenges set by their teachers as they get older.
21. Excellent teaching was seen in one dance lesson during the inspection where the teacher's expert knowledge and her organisation and management of pupils culminated in a display of what the pupils had achieved over the term. Pupils' showed an outstanding response in the lesson and had learned excellently over the term, especially given the limited facilities the school has.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and their learning is good. The headteacher, as special educational needs co-ordinator, is very effective in drawing up with class teachers very clear individual education plans (IEPs) which outline how activities can be adapted to meet individual needs. Staff focus on the precise targets in IEPs and these support pupils' learning very well. Pupils are very well supported in class or when withdrawn to work with teaching assistants at specific times. The quality of support in introductions to lessons is a key feature that accounts for why the pupils' progress is so good. Pupils are supported individually or in pairs and a modified/simplified introduction or explanation by support staff accompanies the class teacher's well-paced exposition. This was a successful feature of many lessons in the class with Year 2 and 3 pupils, where the highest proportion of pupils with special educational needs is located. By this approach, pupils are clear about what they are learning and the steps to success are presented in small steps so that they can learn from each other. Support during practical work is also of very good quality. The staff stand back and allow pupils to try things for themselves, intervening only when they need help.
23. In addition, pupils who need their learning extending, either because of a difficulty with learning or because they are pupils designated as 'gifted and talented' by the school, are supported through the school's 'enrichment' sessions. The very good quality of teaching enables pupils to learn very effectively. Lessons are excellently planned with highly challenging objectives using thought provoking material. Probing questioning and attention to problem solving and pupils' thinking skills helps pupils to use knowledge gained in lessons in English, mathematics or science and to apply it to practical problem solving and investigation situations. For instance during the inspection, Year 3 'able' pupils, in their topic on pirates, examined 'original' pirate accounts documents to work out whether the captain, from his escapades, would be in profit. A story narrated by the teacher led pupils to interpret the everyday language into key mathematical ideas and decide what operations they would use. Although the focus was very much mathematical, the overall outcome was that pupils saw the 'big picture'. They were to decide what the problem was about and know what information was required to solve a particular problem. The last lesson in a series, this was used as a very good opportunity to assess pupils' skills.

### ***The quality of the teaching of subjects***

24. The teaching of English (including literacy skills) and mathematics (including numeracy) is good and follows the principles laid down by the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The teaching of many other subjects also follows the structure of these lessons, although there is great variation in the attention given to the plenary sessions at the ends of lessons. In some the time allocated is far too short. The teaching of science is good. Good attention is given to the use of key vocabulary and pupils undertake regular practical investigations.
25. The teaching of ICT was good in the lessons seen and the judgement is supported by the range and quality of pupils' recent work. Teachers have benefited well from training in ICT,

although it is the training through the local STARS cluster which has supported them most. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly. The opportunities pupils have to learn systematically have only recently been introduced and teachers have not yet acquired a sufficient range of ways established to make the most effective use of the computers or the suite itself.

26. Literacy is well promoted in lessons and teachers take good opportunity to reinforce, correct or develop pupils' understanding of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. Phonic skills are effectively promoted and teachers provide good opportunities for extending pupils' writing in other subjects. Support for pupils' spelling is strongly promoted. Pupils' numeracy skills are utilised well in other subjects, such as science and ICT. Computers are used increasingly to support learning in other subjects. Overall, the use of ICT is satisfactory. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to write using computers, especially to help those who have difficulty learning.
27. It was not possible during this inspection to observe the teaching of all subjects offered in the curriculum.

### ***The features of teaching***

28. Teachers make lessons fun and pupils enjoy them immensely. The activities are always interesting and pupils are always challenged.
29. Three significant features which make teaching particularly successful are:
  - Teachers' management and organisation of pupils is very good. It is very effective throughout the school. It is built on the very firm foundations of the very good relationships that all staff have developed with pupils and also on the 'care' that staff have for them. Pupils are always clear on what they are to learn and do and settle down to work swiftly, trying their hardest and putting great effort into whatever they do. Materials are always well prepared. No time is lost and all time is used to the full. There is a shared commitment by staff to help pupils do their best. Pupils respond positively to this.
  - Support staff and other 'assistants' make a very good contribution to all lessons. The school highly values its staff and its pupils and there is great respect for pupils' views and ideas. Teaching assistants are fully used in lessons and they are fully involved in all aspects of lessons, explaining, simplifying and extending pupils' ideas and knowledge. In addition, parent helpers make a considerable contribution by helping pupils read. The school's use of older pupils as reading 'buddies' for younger ones is good. A Year 5 boy gently supported a Year 1 pupil in reading her text. She exuded a confidence and fluency when reading. This was praised by the boy who also carefully guided her when words were tackled which were new to her.
  - Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils, both in relation to their learning in lessons and in their personal development. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that pupils improve their skills, through challenging written work, questioning or practical activity. Clear expectations about pupils' attitudes and routines have resulted in pupils knowing how to respond and listen sympathetically to the responses of others. Pupils expect to be 'pushed' hard and to extend their ideas; they know questioning will be probing and persistent to make them think about what they are doing and how to solve problems. This was exemplified in a lesson on programming the Roamer (a floor robot) in Reception. The teaching assistant helped pupils to think hard about what steps were needed to enable the Roamer to reach a certain point on the floor.
30. Other features of teaching are generally good. Planning is well considered and lessons thoroughly prepared. Occasionally, what pupils are to learn in lessons could be more clearly stated in order to help teachers better focus on assessment and evaluation. Pupils' independent work and research skills are very well developed and are supported by the wealth of materials and good quality resources the school has as well as through the use of



computers. Pupils are beginning to use the Internet well for this purpose and CD ROM resources are improving. Subject co-ordinators are aware that they need to increase these resources,

31. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects and how to impart knowledge to the pupils from Reception to Year 5 is strong. Activities match the pupils' needs and abilities very well. They are very well thought out and the use of group targets to reinforce ideas to do with literacy and numeracy also help improve pupils' skills.
32. Teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils in lessons is satisfactory. Teachers reflect on how activities might be modified or how particular pupils' might be helped in the forthcoming lessons. However, their review of how the lesson went and which pupils met the expected outcomes at the ends of lessons is sometimes too short to be useful as a way of assessing what pupils have learned.
33. The provision for homework is good. It is set regularly for pupils and is challenging. It is provided throughout the year in the form of reading and writing activities for pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2 and extends to a wide range of other activities, including research and 'projects' for older pupils.

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

### ***Pupils' opportunities for learning***

34. The opportunities the pupils have to learn are very good. The school teaches all the required subjects of the National Curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 5 are very good. They are sufficiently balanced, wide-ranging and relevant to ensure pupils make sufficient progress in all subjects. The school regularly reviews its curriculum to ensure that it is relevant and appropriate for its pupils. The locally agreed syllabus is used as the basis for the teaching of religious education.
35. The school meets the necessary requirements for the daily act of worship. The school places a high priority on teaching English and mathematics and dedicates a significant amount of time each day to provide good quality teaching of an interesting and challenging programme of literacy and numeracy. The school has strategies in place to ensure it promotes basic literacy and numeracy skills through all the other subjects of the curriculum although occasionally, in some subjects these need to be more widely developed.
36. Guidance for teachers is generally good. There are satisfactory policy documents; some are in need of review but a plan is in place to address this. There are good programmes of work to guide teachers' planning for what they are going to teach in each lesson. The quality of half-termly planning is satisfactory and based on the national schemes of work. All subjects are taught regularly within each class but the specific time set aside for teaching and promoting the use of information and communication technology is a relatively new feature. The topics in science have been examined by the school's co-ordinator to check their difficulty and frequency and found to be in need of some review. Homework is used effectively to raise standards.
37. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is very good and within this, the provision for pupils' personal development is very good. It includes opportunities for sex and drugs awareness education. It clearly places an emphasis on developing pupils' awareness of the associated dangers. The new policy for sex education is in draft form and but the policy for drugs education needs was distributed to parents some time ago. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility and work together as well as respect

themselves and others. All year groups follow a relevant curriculum geared to a gradual building up of understanding about self and society. Self-esteem is continually built up throughout the school and the importance of persistence and confidence is reinforced. Pupils are taught citizenship and how to prepare to play an active role as citizens. Pupils are encouraged to give their views in assembly times, circle times and through questionnaires.

38. The school actively promotes equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum for all pupils and this is strongly reflected in the school's vision, documentation and practice. The school aims to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn. Evidence gained during the inspection shows this to be the case in most aspects of the school. Teachers, teaching assistants and other staff work well together to ensure that all pupils are very effectively included in lessons. The work of teaching assistants is as effective in the whole class parts of lessons as it is in group work. The provision and support for pupils' special educational needs is very good. It is very well organised with very good assistance from support staff. Planning and activities are suitably modified especially during introductions to lessons. This helps pupils' gain maximum benefit. Individual programmes are provided for pupils which are taught well by the teaching assistants, often at the beginning of the day.
39. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. For instance, pupils in Years 4 and 5 have the opportunity to take part in a week's residential visit to Hooke Court in Dorset. Other pupils have visited Dorchester Museum, the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton, Preston Manor, the Fire Station in Storrington, local factories and farms and the local church to support their work in school. There have been poets, writers, historians and storytellers in residence, art and craft workshops, dancers, musicians, theatre companies and other members of the local arts community who have shared their skills and knowledge with pupils. Teachers plan a drama production for all pupils on a regular basis. This contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development. More able pupils also benefit from the opportunity to take part in the West Sussex 'enrichment' programme that offers pupils the opportunity to take part in a range of different activities, usually on a Saturday morning. All pupils have the opportunity to benefit from enrichment lessons taught in school by a specialist teacher. For instance, during the time of the inspection, Year 4 and 5 pupils had the opportunity to participate in a puppetry and Asian storytelling day, where they were able to look at a range of puppets and their use in Asia. Using shadow and stick puppets, and their knowledge of translucent, transparent and opaque materials, pupils planned to retell an Indian story. The contribution of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning opportunities is also very good. Staff and other visitors provide pupils with opportunities to learn a wide range of different skills and knowledge through participating in treble and descant recorder clubs, Le Club Français, cricket, gymnastics, dance and multi-sports.

### ***Links with the community and partner institutions***

40. The school has very good links with the local community. Parents and community groups are involved in supporting school activities. For instance, Year 4 and 5 pupils have produced a guide to Thakeham, as part of their geography work that is available to visitors to the local church. Pupils participate in country and maypole dancing as part of community activities. The community policeman, nurse and Fire and Rescue Service all have strong links with the school.
41. Relationships between the school and partner institutions are very good. A transition project to support pupils to enable them to transfer successfully to the 'intermediate' school (middle school) is in place annually. In addition, there are regular meetings to plan the curriculum, set targets for improvement and to share expertise. There are very good links with preschool groups and this supports the children very well as they move from nursery to Reception. The school participates actively in a local (STARS) cluster group of schools to share expertise, training and opportunities for pupils. There are active and productive links with local colleges and universities.

***The opportunities for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral social and cultural development***

42. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The school's individual subject policies do not explain how the subjects support this provision but it has a summary document that explains this and it intends to update policies in the near future.
43. The school promotes pupils' spiritual development very well and, as pupils progress through the school, they are given good opportunities to explore values and beliefs and the way in which they impact on people's lives. They are given opportunities to celebrate their own beliefs and are taught to respect and appreciate the faiths and convictions of others and to understand how their actions can affect fellow pupils. The school actively promotes an atmosphere in which pupils are taught to show consideration, courtesy and respect for themselves, others and the environment they live in. Assemblies contribute excellently to spiritual development and take many different forms to do this. During the inspection, one excellent assembly (by a local community church group, which included parents) focused on special times and developed ideas about faith, trust and doubt using an inspirational dramatic approach to convey the story, in actions and language the pupils could understand, of 'doubting' Thomas. Pupils were enthralled and listened and watched intently, considering the issues raised. They also had fun and sang enthusiastically with gusto, 'I'm a believer'. Teaching styles are promoted which value pupils' questions and give them time for their own thoughts and ideas. They also consider the best ways pupils learn.
44. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The steady growth of respect and responsibility in pupils is central to the school' vision. The school provides a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour and this is promoted throughout the school. Staff, parents and pupils have a shared understanding and expectation of the ways in which to behave. Staff are good role models for pupils and are consistent in their application of the behaviour policy. Pupils are expected to understand the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. There are whole school systems in place to reward good behaviour and deal with any disruptive/aberrant behaviour which may occur.
45. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and this is linked in many ways to the provision for their moral development. The school aims to try to foster a sense of community and common, inclusive values and actively promotes the equality of all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to work cooperatively with each other whenever possible. Most pupils are polite and friendly and eager to be of assistance. Assemblies, team activities, residential experiences and school productions provide positive corporate experiences for pupils. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take responsibility.
46. Provision for cultural development of pupils is good. There are opportunities to participate in school productions and other extra curricular activities. The curriculum is enriched by educational visits. For instance, Year 4 and 5 have been learning about the similarities and differences between their lives and those of people who live in India. Cultural development is promoted very well through music in assemblies when pupils have the opportunity to listen to a range of music from different cultures. However, the school has identified that it needs to develop further pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural society of Britain today and has been developing its library books and other resources for multi-cultural content. The school takes opportunities to celebrate other cultures through religious education, music, dance, art and literature and work with multi-ethnic groups, such as street jazz dance. An author from Caribbean culture, and dance and music from around the world, will be included in the Autumn Arts Week and further training is planned for staff on multicultural arts techniques and skills.

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

### *The school's pastoral care and welfare*

47. The school has very good procedures for ensuring child protection and the welfare of its pupils. These are strengths of the school and have improved upon the good provision noted in the previous inspection.
48. The headteacher is the named and trained child protection person and she ensures that all staff are fully briefed on relevant procedures. The school has an up to date written policy and works very closely with the local social services and police domestic abuse team. Any relevant incidents are recorded in detail and all documentation is securely locked away. The school does not currently have any 'looked after' children but procedures are in place for possible future admissions.
49. The headteacher is also the named health and safety person. She, together with the health and safety governor, is very vigilant. The whole school site is checked regularly and was free of any apparent health and safety issues at the time of the inspection. All risk assessments for the building site and visits out of school are up to date. All fire, physical educational and portable electrical equipment are regularly tested. Emergency drills are held every term and recorded and all escape routes are clearly marked and accessible. The school has efficient and sensitive accident and medical procedures. There are trained first aid personnel who are well identified by the pupils. The school makes very good use of outside professional help such as the police who talk about 'Stranger Danger' and bicycle safety, the school nurse, various therapists and other support personnel. There are very caring procedures for the transfer of children from pre-school and into 'intermediate' education. Lunch is consumed in hygienic conditions with very effective support, which is also evident at play and going home times. The school has an up to date Safety Policy which staff are aware of when asking pupils to research using the Internet.
50. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Class registers are well maintained and checked daily by the school secretary. Parents are made very well aware of their relevant responsibilities and are requested not to take holidays in term time. The school has a tight lateness routine and makes good use of the educational welfare officer.
51. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating that of an oppressive nature are both very good. The school has an up to date, written behaviour policy with realistic awards and sanctions. The separate bullying policy is well known to staff, parents and pupils. The latter are given the confidence to report potential incidents by various discussions in assemblies and circle time whilst the staff are experienced enough to 'nip situations in the bud'.
52. The monitoring and supporting of the pupils' personal development is good. All staff know the pupils very well and via the school's open door procedure can talk to parents regularly about negative and positive aspects. Progress is noted in pupils' personal files and reported upon to parents in their annual school reports.
53. Overall, the school provides a caring, safe and supportive environment in which the learning of the pupils can flourish.

### ***Assessment and the monitoring of pupil's academic performance and support for pupils' special educational needs***

54. Overall, there is a sound range of procedures established for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the information gained from these is used adequately. Staff use the information well to track pupils' progress and to provide help where it is needed.

55. Much has been done by Thakeham teachers working with other teachers from the STARS cluster to help moderate pupils' work and gain a good understanding of the criteria used for assigning National Curriculum levels. Portfolios of work have been produced for many subjects and are high quality and superbly presented records of pupils' experiences in different aspects of most subjects. Some have been assessed and assigned a National Curriculum level, but not all are annotated in this way. This is a missed opportunity to help to identify pupils' progress over time and to provide guidance for staff as examples of the various levels in each subject.
56. Marking and critical feedback were aspects that were identified as needing strengthening in the last report. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is sound and helpful written and practical guidance is given. Regular assessment of pupils is made and pupils are set individual targets in English and mathematics to improve their performance. However, although they are regularly assessed and reviewed, not all pupils remember their targets readily or can say what they have to do to improve.
57. Parents and pupils complete a review sheet of the work covered by the end of a particular topic and these are signed by teachers. Pupils say what they have worked hard at and what aspects have improved. Areas identified for improvement are highlighted, as a result. While these provide a good summary statement for parents and pupils themselves, and pick out some of the skills the pupils have gained, they do not provide an ongoing record of the detail of what pupils have learned, as they are fairly general statements. Assessments made of key subject skills based on the planned outcomes for pupils' learning at the end of a unit of work would help provide sharper assessment of their knowledge, skills and understanding. At present, few subjects other than in English and mathematics are assessed systematically in this way, although teachers keep a range of information of pupils' responses during the term. All this needs to be linked to whole school assessments for subjects and more systematically tied into National Curriculum levels, developing the existing assessment and recording system. The school's enrichment teacher always provides a way of assessing pupils after a project they have undertaken. This is done as a final task to the activity and pupils assessed against the key objectives of the work, which they are always clear about. This is a model of very good practice.
58. The school has a good range of ways of 'formally' assessing pupils. These range from baseline assessment, the school's early development profile it continues from the nursery (and the new Foundation Stage Profile), National Curriculum tests and optional tests in Year 3, 4 and 5, reading tests and some other formal 'commercial' tests. The use of these helps the school to forecast progress and to set targets. Data is collected and recorded electronically on the computer and this helps track pupils' progress over time. The results are analysed carefully, and used effectively to set whole school targets, and to set challenging targets for improvement. Good use is made of this information for identifying pupils who need additional support for literacy and to assist pupils' further progress through the school's additional support programme. Most teachers also make good use of the information gained in their weekly planning for these subjects.
59. Good support is provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO – the headteacher) to enable teachers and teaching assistants to produce clear targets for those pupils who need support. Staff are very aware of the needs of these pupils in their class and work very well towards their individual targets. The school involves their parents well in the setting and reviewing of targets for individual educational plans. Parents are routinely invited to meetings, creating an effective partnership in providing for pupils' needs.
60. Procedures for the Annual Review of progress are carried out appropriately. The school's support systems have been strengthened by a system of setting targets for all pupils; parents and children all value this procedure and their involvement in it.

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

61. The majority of parents believe that this is a very good school. They cite many strengths, such as the enjoyment their children have for school, the good teaching and the way they always feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or a problem. They also think that the school is well led and managed and that the school works closely with parents, keeping them well informed of how their child is progressing. The inspection agrees with all of these positive views. A significant minority felt that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. Thakeham is only a small school and its range of extra curricular activities is very good.
62. The school provides very good information for its parents. The prospectus and governors' report comply with statutory requirements. Parents are pleased with the pupils' annual report. It is clearly written for parents to understand, discusses every subject individually, says what the child can do and gives realistic targets including how these can be achieved. The school has had several curriculum evenings for parents on literacy, numeracy and science. Parents also receive, regular newsletters, copies of the behaviour and homework and other policies, three teacher consultations per year and easy access to the head teacher and staff. The school also has a very clear and informative web site for its parents, which most find extremely useful.
63. Both in school and at home, the contribution of parents to the children's learning is very good. Parents regularly help with, reading, spell checking, pottery, mathematics games, sewing and visits out. The school regularly informs parents of the future, termly curriculum and requests their help with the child's homework. Most parents respond very well by helping their child with projects and topics. Mathematics and writing target books and reading records are taken home for parents to comment in them and this they usually do quite willingly.
64. The impact of parents' involvement upon the work of the school is very good. The school has various willing and licensed vehicle drivers who help with ferrying pupils to and from sporting events or visits out of school. Recently, a father installed air conditioning in part of the school and currently parents are building a framework for the school pond, while others regularly maintain the soil, plants and flowers around it. Parent-governors take their commitments seriously.
65. The school has very good links with its parents. These compare very well with the previous inspection and are another significant strength of the school. Such positive links enhance considerably the success of their children's learning.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

### *Leadership and management*

66. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are good. Standards have risen since the last inspection and the provision for many subjects has improved. The school's approach to learning has resulted in very strongly motivated pupils who understand well the purpose of what they are learning and how the needs of all groups are effectively supported. Monitoring of the school's work has improved significantly and is good. Much support and training has been provided for the headteacher through the local STARS cluster of schools.
67. There is a very strong commitment to improving pupils' academic attainment and progress and to ensuring that pupils gain the best support they can. The headteacher is very hard working and is passionate about the school. Her leadership provides a clear view about where

the school needs to develop. She provides a very supportive environment in which all pupils feel secure and valued, where pupils work hard, enjoy very good relationships and show respect for their friends and adults. There is a strong emphasis on personal, as well as academic, development. The school's aims and mission statement are easily seen in the daily routines of the school which has a very good ethos.

68. The headteacher has built a highly committed team of staff who are intent on the pupils reaching high standards. The headteacher leads clearly by example. While management is good overall, and day-to-day management is very good, subject co-ordinators' roles are insufficiently developed. Although they have responsibility for checking on standards in their subjects and for planning, they do not have the opportunity to monitor teaching or influence practice. While it is acknowledged that this is a small school with the four teachers undertaking a wide range of management roles and the headteacher monitors teaching well, the skills of co-ordinators require further development. Furthermore, although they have information about standards in their subject particular to the year groups they teach, some do not have a full overview across the whole school. However, together with the headteacher, they critically appraise the subject provision well, check on planning and provide good information which leads to subject improvement and development. Subject co-ordinators have various ways in which they plan for the development in their subjects; in ICT there is an extremely thorough, detailed plan, although for some other subjects it is less formal.
69. Planning for school development and improvement is very thorough and there are highly relevant, fully costed priorities to move the school forward. The plan is comprehensive and addresses long, medium and short term priorities very effectively. These also relate well to STARS cluster priorities. The previous plan is reviewed thoroughly and governors and staff reflect carefully on what has been achieved and what could be done better.
70. The systems and procedures for performance management have been successfully implemented. The headteacher and staff all have school and personal targets that are reviewed and assessed on a regular basis. These fit well with the school's priorities and support the school in raising achievement.
71. The work of the governing body is excellent. Governors have a valuable range of expertise and provide very good support for the school. The chair and all governors are committed to ensuring the highest quality education for all pupils and they work very closely with the headteacher to achieve the school's aims. They have a very good working knowledge of the school and this directly affects their decision-making. Governors have a role in visiting lessons to check on aspects of work in their subjects and the impact of any development. They undertake a comprehensive monitoring schedule. Governors know and understand their roles clearly and maintain a successful approach to meeting their responsibilities. For example, they are very aware of the problems with cost comparisons in relation to the measure of achievement.
72. The proceedings of the governing body are very efficiently conducted and committees are very well organised and meet regularly. There is a very positive relationship between the governors and the school. Teachers are welcomed at governors' meetings to present reports relating to their special areas of curriculum responsibility. The governing body fully fulfils its statutory requirements. The governors are clearly critical friends who have the best interests of children at heart.

### ***Staffing, accommodation and learning resources***

73. The school has a good number of suitably qualified staff; there are good numbers of teachers and teaching assistants. Class sizes are favourable. An increase in the number of teaching assistants has been made since the last inspection. They have had good range of training and many support pupils with special educational needs or groups of pupils who need extra help

with reading and writing. They work particularly effectively, supporting pupils during the introductions to lessons and at the beginning of the day when they give additional support to designated pupils. Their support during lessons is also very good.

74. Induction of new staff is good. The arrangements in the school for professional development are good and focus very well on areas where specific school development is needed.
75. The accommodation is satisfactory and is used effectively to support learning. The school is housed in a Grade 2 listed building, in a conservation area, which is very attractive but this imposes strict regulations on the school. Good improvements have been made to increase the provision for the children and the headteacher and governors are vigilant in pursuing further development. A room has been re-modelled to provide a small computer suite. Very creative and imaginative use has been made of all space and an attractive learning environment has been achieved. The quality of the display is exceptional and shows the care the concern of staff for pupils' achievements, as well as being a way they celebrate them. There are limitations on play space for Foundation children; only limited adaptations have been able to be made because of listed status. The school does all it can to compensate, however. The school does not have its own field for sports activities. It uses an area close the school.
76. The learning resources overall are good. Improvements have been made to the library ensuring that there are adequate books , including 'Big Books'. The range of non-fiction is good and the computers are used to some extent for research purposes, and supporting areas such as art and science. Software is generally limited, however, especially for supporting pupils' learning in subjects and those with special educational needs. The computers are used effectively to support administration. Resources for physical education are satisfactory but large apparatus is limited as are facilities for sport on site, other than in the playground.

### ***The school's strategic use of resources and financial planning***

77. The headteacher and governors have effective procedures to plan and oversee school finances and the budget. Governors have a very good strategic oversight of finances and are fully involved in development planning, linking finance to necessary improvements. The work of the finance committee is effective. Governors regularly review the school's spending and keep a careful track of expenditure. Since the last inspection, they have spent their money wisely on a new computer suite that is having a positive influence on pupils' attainment.
78. Financial control is very good and the school's administration on a day-to-day basis is efficient. The very minor issues from the last financial audit, carried out by the local education authority, have been addressed. Governors take very good account of best value principles in the decisions they make and this is effective in the way procedures for obtaining services and supplies to the school take account of getting the best value for money. The identified priorities and associated actions in the school development plan are carefully costed with an agreed time scale. The school compares itself locally and nationally and a strength is the way in which it challenges itself to do better. It has consulted with the local community regarding its role. It 'listens' to parents informally and formally, by using parent governors to talk with parents and by using questionnaires or discussing issues with a sample of parents. All parents were involved in discussions about and agreement of the Home/School contract and a small group reviews this regularly. Grants obtained by the school (through the 'Standards Fund'), including those for pupils with special educational needs, are wisely spent on the areas they are designated for.
79. The school had a substantial surplus at the end of the previous financial year with nearly a nine per cent underspend; a much smaller surplus is indicated this year. Some of this was due to planned projects which needed further development, had been costed but finance had not been deducted. Ongoing work on the wildlife and pond area has been funded from a parish



council grant. An ICT suite has been created and internal building work was needed to convert the room, as well as additional storage and classroom areas. Further ICT resources are to be purchased and outdoor equipment for the external play for Foundation Stage children has yet to be paid for.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

1. Build on the good practice already in the school to more systematically collect assessment\* information of pupils' attainment in all subjects and ensure that the tracking of pupils' progress is detailed and enables the school to identify clearly and simply the gains pupils make;

*(Paragraphs 54 – 60)*

2. Develop the role of subject co-ordinators further so that they have opportunities to monitor all aspects of their subjects and especially to influence the quality of teaching;

*(Paragraph 68)*

3. Continue to improve the provision for ICT\* and increase pupils' levels of attainment.

*(Paragraphs 132 – 138)*

*\*recognised by the school and identified in the school development plan*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

27

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

25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	9	16	1	0	0	0
Percentage	4	33	59	4	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	71
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		12

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	9	5	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	93 (100)	93 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	93 (100)	93 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	54	0	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	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 – Y5

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	24

### Education support staff: YR – Y5

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	99

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	270260
Total expenditure	242012
Expenditure per pupil	3457
Balance brought forward from previous year	21561
Balance carried forward to next year	25248

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	71
Number of questionnaires returned	45

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	24	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	58	2	2	2
The teaching is good.	73	27	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	31	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	18	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	75	20	0	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	78	20	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	18	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	40	16	0	0



## **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**

81. Children enter the Reception class in the term in which they are five years old. This means there are three admissions each year, one at the beginning of the school year, one at the start of the spring term and one at the commencement of the summer term. The school's intake overall by the end of the year is relatively small (about 14 pupils). Reception children are taught alongside those in Year 1. There has been good improvement in the provision since the last inspection and especially in the quality of the curriculum. The school has successfully adapted national guidance for planning and has improved facilities, as much as it could, for the children's physical and outdoor play.
82. The children's attainment on entry varies each year from below average to average. A small number of children usually have above average skills. The school draws its pupils from a wide area. It is known for its care and support for children who are slower to learn than others, those who have particular difficulties, or those who are more able. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all areas of learning by the time they leave the Reception class and almost all achieve, or exceed, the levels expected for their age.
83. The quality of the teaching of children in the Reception class is good in all areas of learning. The teacher is very knowledgeable of the pupils' needs and how to promote their development. It is strongest in communication, language and literacy and children are given careful models for extending their speaking and listening skills and are systematically supported in their early literacy skills. It is also strong in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world where the teacher has a great deal of skill in modelling techniques for pupils to learn from and provides a great challenge for them to learn.
84. Planning is detailed and the teacher plans well from the Early Learning Goals programme and the National Curriculum programme of study for the Year 1 pupils. There is a good, careful balance to ensure the needs of both groups are met with activities well matched to the pupils' needs. Links to the medium-term planning of Foundation curriculum and the intended learning outcomes are clearly identified, particularly in non-adult supervised activities and 'play activities'. Records of work covered on a day-to-day basis are good and the assessment and monitoring of children's progress is good and has been strengthened by the continuation of the procedures, used also by the nursery from which most children come. This, plus the use of baseline assessment, provides a very good basis for tracking individual children's progress across all areas of learning as well as children's general responsiveness and enthusiasm for learning. High quality 'topic' books of the children's work give staff and parents a considerable insight into the work carried out by children in a particular topic and enable good progress to be seen over the course of a year.
85. Resources for the Reception class are good; accommodation is satisfactory. The small, compact classroom is well organised into areas which reflect the activities outlined in the school's programme. The outdoor play area is part of the main playground and is small but well used. Physical play also takes place in the school hall using apparatus specially purchased for the younger pupils. The school has plans to develop the outside area further but this, and the classroom accommodation, cannot be easily adapted because of the building status. Focussed opportunities indoors for large play and role play enhance children's learning opportunities further. Support staff are very well used in the Reception class and contribute very effectively to children's learning. Occasionally opportunities for extending children's learning are lost, however, because staff concentrate more on the management of an activity, rather than on extending what the children can do or say. There is very strong support for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Children are encouraged to

celebrate and wonder at what they see, hear and do. There is a strong ethos of care and concern for others and mutual respect is carefully nurtured.

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

86. The children are happy to come to school and follow the daily schedules of the class well. They respond politely when general routines such as registration, drink time or clearing up activities occur. They manage their own personal hygiene well, especially after going to the toilet and before handling food. In all sessions observed, children's attitudes and behaviour were very good. The children behave very well outdoors; they share resources unselfishly and play together very well. In an ICT lesson, children were very keen to participate, answer questions and contribute, and wait patiently for their turn. In literacy sessions they listen carefully to each other and applaud each other's successes. Almost all the children change quickly for activities such as physical education lessons with little adult help needed. They are enthusiastic in lessons and respond well to teaching and non-teaching staff. They show good level of self-control as in a short tennis lesson when they try hard to bounce a tennis ball . They settle quickly to group activities, discussing what they are doing but also supporting and helping each other. They enjoy the opportunities they have to take responsibility. Very clear messages from their teacher and relevant stories help children to learn to distinguish right from wrong, to have respect for each other and to form constructive relationships with peers and adults. Pupils' skills in this area of learning are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the time they leave Reception.

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

87. The children make good progress in this area. By the time they enter Year 1 their skills are on track to be above those expected for their age. The children are given frequent opportunities to listen and extend their vocabulary; for example, during story telling, answering questions and interacting with peers and adults during activities when painting. They listen attentively when new rhymes and stories are introduced and, although role-play opportunities could be extended, those they have provide an ideal way of supporting expressive language. Children, for example, set out their own version of *Mr Gumpy's car* with large blocks and using their imagination, discuss different endings. In group work, the children often use language well to plan and negotiate.
88. The children express their ideas clearly. They make good progress in early reading and writing activities. They distinguish print from pictures and can follow a text with adult support. Their older 'book buddies' read regularly with them and support their reading well. They enjoy listening to stories and have a real interest in books. They look at books at times other than in class, such as when in the library. Most know their initial letters and sounds and higher attaining children can build up simple words. Children recognise a growing number of familiar words by sight. Most write their names independently and enjoy writing freely. Early writing skills are practiced by making letters with clay, paint and sand. Higher attaining children have a growing bank of words that they read and write and some write several short sentences. They make reasonable attempts at unknown words. They have a wide variety of apparatus to aid their spelling, such as computer software, magnetic white boards and letters and games. Children's work in communication, language and literacy is well planned to fit in with the school's literacy strategy, as well as with the early learning goals.

### **Mathematical development**

89. Children make good progress in their mathematical development and their attainment is on course to be above other children of a similar age by the end of Reception. The pupils have many opportunities to practice their numeracy skills. These range from informally through role

play in the class 'shop', where children write down prices and 'calculate' how much they have spent, to lessons which follow the National Numeracy Strategy approach. In mental and oral work the whole class works together, usually responding well to the teacher's fast pace and challenging questioning. Occasionally, the work is targeted at Year 1 pupils and is beyond the Reception pupils; the language used is not always simplified enough to involve them sufficiently in the activity. The staff take every opportunity to develop the children's mathematical language.

90. The children know the names of basic shapes and can create a repeated pattern using different criteria such as colour, size, shape and thickness. They can count reliably to 20 and are learning to add two numbers to 10 using sets of teddies. The more able know how to write down simple sums, write the numbers accurately and know how to count on. They cope readily with simple sums, drawing the remaining objects to make up ten. They show increasing confidence with mathematical language such as *light and heavy*. Through their sand and water play they form an early idea of volume and capacity.

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

91. The children enter the school with a general knowledge in this area which is expected for their age. There are many good experiences planned for them, which stimulate their curiosity and enable them to explore their senses, ideas and develop their observational skills and curiosity. Progress in children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good and pupils' skills are on course to be above those of similar aged children by the time they leave Reception. They observe the growth of bulbs and flowers and observe the changes in the school garden. Children have opportunities to experiment with the properties of water and sand. They learn about people and places in and beyond their environment. Construction materials are used well and children talk about the models they make, identifying how they have constructed these and how they can be made better. Good use is made of computers to support children's learning and most use a mouse confidently to select objects and can 'click' and drag objects when needed. They demonstrate skills and vocabulary use above expectations in their use of ICT, such as when programming the *Roamer* to move forward.

### **Physical development**

92. Children's progress in physical development is good overall and the class make good use of the school hall to explore and develop gymnastic skills. A small outdoor playground area offers some large toy play opportunities and music and movement extends children's body awareness further. The children make good progress in their co-ordination, body awareness and large movement physical skills. They change for lessons readily and need little support. They follow instructions accurately, such as when changing movements according to instructions. They show considerable control in their movement and can balance a ball on their racquets. The children make good progress in manipulative skills using equipment such as pencils, crayons, scissors, paint, brushes, glue and some construction equipment.

### **Creative development**

93. Children make good progress and are likely to attain standards above those for their age by the end of Reception. They have good opportunities to draw, colour, paint, cut and glue and develop increasing control in using different techniques such as drawing, cutting and colouring. They know a range of colours and are encouraged to observe colours and shapes closely. They find out about shapes through cutting, discussion and sticking. Children are developing the ability to represent the world around them and to produce recognisable drawings, paintings or models. The techniques to be developed are explored well. They use tools such as a sponge to dab paint on their painting of an Easter chick, mix paint so it looks like cream and create black and white patterns inside circles and squares in traditional Indian designs. The children develop their creativity in fixing materials together in their transport

models and also through their opportunities to make sponge cakes with icing (which also adds much to their mathematical understanding through weighing in grams). It is also stimulated in the role play activities such as in the 'shop'. The children learn an increasing repertoire of songs and rhymes. They sing tunefully and produce simple rhythmic patterns.

## ENGLISH

94. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the provision for, and of standards in, English. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection, which were good, although writing has improved further in the Year 3 to 6. The school has introduced a target setting booklet for writing, but its use is not yet fully embedded in practice in the classroom. Paired and guided reading has been introduced. Additional support is provided for pupils who have difficulty with reading and writing or to support higher levels of achievement in the subject. This work is effective.
95. Inspection findings are that standards in English are average by Year 2 and above average in Year 5. In Year 5 standards in reading, writing, and spelling are above average. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. In Year 2, standards in reading, writing and spelling are average. This is a lower attaining group of pupils with a high number of pupils with special educational needs. A particular feature of the school's work is the promotion of speaking and listening skills and this results in these pupils' standards being above average. Standards in handwriting are average throughout the school. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school.
96. Pupils' attainment in English varies from year to year. However, good progress is made because teachers' expertise in the teaching of basic skills is good and they encourage pupils to do their best. The pupils are keen to learn and work hard in lessons. Teachers offer all pupils sufficient challenge in a range of interesting tasks. The pupils also achieve well because of the successful introduction of the principles of the National Literacy Strategy, coupled with good teaching.
97. The school works hard to provide opportunities for all groups to learn and work together. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in both group work and in whole class parts of lessons. Teaching assistants support these pupils well by repeating teachers' questions and writing key words and phrases on small white boards so that pupils have the words close to them and do not have to work off the main board. Their encouragement to pupils and the positive approach to the way that they work with pupils contribute well to the progress that pupils make. The school identifies pupils who need extra help and provides effective support for them.
98. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 5. Pupils listen carefully in lessons and are interested in what others have to say. Good teaching and an appropriate pace in lessons encourages pupils to listen well. The teachers regularly provide opportunities for pupils to speak during all parts of the lessons. Pupils respond well to teachers' questions and appropriately to those which need an explanation as well as those needing a quick one-word answer. For instance, in the summing up part of a very good music lesson, pupils were able to demonstrate a good knowledge of the specific vocabulary for the Indian rondo, explain about how the music is constructed and contribute well to the evaluation of other pupils' work. The school creates good opportunities to develop speaking and listening through the visits of authors, storytellers and through the 'book buddy' scheme and the involvement of volunteer parents and friends. However, the summing up part of many lessons is often too brief and does not give pupils sufficient opportunities to evaluate their work, or explain and develop their own questions. At this time, pupils usually share their work but there is often insufficient clear focus on how that work relates to the learning

objectives for the lesson. In addition, there is a school production every term when many pupils have the opportunity to take on speaking parts.

99. In Year 2, standards in reading are average and in Year 5, standards are above average. Following discussions with pupils, it is clear that they enjoy reading very much. They read regularly both at home and at school and have access to a wide range of books. In particular, in Year 5 pupils' good speaking and listening skills enable them to discuss their favourite authors and books and give reasoned answers as to why they enjoy particular ones. They have benefited very much from the very good extra curricular provision of visiting authors and storytellers that have been a very positive influence and inspired them to want to read and write. In Year 2, pupils link letters with their sounds well and usually use this strategy when they are unsure of a word. They are less used to using other strategies, for instance, reading the whole sentence through and then making an informed guess of an unknown word. In Year 5, pupils read fluently and with expression and have a wider range of strategies at their disposal.
100. The teachers manage reading well. During book 'buddy' time, older pupils read with younger ones, listen to taped stories or read individually with the class teacher or another adult. The school also teaches reading through guided reading, although no sessions were observed during the inspection, and pupils have the opportunity to read in groups as well. The school has recently improved the guided reading resources. The range and level of books provide a good challenge in lessons. There is a good balance between reading scheme books, books from children's literature and non-fiction texts. The teachers, parents and pupils contribute to each pupil's reading record. Pupils throughout the school make their own books of their topic work. Throughout the school, there is extra time for reading planned into the school timetable. The teachers plan a range of activities for these times, but not usually for research opportunities on the Internet and this needs to be developed. The teachers and teaching assistants give pupils good support to enable them to progress. Good opportunities exist for pupils to change their library books on a weekly basis but more opportunities need to be planned to develop library skills at this time. Some infant pupils are not familiar with the library system and cannot confidently explain how to locate books. The older pupils are more confident with this and can explain the Dewey system.
101. Standards in writing are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 5. All pupils have opportunities to participate in writing enrichment activities with a teacher employed by the school to teach 'enrichment' activities at different times. At the moment, Year 2 pupils are producing a video of a children's TV programme on Weather/Snow that links well with their geography topic. In a Year 1 lesson where the teaching was good, pupils were able to sequence well events that had happened during the weekend. Most pupils had worked hard and produced a good amount of work in the time allowed. The teacher encouraged the pupils' independence well by providing them with 'trying out books' and vocabulary cards. These pupils regularly learn spellings for homework and, consequently, their work is above average for their year group. The school gave Year 5 pupils very good opportunities to work with authors and poets at a 'Writers Day' that recently took place. Displays of previous work associated with this annual event were of a high standard. In Years 2 and 3 pupils have been writing acrostic poems about daffodils. They understand the use of adjectives to improve their writing, but their understanding of adverbs is less secure and this point was not followed up in the summing up part of the lesson. The teachers encourage pupils to take pride in their work and usually it is fairly neat and tidy and well presented. Handwriting is not always taught consistently. The policy is that in Year 2 pupils begin to join writing but some older pupils print and some write in a cursive style. The basic skills of spelling and grammar are taught progressively and pupils are able to demonstrate in their work good knowledge of the conventions of English. In Year 4 and 5 pupils were learning about the use of the apostrophe for omission and possession. The teacher had chosen an appropriate text that demonstrated the various uses of apostrophes well and by asking the pupils to answer her kinaesthetically she had instant feedback on pupils' understanding. All pupils have writing targets but the

emphasis placed on these targets is not consistent in the three classes. Some pupils can explain their targets well, whilst others are not sure of what their targets are. In addition, the targets are not yet part of pupils' everyday experience in the classrooms.

102. Teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall in the younger infant classes. Good teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds) enables pupils to write sentences independently. However, pupils need more opportunities to write both in literacy lessons and in other subjects in order to achieve a higher standard of attainment. In the lessons observed, work was usually planned well for pupils of different attainment but from the scrutiny of work it was less evident how this had been done.
103. In Years 3, 4 and 5, the teaching of literacy is good overall. The teachers provide a range of learning experiences for the pupils. Pupils write for different audiences and purposes, usually independently. For example, pupils presented their point of view in a letter about whether fox hunting should be allowed. The teacher modelled letter writing well for the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. In lessons, teachers ensure a good balance between enriching writing through a wider use of vocabulary and descriptive language and encouraging the use of these skills in a finished piece of work. However, an analysis of pupils' writing provides less evidence of drafting, reading through and improving longer pieces of original writing. Writing needs to be taught more frequently and developed through other subjects more often, especially as it is an identified school focus.
104. Throughout the school, use is made of the computer for pupils to use their word processing skills to produce interesting final pieces of work. However, sometimes there are missed opportunities and pupils could make more use of this technology. The pupils need to search the Internet or CD ROMs for information more regularly. Computers programs are used to support the learning of spelling. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their listening skills through listening to information and stories on tape recordings. There are good resources in classrooms that support pupils' literacy development well. In particular, in Reception and Year 1, hanging word banks give pupils a range of other words that they can use instead of, for instance, 'nice'.
105. Teaching in English is good overall. Relationships in English lessons are very good. This enables pupils to have the confidence to try out new ideas and to share them with their fellow pupils. In a Year 2 and 3 lesson, pupils shared their acrostic poems about daffodils, which was listened to attentively by other pupils. Lessons are well managed and move along at a good pace. Very little time is wasted so that pupils work hard and are productive.
106. The leadership and management of English are good overall. The co-ordination of the subject is shared between the headteacher and another teacher. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well. There are some good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects, but this area needs to be developed further as there is very little recorded work in some subjects. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the co-ordinator is insufficiently developed, but planning has been checked and pupils' work moderated. The procedures to assess pupil attainment and monitor their progress are satisfactory. Pupils' progress needs to be tracked in greater detail so that the co-ordinators and class teachers have a clearer idea of standards. Most of the policies for English were written some time ago, although most have been reviewed. There is a new 'statement of practice' but the policies need to be updated as soon as possible. Resources are good and accessible in lessons.

## **MATHEMATICS**

107. The school has responded well overall to the key issue identified in the last report. Standards have risen and higher levels of attainment are now reached by pupils. In the 2002 National Curriculum Year 2 tests, the pupils' results were above the national average overall. The

percentage of pupils attaining the expected level for their age (Level 2) or higher was average. The percentage attaining the higher levels (Level 3) was well above the national average. The pupils' performance was average in comparison with those in similar schools. All this represents a good achievement for the group of pupils who took the test; they were a lower attaining group of pupils on entry to the school and there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In recent years, standards have been well above average in mathematics. However, standards vary from year to year depending on the ability of the small number of pupils who take the tests.

108. The standards for the current group of pupils in Year 2 are average. This is also a good achievement for them; this group also has a high number of pupils with special educational needs. The pupils in Year 5 show knowledge, skills and understanding which is above average. All pupils make good progress across the school, including those who have special educational needs and those who are high attaining, and the school exceeded the targets set for pupils' attainment last year.
109. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils recall, quickly and accurately, addition and subtraction facts necessary to solve 'real life' problems. They are particularly good at mental calculation and finding the correct solution to word problems. Pupils decide which of the information they are given is important and identify correctly the correct number operation to use to solve the problem. They use simple ways of dealing with simple subtractions such as rounding numbers and then subtracting or adding the difference. They can find equivalent fractions such as  $\frac{2}{6} = \frac{1}{3}$  and begin to add fractions. Lower attaining pupils tell the time when the hands are on the hour and measure length in centimetres. They can find the right angle in a shape and correctly identify a simple fraction of a shape.
110. Towards the end of Year 5, pupils respond very well to the quick fire mental tasks at the beginning of lessons. Their knowledge of their 'times-tables' is strong. They round large numbers up and down accurately. Higher attaining pupils add five digit numbers confidently using methods of carrying. They are strong in calculation using all operations and have a good understanding of place value. They add fractions, converting the fractions to their common factors. Some investigation is carried out, although the extent of this is limited. Pupils undertake activities which introduce them to simple probability, such as the frequency of digits in telephone numbers, and they construct graphs of their findings. Some lower attaining pupils need the support of a model clock to convert 12 hour to 24 hour time but most are able to tell the time to the nearest minute. They can use all number operations for calculations but are only confident with two to three digit numbers, such as dividing 40 by 8. They are able to produce line graphs from data provided and answer simple questions.
111. There is some use of ICT to support learning in mathematics, although this is limited overall. This is used mainly for constructing graphs.
112. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The teaching is never less than good and it is often very good. The teaching is characterised by a brisk start to lessons with quick fire mental questions, which focuses pupils' attention and so encourages their learning. Activities are always challenging and nearly always take good account of the differing needs of pupils. Plenary sessions reinforce the learning objectives and teachers use this time to assess how much pupils have learned. However, in one class, the time for these opportunities is often limited and they sometimes do not occur at all. Planning is satisfactory and follows the National Numeracy Strategy objectives closely. At times, objectives could be sharper and the outcomes for different groups of pupils' learning by the ends of lessons specifically identified. The way pupils are challenged to think and use their number knowledge is a particular strength. Where investigations occur, the skills are taught very well and broken down into small parts for the pupils to reflect and focus upon. However, systematic opportunities tend to be limited overall. However, the very good support provided by the school's enrichment teacher means that other pupils also have some opportunities to be challenged by well thought out and

constructed, thought provoking investigations. A particular strength is the way all pupils are encouraged to see the relevance of their mathematical learning to real life situations. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good because they find the work their teachers plan interesting, motivating and challenging. They present their work well and can easily track what they have done in their workings out. They are keen to take part and to answer questions and they persevere well in group activities. Good relationships are apparent and pupils' readily answer questions with confidence, with others listening well and showing their appreciation when good ideas are put forward.

113. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well. Lesson introductions are often simplified for these pupils and support staff use apparatus to explain the ideas the teacher is presenting. This works particularly effectively. Effective, ongoing support also occurs when pupils are undertaking group work.
114. The subject is led and managed well. There is a clear plan for the development of the subject which links to the school's improvement plan overall. Assessment is used well to monitor standards. However, the school's high quality portfolios are a missed opportunity to contribute to this process as they do not always show a National Curriculum level. The pupils are not always aware of their targets, however, and what they must do to achieve them. Teaching is monitored by the headteacher, but not by the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator's knowledge of standards in the subject, across the school is also broad. However, she has been to see practice in other schools (as have all teachers) and the school has liaised with a local advanced skills teacher in order to identify and develop good practice. Numeracy contributes well to science and design and technology, but insufficient use of information and communication technology is planned. Resources are good.

## **SCIENCE**

115. The pupils' standards in science have improved since the last inspection. This improvement has been largely due to the emphasis the school now has on supporting higher attaining pupils and providing for their particular needs, especially through the 'enrichment' activities. The subject had a particularly high profile in 2001 when much work was done on improving pupils' understanding of investigation. Staff across the local family of schools (STARS) liaised to moderate pupils' work and produce a portfolio of work to support assessment. Standards currently are above those found nationally by Year 5 and the great majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
116. Pupils' attainment in the national assessments made by teachers at the end of 2002 was average for those reaching the expected level (Level 2) for their age and also average for those higher attaining pupils who reached Level 3. The gains made here, from their attainment on entry, represent a good achievement for them. Standards vary from year-to-year because of the make-up and ability of each year group. The group being assessed last year contained a large number of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom had difficulty with explaining their observations and findings. Standards in the previous year were much higher.
117. Throughout the school, the pupils make good gains in their scientific knowledge and understanding across all areas of the subject and acquire appropriate scientific vocabulary to support their learning. By Year 2, the pupils gather information on the external temperature (in degrees Celsius) using a variety of sources, such as in the newspaper, on the television and with a thermometer. They record their results well in pictorial form and on a chart (and also use ICT to produce a block graph) and answer challenging questions. The work shows that they have a real grasp about issues which can affect temperature and good ability to interpret data. Lower attaining pupils produce short written accounts linking the effects of condensation to rainfall. Higher attainers write at length using the main conventions of punctuation and in a neat joined style; presentation is very good and the pages are well laid out. Pupils investigate



the effect of heating and cooling and how ingredients, such as those used in the making of a pizza, change. Higher attainers can identify the main features which make a test fair.

118. Pupils in Year 5, have a clear understanding of cause and effect. They identify sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic rocks and can state the reason for their crystalline structures. They examine the effect of shadows and record the angle of the shadow and the height of the light source, relating this to the sun and time of day. In 'enrichment' work, pupils examine the movement of the earth and its relationship to the solar system. There is some confusion in the movement of planets by the lower attaining pupils. Higher attaining pupils go on to measure force in newtons. Linked to this work are opportunities to write stories which contain factual information about the 'battle of the solar system'. The emphasis in this work is very much research based and gives pupils considerable opportunities to find out information for themselves. They have to respond to the challenge and always keep central to their work the 'big picture' – TATIS (Thakeham's Astronomical Tourism in Space) research and design all that is needed to get tourists to holiday on the moon. This also integrates work such as circuit construction, astronomy, poetry writing and captures pupils' imaginations, and motivates and challenges superbly.
119. Only a few lessons could be seen during the inspection but from these observations and an examination of pupils' work, the quality of teaching is good overall and particularly good for older pupils in the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported particularly well. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and pass this on to pupils, who really enjoy learning science. Planning is detailed and clear and states what teachers expect pupils to learn by the end of a lesson; however, this does not always relate to specific groups of pupils or year groups in the class. They use a wide range of interesting ways to help pupils understand what they are to learn. They use challenging and thought provoking questioning which pupils respond to very positively. Most science learning is effectively planned through the use of experiments and investigations. Practical work is well taught and pupils develop the idea of a 'fair test' early on, understanding the reasons for only changing one factor in an experiment. There is a good balance between practical work and pupils' recording their results and pupils are given good guidance on how to write up their investigations and results. Pupils are always required to reflect on the accuracy of their results and are helped to make good scientific conclusions. Good emphasis is placed on challenging pupils to think for themselves and express their understanding. The work undertaken in 'enrichment' is excellent and contributes to an 'all round' understanding of the scientific content being learned.
120. The subject co-ordinator provides effective support for teaching and support staff but has not monitored teaching. She has a general overview on standards and knows where the subject needs to develop further, such as the re-organising of some units of work so that 'building blocks' are put in place for some work earlier than they currently are. The action plan for the development of the subject needs to be more specifically linked to the raising of standards, although the work done earlier, when the subject was a priority focus, clearly had this in mind. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection, when fewer pupils attained at the higher levels in the subject. Progress by older pupils is now good and their previous knowledge is now built on well.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

121. Improvement in the provision for art and design since the time of the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards, which are above the expected levels for pupils' ages, are similar to those found previously. The school has made good progress in developing the multicultural aspects of this subject.
122. Insufficient teaching of art was observed to make a judgement about teaching but evidence from work seen on display, portfolio evidence and a discussion with the headteacher,

indicates that the attainment of pupils throughout the school exceeds the expectations for the pupils' ages. Pupils develop skills in drawing, painting, textiles and collage and use a good range of materials, which they combine for effect. The progress pupils make, including those with special educational needs, is good.

123. In Year 1, pupils effectively communicate ideas about themselves by drawing a self-portrait. They use a good range of different drawing materials and techniques, including pencil and pastel. They investigate colour by mixing paints to produce a range of different colours, for instance purple and blue. They have developed their knowledge of patterns found in art work in other cultures by painting Indian patterns in black and white that have contributed to a collaborative display. In Year 2 and 3, pupils have been making wind chimes out of clay and then decorating them with different coloured glazes. The pupils worked carefully and accurately in order to produce a finished product that they were proud of. Other pupils were applying paint with rollers in order to contribute to a piece of group work depicting different clouds. Good support from both the class teacher and teaching assistant who questioned pupils well, improves their understanding and the quality of their work. While there was a brief plenary for this lesson, more opportunities need to be taken to evaluate work. Good links are made to other subjects, for instance each pupil has designed a square of fabric for Joseph's 'technicolour' dreamcoat. In Year 4 and 5, pupils have been working on 'Talking Textiles' and explored Indian stories through textiles using a range of techniques. This work links well with their geography work and develops their cultural awareness.
124. The leadership and management of this subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is insufficiently involved in the monitoring this subject, although standards are informally checked. The headteacher also gives teachers oral feedback on their planning and some lessons, though this is not always recorded. Reception and Year 1 pupils do not currently have their own sketchbooks. At present, there is no recorded system of how well pupils are doing in the subject during the course of a school year. Levels of attainment are annually recorded, however, in the record of achievement for each child. While information and communication technology is used as an integral part of teaching and learning of art, its use needs to be developed further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

125. There has been a good improvement in pupils' attainment in design and technology since the last inspection and more emphasis has been placed on evaluation. This is now satisfactory, but could extend even further. Evidence of recorded evaluation is found in the design and technology portfolio and topic books for the experiences undertaken. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the teaching of design and technology as only two food technology lessons could be observed during the time of the inspection. In addition, pupils in Year 4 and 5 were applying their design and technology skills in an 'enrichment' lesson. The main evidence for the judgement on attainment comes from the work on display throughout the school, photographic evidence, pupils' portfolios and a discussion with the headteacher.
126. Standards in design and technology are above those expected for pupils' ages throughout the school. Pupils make good progress. In Year 1 pupils designed and made well thought out and constructed vehicles using axles and wheels. They have designed and sewn a range of different fruit in felt and some pupils have sewn on some beads as decoration. They are currently learning about safe procedures for food safety and hygiene when dealing with food and cooking and are able to follow a recipe, with the good support of a teaching assistant to make some sponge cakes. Staff question pupils well and use the activities well to enable them to practise their mathematical skills in terms of telling the time and measuring. The evaluation part of this lesson that took place later in the day with the class teacher, while giving pupils the opportunity to review what they had done, did not challenge them sufficiently to evaluate their work. In Years 2 and 3, pupils have made wooden picture frames for their flower pictures.

They planned and evaluated their work satisfactorily and the outcomes were of a high standard. A small group of pupils in Year 2 were designing an Easter basket using polyhedron during the time of the inspection. These pupils were working together well but found it difficult to overcome some joining problems without adult help. Pupils had a good opportunity to evaluate their work, but because some had special educational needs they found it difficult to communicate their ideas. In Years 4 and 5 pupils have been using a range of techniques to produce 'pop up books' that relate closely to their work on India in geography and their religious education work.

127. The co-ordination of design and technology is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is insufficiently involved in monitoring the work across the school. The headteacher has observed lessons and given oral feedback but this is not usually recorded. Assessment procedures need to be developed in this subject to ensure that pupils' prior attainment has been taken into consideration when lessons are planned. At present, there is no recorded system of how well pupils are doing in the subject during the course of a school year. Levels of attainment are annually recorded, however, in the record of achievement for each child. There is a satisfactory policy, but it is undated. Planning is based on the national guidance for planning and is adequate. Resources for design and technology are good.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

128. Attainment in geography and history is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. As there were no lessons planned during the time of the inspection, no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in these subjects. This is a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection when there were no lessons taught in either of the subjects. The school teaches geography and history in blocked units of work and works closely with the school the pupils transfer to ensure that pupils cover the necessary elements of the National Curriculum and develop their skills and knowledge in a systematic way. Most of the teaching of history takes place in the summer term.
129. Evidence drawn mainly from discussions with pupils in Year 5 and the headteacher and from the portfolios of work, indicates that pupils' skills and knowledge are in line with expectations. There is very little evidence of written work for the current year. The curriculum for history and geography is enriched well by visits and visitors. The school has history portfolios that contain photographs of many visits that have contributed well to the history curriculum in previous years. There is some pupils' work in these portfolios, but it is not usually annotated with National Curriculum levels. Pupils have visited the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Preston Manor, the Parish church and have had the opportunity to participate in a residential visit at Hooke Court. Their work on the Tudors was enriched by visits to Athelhampton House and Mapperton Manor. They also take part in a tea party to support the Victorians topic. There was little evidence of the use of information and communication technology for research on the Internet for history and geography, although pupils used it in an ICT lessons for finding out information relating to their forthcoming residential field trip.
130. In Year 1, pupils develop their geographical enquiry skills by describing their route to school and learn about the jobs that local people do. In Year 2 pupils have been keeping weather dairies and recording the temperature in degrees. There are strong links with their mathematical work as pupils have had the opportunity to record data in tables and charts and interpret that data. The pupils have displayed their data in bar graphs. The pupils have been learning the appropriate geographical vocabulary for weather and about *cumulus*, *stratus* and *cirrus clouds*. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 follow a Thakeham village trail and have the opportunity to visit the local mushroom farm and factory. Pupils in Year 2 and 3 compare Clymping, a coastal village, with Thakeham, an inland village. In Year 4 and 5 pupils learn about a locality less economically developed than their own through a study of India. A visit by Indian musicians and dancers has supported this topic, and pupils' understanding, well.

131. Medium term planning for history and geography is based on the national guidance for planning the work. Leadership and management of these subjects are satisfactory. The headteacher is the subject leader for history and geography. There are curriculum files for all subjects that cross-reference with class teachers' planning files which show that the work is covered adequately. Assessment procedures for these subjects are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that work is always planned to take account of ongoing information about pupils' prior attainment. At present, there is no recorded system of how well pupils are doing in the subject during the course of a school year. Levels of attainment are annually recorded, however, in the record of achievement for each child. Because of the way that the work is organised in topic folders, the progress that pupils make in developing their historical and geographical skills is not always apparent. The headteacher monitors all topic books and gives oral feedback to teachers. Monitoring of history and geography would be improved by being more formalised, especially that of teaching. The school library has a good range of books to support investigative research in history and geography.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

132. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision for ICT since the last inspection. At that time pupils' attainment was as expected by Year 2 and Year 5, although there was insufficient evidence of control, modelling and monitoring. The pupils made sound progress over their time in the school. The pupils now have systematic opportunities to be taught in the school's relatively new ICT suite completed in January 2003. The teachers' knowledge has improved well, and especially their confidence, although all staff report that they felt the national training they received was not particularly effective. However, the work the school has done with staff from the STARS family of schools has helped improve teaching and support staff's knowledge well.

133. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress in lessons but all this work has not yet had time to impact on their progress in the subject over time. Their skills are currently below the level expected for their ages but the picture is a positive one, with clear planning to ensure that all aspects of the new National Curriculum programme of study for ICT is being taught. Computers are used in various ways across the school such as for research and recording, although this is mainly for producing word processed work or graphs and charts. There is little use of ICT (or software available) to specifically support pupils' knowledge and understanding in a subject or to aid the reading and writing difficulties that pupils with special educational needs have.

134. The great majority of pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in the school. Systematic teaching by class teachers, reinforced by the school's skilled ICT technician in the small ICT suite, enables pupils to develop confidence in using the computer to complete a variety of work, often related to aspects of work in other subjects. Pupils benefit from activities which are meaningful and purposeful and they now enjoy regular access to the computer. New assessment procedures are now in place for individual pupils through the use of their 'I can...' books. These record their level of attainment and the work they have covered. However, this is largely by pupils' self-assessment, and the language used often results in some pupils' over-estimating their skills. Assessment of what the groups of pupils have learned at the end of a module of work, as assessed by their teachers, is not yet in place.

135. Pupils make particularly good progress in extending their skills in communicating information. They learn well to use a wide range of tools to produce, amend and enhance text. In the production of their science food investigation folder, most Year 2 pupils carefully considered the layout of their page, the size and colour of the titles. Higher attainers know how to enlarge and centre their text. They begin to use a 'picture gallery' to choose relevant pictures to go with

their text. Pupils in Year 5 are beginning to explore websites such as *Google* and understand the role of a search engine. During the inspection, pupils explored a website related to the residential visit they were about to embark on. They used tourist information well about Dorset to identify historic Roman features to see. Sometimes they did not, however, examine the blurb attached to each record sufficiently well and entered websites which had no information about what they were looking for. Throughout the school, the work completed in ICT contributes well to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

136. The quality of the teaching of ICT is good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives, and work is generally pitched at a challenging level. Pupils really enjoy ICT, are enthusiastic, and usually work productively. At times, however, teachers do not sufficiently use the 'technical' language of the subject, especially those relating to the parts of a web page. The good skills of the technician, who supports in the school for part of the week, are used effectively and his work considerably enhances the provision. There are opportunities for pupils to try ideas out for themselves coupled with effective whole class teaching. The room is small and with the restrictions teachers find it difficult to demonstrate themselves, although space has now been identified by making a small modification to a window area. The purchase of an interactive whiteboard is planned for the future.
137. Pupils are not able to organise the work they produce on software as the school has no systematic method for saving it, as yet. Information and communication technology makes a strong contribution to pupils' social and spiritual awareness. Pupils work very well together to solve problems. They celebrate each others' successes and are keen to find out more about how the control technology works, especially those in Reception and Year 1 who are introduced to it at an early age.
138. The subject is well led and managed. There is a clear view on how the subject should develop in the short term which links very well to the excellently constructed long-term school and STARS cluster plan. Actions are well considered and the school is aware of the need to develop the use of ICT across subjects. Monitoring of teaching is not yet undertaken by the co-ordinator but she does have some oversight of planning and the quality of pupils' work.

## **MUSIC**

139. Improvement in the provision for music since the time of the last inspection has been very good. Pupils' performing and composing skills were weak at that time. Pupils' attainment has risen very well. The school benefits from the expertise of a specialist music teacher, who teaches each class for one hour per week and supports the teaching of music generally. Pupils have the opportunity to learn the cello, violin and trumpet, taught by peripatetic teachers who work with pupils at the school.
140. Attainment in music is above the level expected for pupils' ages throughout the school. This is because of the teachers' expertise, the quality of the planning and the rich range of experiences. Evidence to support these judgements comes from the observation of two lessons and assemblies. The quality of the singing in assemblies and in lessons is very good. Pupils show obvious enjoyment and enthusiasm. They also listen well to the performances of other pupils. Pupils listen to music as they arrive and leave assemblies and teachers help them to remember the titles of the music and names of the composers by displaying them in the hall.
141. In the two lessons observed, the teaching was consistently very good. It is not possible to make an overall judgement as too few lessons were seen. There was thorough planning and preparation. The lessons were well resourced with appropriate instruments and recording sheets. Pupils made good progress. Care was taken to ensure that all pupils were fully involved. In Year 4 and 5 pupils were learning about music from different cultures and how to

construct a piece in rondo form. This contributed well to pupils' cultural development. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good. They worked together very well. They really enjoy these lessons. The teacher encouraged pupils to evaluate their work and the work of other groups well. Good use was made of the summing up part of the lesson in order to assess how much pupils had understood. Pupils demonstrated that they knew the vocabulary of Indian music well, but did not always use the correct musical terminology when evaluating their own and other pupils' work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good progress. In a lesson for Years 2 and 3 pupils were also very enthusiastic about their music lesson. They had developed a composition made up of their own musical compositions and writing that they took pleasure in performing. Most of them worked together well and their attainment is above average.

142. Pupils have many good opportunities to perform. For instance, there is a summer concert, a tea party for parents, grandparents, governors and child minders, the Church Harvest Festival, when the treble and descant recorder players perform and the Christmas production of 'Puss in Boots'. They benefit from participating in music from other cultures. For instance, musicians from Kala, the Arts, Indian Workshop visit the school. There are descant and treble recorder clubs that are well supported and pupils have the opportunity to learn the trumpet, cornet, cello and violin. Formal observations of music teaching have taken place as well as informal monitoring of lessons and children's achievements. There are good resources for music, including multicultural instruments. The use of information and communication technology needs to be developed further. At present, there is no recorded system of how well pupils are doing in the subject during the course of a school year. Levels of attainment are annually recorded, however, in the record of achievement for each child. The co-ordination of music is good.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

143. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the provision for physical education since the last inspection. The provision for dance, especially in Years 4 and 5 is now very good and pupils have good opportunities to participate in team games through after school clubs. However, the weaknesses identified in the teaching of gymnastics at the time of the last inspection still remain. Also, although the teaching in lessons for the younger pupils is good, there still needs to be a stronger emphasis on evaluation – too little weight is given to this. All the lessons observed had a vigorous warm up which was not the case at the time of the last inspection.
144. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards of attainment in physical education as not all the areas were observed and there is no recording system which outlines and tracks pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in all the aspects of physical education on an ongoing basis. Levels of attainment are annually recorded, however, in the record of achievement for each child. However, standards in gymnastics and games are above those expected for pupils' age in Reception and Year 1 and standards in dance in Years 4 and 5 are well above the expectations set. Standards in gymnastics in Years 2 and 3 are in line with what is expected for pupils at that time. Provision for swimming is good. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim on a regular basis and achieve at the least the minimum standard expected before they leave the school. During a residential visit for the older pupils, pupils have the opportunity to take part in orienteering activities. The school benefits from specialist leisure centre coaches' and the development officer support for games sessions.
145. The teaching of physical education in the three lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to excellent. It is not possible to make an overall judgement as too few aspects of physical education were taught. In a very good games lesson for the Reception and Year 1 pupils, the teacher made her lesson objectives and expectations about pupil behaviour very clear. Consequently, pupils made good progress in developing their co-ordination in short tennis.

The pupils were very active and not a moment was lost. However, taking more time during the lesson or at the end of the lesson to evaluate performance would help pupils to know what they have to do to make even better progress. In a gym lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3, the pace of the lesson was too slow and, consequently, pupils were not active enough and not involved enough in the lesson. Some pupils were rather fidgety and not concentrating enough on working well. These pupils are capable of controlling their movements better and putting more thought and effort into their sequences of movements and balances. The class teacher needs to ensure that when she questions pupils, all pupils are involved and they have a clear focus to think about when evaluating. In another gym lesson for Reception and Year 1 pupils, the class teacher made her expectations very clear about behaviour and what she wanted the pupils to do. Consequently, they learned well. They controlled their movements well and demonstrated that they could follow instructions well but also think for themselves when asked to do so. The class teacher modelled the language associated with physical education well and pupils began to use the correct words when answering questions.

146. The co-ordination of physical education is satisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring of the subject standards and teaching. At present, there is no recorded system of how well pupils are doing in the subject during the course of a school year. Levels of attainment are annually recorded, however, in the record of achievement for each child. The pupils have a good opportunity to participate in inter-school cricket and football and *Dancetime* performances. The school hall is very small and pupils do not have a great deal of workspace in gymnastics and dance lessons. The playground is adequate for outdoor activities and, in addition, the school has the use of a field suitable for games when it is needed. The school has good resources for physical education and makes good use of *Top Sport* equipment.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147. The subject is very well planned and the way themes are used and developed, both in religious education lessons themselves and through collective worship, are a strength of the school. The work contributes very well to pupils' knowledge of religion but also significantly, to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection.
148. The school's policy was reviewed in the light of the changes made to the West Sussex agreed syllabus, from which the school plans.
149. Pupils' attainment is above that expected for their ages at Year 2 and Year 5. They make good progress in understanding ideas from the Bible and from the other religions studied. In studying the Easter story, the pupils clearly know why Jesus was going to Jerusalem and why he might be feeling downhearted. They know that Christians celebrate Easter but can also identify religions which do not. Their understanding of symbolism is developing well. By Year 5 pupils know the reason why Jewish people recognise the Torah and Star of David as important symbols. Some recreate these through art work or through the use of the computer. One pupil identifies the key features of Judaism and the Jewish life through labelling the six points of the Star with his key ideas. These include, places such as Israel and Jewish homes and people including Moses. They develop their understanding of the Passover through the preparation and tasting of Jewish food, such as bread / Matzos.
150. Only one lesson could be seen during the inspection, and there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement. In the one lesson seen, the teaching was good and pupils learned well. The teacher told the story of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem in a compelling way and this ensured that pupils listened intently. The pupils' work shows that they answer challenging questions which make them think about the reasons for why things might be happening in stories such as this. Teachers are knowledgeable and use a good range of the resources/artefacts to enliven lessons and interest pupils.

151. The subject is well led and managed and the subject is also supported superbly by the stories, actions and ideas that develop during assembly and collective worship. These are very well planned and excellently taught. One such assembly was an inspirational presentation which dealt with the idea of doubting faith and through drama and comedy pupils were highly 'entertained' by the local church community group. The activity linked excellently to the understanding of how Thomas doubted Jesus at the last supper.