

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HILMARTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hilmarton, Calne

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126198

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Luke

Reporting inspector: Dr T Simpson  
10428

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September 2002

Inspection number: 248740

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Road Hilmarton Nr Calne Wiltshire
Postcode:	SN11 8SG
Telephone number:	01249 760602
Fax number:	01249 760602
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jasmine McFadzean
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10428	Dr T Simpson	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Music Physical education Special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements  How well is the school led and managed?
1035	Mr G Ellis	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24342	Mrs D Franklin	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History The Foundation Stage Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31838	Mr M Williams	Team inspector	English Design and technology Information and communication technology Religious education	How well are pupils taught?  How well does the school care for its pupils?

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN</b>	



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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hilmarton is a small primary school serving a number of local villages in North Wiltshire. The pupils largely live in owner occupied accommodation. Some also come from the nearby town of Calne. There are 113 pupils on roll – including 21 who are in the reception year. This latter group is described as being in the Foundation Stage. There are slightly more girls than boys on roll. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority groups and there are none for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs – including those with Statements of Special Educational Need – is below average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, but overall is around the expected level.

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

This is a very effective school. At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science and pupils' overall achievement has been good. Pupils are very well supported by staff and their attitudes, values, relationships and personal development are all very good. Teaching and learning are good or better in most lessons. Overall management at the school is very good. The headteacher and staff have a very high level of shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to achieve this. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- By the time they leave the school, pupils have achieved well and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science as a result of the predominantly good teaching.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and this results in very good attitudes, personal development and relationships.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good and the school uses assessment information well to inform planning.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and as a result these children make particularly good progress.
- Leadership and management are very good and this has had a very significant impact on the school's overall improvement.
- This is a very inclusive school and all pupils have full access to all areas of the curriculum and all aspects of school life.

### **What could be improved**

Standards in information and communication technology are not high enough by the end of Year 6 and the subject is not used enough to support learning in the other subjects of the curriculum.



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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997. Since then it has made very good improvement overall. Standards are higher in English, mathematics, science and several other subjects. Management, teaching, curriculum provision and assessment procedures have all improved significantly. Pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships are now better. The school is now more popular with parents and pupils. Despite recent efforts, however, standards in information and communication technology at the end of Year 6 are still below the expected levels.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	B	B	D
Mathematics	B	D	D	E
Science	A	B	C	D

**Key**

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

In the 2001 tests of pupils at the end of Year 2, results in reading were above the national average, in writing they were well above it, but in mathematics they were average. In 2002, the results were higher in English and science at the end of Year 6 and significantly higher in mathematics. They were also significantly higher in mathematics at the end of Year 2. National comparative figures are not yet available for 2002. Current standards are not quite as high as those reached in the 2002 tests, but are still above the national average in all three subjects at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in English, mathematics and science are now higher than they were at the time of the last inspection and the school's trend of improvement is higher than the national trend. The better standards being reached in mathematics are a direct consequence of strategies for improvement that have been employed by the school over the past two years.

Overall achievement is difficult to judge because of the small numbers of pupils in each year group and a variation in the attainment of children on entry to the school from year to year. However, comparison of the test results of pupils at the end of Year 2 with their attainment on entry and comparison of individual results at Year 6 with those gained at Year 2 indicate that achievement is good throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Appropriately high targets for further improvements in literacy and numeracy have been set and the school is on course to meeting them. Most children in the Foundation Stage are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in all areas, and to exceed these in some. In most of the other subjects, standards are at the expected levels at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The only exception is information and communication technology at the end of Year 6 – where standards are below the national expectation. It was not possible to judge standards in music as no lessons took place during the period of the inspection.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good – the pupils enjoy coming to school and are very well motivated towards their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good and sometimes very good - the pupils are proud of their school, know what is expected of them and respond accordingly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good – pupils relate very well to adults and to one another and are happy to take on responsibility. The very good relationships are a significant strength of the school.
Attendance	Very good and well above the national average.

Pupils like school and are keen to do their best. They are respectful of property and work together harmoniously. They collaborate well in group work and learn effectively from one another. There is an ethos of inclusiveness in the school at all levels. Overall, the pupils' very positive attitudes, good behaviour and very good relationships contribute very well to their learning and personal development.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Very 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 is frequently very good. This is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and on the standards they are reaching. There are examples of very good teaching at all

stages of education in the school. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. There are particular strengths in the teaching of English – including literacy – and mathematics – including numeracy. Particularly strong features of the teaching at the school include the management of pupils which is sometimes excellent and is having a very significant impact on pupils’ attitudes and relationships. Other strengths within teaching include the way that teachers work well with support staff, which impacts well on pupils’ learning. These strengths are particularly evident in the Foundation Stage. Teachers have a good knowledge of individual pupils which they use sensitively to support and promote their self-esteem. In most lessons, teachers use a good range of strategies to keep up a brisk pace. As a result, pupils generally listen well and work hard. However, teachers are sometimes still reluctant to use the now very good information and communication technology resources that are available to them to support learning across all subjects of the curriculum. Also, in a small number of lessons, teachers do not organise tasks with sufficient focus and as a result pupils are not fully engaged and lose interest. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, which has a positive effect on the progress they are making and, overall, the quality of the teaching at the school meets the needs of all the pupils well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. There are effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and this is having a positive effect on pupils’ learning. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Planning and provision for pupils with special educational needs are good and most make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Not applicable
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils’ moral and social development is very good while provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. This is preparing pupils satisfactorily for life in an ethnically diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good assessment procedures in place which enable the school to track the progress of pupils effectively. All pupils are very well cared for by staff and as a result feel happy and confident in the school.

The school works well in partnership with parents and nearly all are very satisfied with the provision it makes for their children. All statutory requirements in respect of the curriculum are met. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory and those for promoting and monitoring appropriate behaviour are good. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall management at the school is very good. The headteacher and staff have a very high level of shared commitment to further improvement and the capacity to achieve this.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is knowledgeable and very supportive of the school. It carries out its statutory duties effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good – an extensive range of systems are in place for monitoring standards and teaching. The school has been very effective in monitoring its strengths and weaknesses and taking appropriate action.
The strategic use of resources	Good – the budget is constructed in relation to the school's needs and resources are used efficiently to support pupils' learning.

Resources are satisfactory overall, with strengths in those used to support literacy, numeracy, geography and information and communication technology. There are weaknesses in resources for design and technology. The ratio of teachers to pupils is slightly worse than average, while the number of support staff is around average. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in the facilities available for indoor physical education. The school has good regard for the principles of best value. It carries out consultations, analyses and comparisons and takes appropriate action where this is possible. A major element of the very high ethos at the school is the way that all pupils – including those with special educational needs – are very well included in all its activities.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve of their best.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agreed with the positive views. It judged that the range of activities out of lessons was very good and that the provision of homework was satisfactory overall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the time of the last inspection, standards were average in English and mathematics and below average in science. They were also below expectations in geography and information and communication technology at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, and in design and technology at the end of Year 2. Current standards are an improvement on all these findings – with the one exception of information and communication technology at the end of Year 6 which, while improving rapidly, is still below the national expectation. Statutory assessment results in English, mathematics and science have all fluctuated to some extent over the years as the result of differences between the small groups of pupils involved. The overall trend has been one of improvement in all three subjects. When the results of the most recent Year 6 tests are compared with last year's national averages, they are well above the national average in all three subjects. They are also well above the average for similar schools in English and mathematics and above it in science, another indicator of good achievement. (Comparative data for this year is not yet available.) The most significant improvement, however, has been in mathematics. This is because the school identified the subject as an area of concern, analysed data effectively, and identified areas of specific weakness to inform teaching and target resources such as booster classes. Planning, teaching and learning have also been effectively monitored and the results fed into the subject's action plan for improvement. Local authority support was provided to train teachers. All teachers currently working in the school have been appointed since the time of the last inspection and the quality of the teaching now is significantly higher than that reported previously. This factor has also had an important impact on the raising of standards. The mobility of pupils in and out of the school is high, but there is no evidence that this has affected standards either way. The school received an Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills in February 2002 as a recognition of its improvement in standards. Most children in the Foundation Stage are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas and to exceed these in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world.
2. There is no difference between the different strands of English – all being above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Younger pupils listen well to a wide range of instructions, questions and statements. Most use a wide vocabulary and speak in properly constructed sentences. By Year 6, pupils listen attentively to their classmates, so that their own contributions to discussions are relevant and focused. Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly and there is an increase in the breadth of their vocabulary as they move through school. From an early age all pupils are taught an appropriate variety of reading skills. By Year 2 even lower attaining pupils read sentences accurately, while average and higher attainers can offer opinions on events and characters and make confident predictions about what is likely to come next. By Years 5 and 6, pupils read with much fluency and accuracy and use

their research skills well. The majority of pupils write in a clear intelligible script by the end of Year 2 – although their handwriting is rarely joined. Spelling and punctuation are satisfactory overall. Average attainers punctuate their work well, but its content does not develop to the same extent. On the other hand, higher attainers introduce detail into longer sentences to hold the reader's attention. By Year 6, pupils produce good examples of extended writing. The vast majority of pupils are technically competent, but there are few examples of pupils being strongly aware of the power of words and using them adventurously to the fullest effect.

3. By the end of Year 2 most pupils understand the basic language of number, have a good knowledge of place value to at least 100 and can quickly recall addition and subtraction facts to 20. Most can use standard and non-standard measures for weighing and measuring, and can name simple two and three-dimensional shapes. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are confident in using their understanding of place value to add, subtract and divide large numbers beyond 1000. Most can find the 'median' and 'mode' of a set of data and higher attainers also determine the 'range'. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are all aware that light comes from a variety of sources. Most Year 6 pupils are clear that the earth's rotation is the reason for the phenomenon of day and night. Many recognise that the amount of daylight alters according to the season – but frequently do not understand why this is. Standards in investigative science are not as high as in the more knowledge based aspects of the subject - particularly at the higher levels - because teachers do not always set work that give due consideration to pupils' differing attainment levels.
4. The school has made great strides in improving the weaknesses identified in information and communication technology by the last report. It has purchased new hardware and software, trained teachers and introduced appropriate planning and assessment procedures. As a result standards are now satisfactory at the end of Year 2. However, these have not yet had time to fully impact on standards at the end of Year 6. For example, although the majority of pupils enters data on spreadsheets and is beginning to produce charts and graphs from this, most have little experience of interrogating such information to explore patterns or to make predictions. They have also not yet used equipment with sensors to monitor physical data, and have done little to compare and contrast information and communication technology with other means of achieving the same outcomes.

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

5. Pupils' attitudes to school, their personal development and their relationships are all very good. They are very well motivated towards their work. Their behaviour is good. Parents consider that the school is very successful in achieving good standards of behaviour. Attendance is very good. Pupils enjoy school. They are very well motivated and enthusiastic. They show very good interest and involvement with very good levels of concentration, paying attention to their teachers with evident eagerness to learn. Pupils make good progress overall. They are very keen to participate, join in activities and discussions in lessons, respond wholeheartedly and work conscientiously with enjoyment and enthusiasm. They work well in

unsupervised groups, focusing well on group tasks and co-operating well with one another. They are eager to talk about what they are doing.

6. The previous inspection report indicated that behaviour and relationships were both good, with pupils having good attitudes to learning. Relationships are now very good. The school maintains an environment of responsible behaviour in which pupils are aware of what is expected of them and generally respond well to this. The staff's reinforcement of this positive learning environment enhances the school's approach to behaviour and effectively achieves a good overall standard in and around the school. Pupils are smart, friendly, courteous and considerate of each other. They listen well to each other and are mindful of each other's needs; for example allowing sufficient space in a physical education lesson. Behaviour in classes is generally good and sometimes very good. Pupils move around the school sensibly and lessons are able to start promptly. Standards of behaviour in the playground are good. Bullying or aggressive behaviour is extremely rare and none was observed during the inspection. Boys and girls play well together. There have been no exclusions. Pupils are proud of their school and are careful with equipment and resources. They are respectful of property and their classroom environments. In class they willingly and politely share. Equipment is tidied up quickly with the youngest pupils undertaking class routines without fuss.
7. The very good relationships are a significant strength of the school. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils feel valued by teachers and reciprocate accordingly. Pupils also relate and interact very well to each other. They work together harmoniously, assist each other in their activities and frequently provide general help to each other. They collaborate well in group work and learn effectively from each other. They are trustworthy, thoughtful and considerate, respecting the feelings, values and beliefs of others. The school has been developing opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility and although they are still limited, especially for older pupils, they respond well with confidence and maturity. All pupils willingly undertake duties in classes, demonstrating good capacities for responsibility and developing independence; for example, in science project work undertaken by Y2 pupils.
8. In the previous inspection report, attendance was good. It is currently well above the national average and is therefore very good with negligible unauthorised absence. Registers are completed promptly and well in accordance with regulations. Pupils are punctual in their attendance and lessons are able to start on time. There are no significant attendance problems. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are major strengths, contributing to a positive learning environment, pupils' progress and the quality of life in the school. Comments from parents, both in the questionnaires and the meeting prior to the inspection, wholeheartedly support this view.

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

9. The school has successfully addressed the areas for improvement noted in the key issues of the previous inspection. Teaching is now good overall, and good or better

in nearly nine out of ten lessons. In more than three out of ten lessons teaching was very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, whereas previously in one in ten lessons teaching was unsatisfactory. There were examples of very good teaching at all stages in the school. In consequence pupils learn well in the vast majority of lessons.

10. The quality of teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage. Lessons are planned in detail using the Foundation Stage curriculum very effectively to meet the children's needs. The teacher and the teaching assistant work superbly together as a team and this has a very positive impact on the children's learning. Both adults have extremely high expectations and as a result children know what is expected of them and work very hard to achieve this. Behaviour management is excellent. In the Years 1 and 2 classes the quality of teaching is good overall and results in good learning by pupils. This is an improvement from the satisfactory but inconsistent standards found at the previous inspection. Pupils attain above average standards as a result. In the Years 3 to 6 classes, the quality of teaching is good overall, resulting in good learning by pupils, and above average attainment. Overall, the teaching of basic skills is very good. This supports pupils' learning in all subjects of the curriculum. Teachers have worked hard to implement the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy in ways that meet the needs of their pupils. The overall expertise of teachers has been strengthened through the use of nationally recognised schemes of work for all subjects. These have provided a good basis for lesson planning. A national initiative for training teachers in the use of information and communication technology has improved teachers' knowledge and confidence in the use of computers but has yet to have full impact on raising standards by Year 6. Teachers are still reluctant to make regular use for all subjects of the curriculum of the now very good information and communication technology resources available to them. The school intends to address this through a program of 'in-house' training. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are well supported in lessons by teachers and by the classroom assistants, who work well alongside the class teachers. There are currently no pupils at an early stage of learning English, so there is no need for specific teaching support in this area.
11. In all lessons, there are strong features that contribute to the very positive attitudes pupils have to their learning. Teachers manage their pupils in a consistent and positive way. This is based on the very good relationships between all staff and pupils. Teachers help pupils to meet their high expectations of behaviour by creating a calm, secure and purposeful atmosphere in the majority of lessons. They are good at adapting their style of teaching to the particular needs of the pupils by using a good variety of enjoyable activities. For example, a role play activity undertaken by the class teacher and classroom assistant engaged reception pupils so well that they subsequently made very pertinent observations about the labels society tends to apply to its members. Teachers have a good knowledge of individual pupils, which they use sensitively to support and promote their self-esteem. In a very good mathematics lesson, pupils in Year 1 shared ideas about patterns very well, both when working in small groups and in the class as a whole because the teacher challenged their different abilities and channelled their enthusiasm very well. Teachers listen to and value pupils' ideas, helping them to develop their confidence in expressing them. Many very good examples of this



were seen in lessons across the school. For example, in a literacy lesson, boys and girls of all levels of attainment in Years 3 and 4 responded well to detailed questions, because the teacher made it clear by use of praise and follow-up questions that what they had to say was important to her.

12. Other good features include the way that teachers work with support assistants. They deploy teaching assistants well, so that their skilled support has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Many examples were seen of teachers using good subject knowledge in effective questioning, both to consolidate and extend pupils' learning, ensuring, for example, that boys and girls were equally involved. Teachers choose resources and contexts for learning that are relevant to the pupils and arouse their interest. They make links between subjects so that pupils see how they are developing a whole body of knowledge and skills, not isolated components. In an art and design lesson, pupils in Year 1 explored patterns, which reinforced their numeracy skills, and structured their comments in phrases and sentences that they had learned in literacy lessons. To end the lesson they used design and technology skills to construct some of the patterns from a commercial kit. In many lessons teachers use a good range of strategies to keep up a brisk pace, setting time limits, for example, for pupils to complete the varied tasks set. As a result, pupils generally listen well and work hard. In the vast majority of lessons they respond to teachers' high expectations of behaviour by settling quickly and sensibly to group activities. They showed how well they concentrate and work independently without close supervision. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 information and communication technology lesson, pupils worked in pairs on computers, some in different rooms. The teacher necessarily moved from room to room but the vast majority of pupils remained firmly on task, helping each other, whether he was close by or not.
13. There were elements of teaching where examples of good or very good practice were seen, but where there was some inconsistency between teachers. This frequently made the difference between good and very good teaching and satisfactory lessons. In some lessons teachers did not organise tasks with sufficient focus, so pupils did not concentrate and work as purposefully as they should. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 physical education lesson, there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to compare the tasks of different groups or suggest improvements, so they were not as fully engaged as they should have been, and some lost interest. In a Years 3 and 4 art and design lesson, by good use of praise the teacher successfully involved a pupil with special educational needs into the main activity. However, when this pupil later grew restless, others became distracted. The teacher did not intervene sufficiently firmly and other pupils came off task too. This did not make the best use of time and in consequence pupils did not work as hard or as briskly as they should.
14. A particular improvement since the time of the last inspection is in planning. The school has adopted nationally recognised schemes of work for all subjects so teachers have good guidance to produce effective lesson plans. These have not been in place long enough to have raised standards to their fullest extent in some subjects, where teaching is overall satisfactory. A design and technology lesson for Years 5 and 6, for example, was very good but pupils' work over time showed that they were reaching average standards because insufficient emphasis had been given to the skills of evaluation and modification. Lesson objectives are regularly shared with pupils so that everyone knows where they are going, and via a plenary session at the end, how well they are getting there. This means that pupils have a very good knowledge of their own learning. The use of assessment in lessons is good throughout the school in most subjects. Teachers generally apply assessment of rates of learning well in order to plan and present all pupils with suitably

challenging tasks. Very good use is made of homework in the Foundation Stage. Satisfactory use is made in the rest of the school. There were very few examples of homework set during the inspection week, suggesting that it is not as systematic as it might be. Where set, homework was relevant to the tasks for the week, although not always closely tied to the particular lesson and not always tailored to the different attainment levels of the pupils. As a result of the improvements in teaching, the vast majority of lessons are clearly focused and well structured, so that pupils learn and achieve well overall.

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

15. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the pupils are good. There is an appropriate range of subjects taught and the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. The school provides pupils with music, art and sports appreciation days to enhance their enjoyment involvement in these areas. The quality of the curriculum overall has improved significantly since the last inspection and the key issue for improvement has been addressed very well. All subjects meet statutory requirements, including provision for religious education, which is taught through the locally agreed syllabus. There are effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
16. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good and indicates the importance the school places on purposeful learning experiences in all areas of learning for children of this age. This makes a significant contribution to the very good progress that the children make towards achieving and often exceeding the Early Learning Goals and ensures a smooth transition to the work of the National Curriculum in Year 1. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the last inspection and the key issue – to improve provision for the under fives - has been addressed very well. Planning and provision for pupils with special educational needs are good and these pupils are well cared for. Individual education plans accurately reflect the pupils' needs and are used effectively to inform lesson planning on a day-to-day basis.
17. Overall planning for the long, medium and short term is satisfactory. The teachers have worked very hard to improve planning since the last inspection and planning is now linked closely to the literacy and numeracy objectives and to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Planning for the Foundation Stage is also clearly linked to the stepping stones, which are set criteria towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. This ensures that the curriculum is appropriately planned to meet the needs of the wide range of age and attainment within each class. This is having a positive impact on standards. The school has organised an effective two-year rolling programme of topics, although it does not have a whole school curriculum map to ensure that there is a clear progression of skills being taught within each area of the curriculum. This has been identified by the curriculum co-ordinator as the next stage in curriculum planning. The physical education curriculum is successfully delivered through good use of the outdoor areas and the use of the local village hall, because it does not have a hall of its own. The school makes good

use of the local environment to enhance the curriculum; for example walks around the village for geography and history. Cross-curricular links are developing satisfactorily. For example in a geography lesson pupils used their knowledge gained in a literacy lesson from reading a book about Brazil when discussing climates in different parts of the world.

18. All pupils have very good opportunities to access the full range of the curriculum. Opportunities are available for all to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge they need to continue their learning at a level that is appropriate to their current level of attainment. Tasks are well planned to meet individual pupils' needs and the school ensures that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. The school makes appropriate provision for the small number of Plymouth Brethren pupils in the school and has good links with their carers to ensure that they are all working together to provide a balanced curriculum for these children. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and these make a significant contribution to the good quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the pupils. Activities offered include football, netball, rounders, touch rugby, gardening, art, volleyball and games. Many of the activities are available for pupils from Years 2 to 6 and the games club is offered to pupils in Years 1 and 2. There is a residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and the school also offers music tuition for pupils. Other activities such as theatre trips, visits to museums and visitors to school enhance the curriculum and make a positive impact on pupils' learning. Some parents expressed concerns about the number of extra-curricular activities available for their children but the inspection team found it to be very good - and more than adequate for a small school.
19. The school is very effective in promoting pupils' personal development. The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good and delivered very well through a comprehensive programme. A programme of sex education and drugs awareness is very effectively taught through the science and personal, social and health education programmes of study, with support from the school nurse, health visitor and the mobile Life Education Centre. This area of the curriculum is a major focus for the school, particularly raising self-esteem and introducing strategies to motivate the pupils. A reward system has been introduced whereby pupils can have a short session each week doing an activity of their choice - providing they have earned this privilege during the week. This is known as 'Golden Time'. Although it was not possible to observe any of these sessions during the inspection, pupils are enthusiastic about them and are confident that they are having a very positive impact on raising self-esteem and motivation to learn. The whole ethos of the school is one of mutual respect and trust and this also makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. There is a racial equality policy in place.
20. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, a finding broadly similar to that of the previous inspection. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. It is supported through religious education lessons, personal, social and health education lessons which focus on self-reflection, and through some other lessons such as science where, from time to time, pupils have the opportunity to experience some of the wonders of nature.

However, providing opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness is not yet planned for across the curriculum and assemblies - while satisfying statutory requirements to provide a daily act of corporate worship - generally focus on other aspects of personal development.

21. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and this is impacting well on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Most assemblies focus heavily on social and moral issues, and personal and social education lessons deal effectively with major issues - as well as tackling emergent problems. There is a detailed and positive behaviour policy which is consistently enforced. Pupils were involved in its construction and in the drawing up of class rules. There is an appropriate system of rewards and sanctions which is fully understood and appreciated by all concerned. Through the school council and informally, pupils are consulted about many areas of school life. This contributes well to their social development. The school council, which has recently been established, includes representatives from each class who are elected termly. It meets regularly with a member of staff and a governor, providing an opportunity for pupils to be involved in the practical running of the school. Pupils have been well involved in a number of community issues such as a traffic survey for the local village and the local parish festival, and have raised money to support local churches as well as national charities. Pupils are encouraged by staff to support younger ones in the class and in the playground and to help entertain older members of the community when these visit for functions.
22. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. It is supported by special functions such as a music appreciation day and a visit from an African drummer. In religious education lessons, pupils study a range of major world religions. From time to time, followers of different faiths – including Islam – share their beliefs with the pupils. The pupils have opportunities to listen to a range of music and to look at the work of major world artists. Some of this is non-European. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils are currently studying aboriginal art and music as part of a topic. The contents of the school library have recently audited to ensure that all the books contain appropriate role models for the pupils.
23. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. The school encourages people from the community to talk to the pupils about their experiences. For example, a local person talked to older pupils about his experiences during the Second World War. Many villagers have recently contributed to a survey on the traffic problems on the main road through the village carried out by pupils in Years 5 and 6. The local vicar regularly takes assemblies and members of the Plymouth Brethren support pupils of their faith during lessons that they are unable to take part in. All these activities very effectively enhance the curriculum, provide vital links with the community and have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. There are good links with partner institutions, particularly the local playgroup. The local secondary school, which has language college status, has provided the school with a computer and software to develop the teaching of French in the school. The Headteacher is investigating links in other areas of the curriculum. There is a comprehensive induction programme for pupils moving to secondary school, including several visits to the school and visits from the Head of Year 7 and the special educational needs co-ordinator. This ensures a smooth

transition for pupils from one school to the next and supports their learning well. There are active 'small primary schools' groups for deputy headteachers and senior teachers, special educational needs co-ordinators and Early Years teachers.

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

24. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good overall. An extensive range of assessment procedures enables the school to gather very good assessment information. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when, except for the under fives, assessment was unsatisfactory and a key issue for improvement. There is now a coherent assessment policy. Assessments are now planned and regularly undertaken. They include spelling and reading tests and optional national tests for Years 3 to 5. These systems enable the school to track carefully the progress of each pupil - especially in terms of National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics. In science and the other subjects pupils' achievements are plotted carefully through a system based on the expected outcomes of nationally recommended schemes of work. The school now records wide ranging skills development through a weekly and half termly three-tier grading system. This gives very good information from which teachers can set objectives to guide future planning. The school monitors the results of its assessments to identify achievements of different groups; for example girls and boys and pupils with special educational needs. The monitoring and use of assessment information has been particularly effective in raising standards in English, mathematics and science. Assessment information carefully records the progress of each pupil and helps to inform individual target-setting. Detailed files are maintained on computer and in readily accessible printed format. Teachers' awareness of assessment information is good because it is regularly shared through printouts of the data generated, particularly for individual subjects. Through monitoring of teaching the headteacher and subject co-ordinators ensure that all teachers interpret them consistently. Careful assessments are made of pupils with special educational needs and these are used well to inform the targets identified in their individual education plans.
  
25. The school is currently refining assessment procedures in science and the foundation subjects to align them more clearly with National Curriculum levels. School portfolios of work, to help teachers moderate National Curriculum levels, are being established and give good support to tracking pupils' progress in order to raise standards further.
  
26. The school provides a caring working environment which is effectively supervised and results in satisfactory welfare provision. The previous inspection report stated that the school had satisfactory procedures for monitoring personal development. These have considerably improved and there is now very good educational and personal support and guidance. Procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are good while procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The school prioritises welfare and support as important elements in pupils' learning. The very good personal support and guidance provided by the headteacher, class teachers and support staff is well matched to the needs of pupils. There is,

therefore, very good, comprehensive pastoral care provided by the staff who know all the pupils well.

27. The school does not have a child protection policy of its own - although there is a designated, experienced staff co-ordinator who has received the appropriate training. However, while staff are aware of the procedures, they have not recently received a thorough briefing in operating them. This, with the lack of a school policy and guidance, means that current arrangements are insufficient and should be addressed as soon as possible. The school uses the standard local authority health and safety policy and internal responsibilities are appropriately defined. There are regular health and safety assessments by staff and monitoring by the headteacher and a member of the governing body. There are good arrangements for the care and support of pupils who are taken ill at school, first aid provision and appropriately maintained accident records. There are good arrangements for the supervision of pupils at break times and lunch periods. The school provides a safe and healthy environment.
28. There is a comprehensive behaviour policy and the school's approach to behaviour and discipline is conscientiously applied by all staff. The good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, the well understood system of rewards and sanctions, the staff's good role models and the positive direction they provide successfully motivate pupils to act responsibly, which is demonstrated by the good behaviour of pupils in and around the school. There are good procedures for dealing with bullying and aggressive behaviour. However, instances are very rare. There are very good procedures for monitoring of pupils' personal development, the resulting gains to their maturity preparing them very well for their next stage of education. Staff provide very good personal support and work hard to promote pupils' independence confidence and social skills. They provide formal assessments each half term, related to the personal and social education curriculum. The school is supporting the development of pupils' awareness and independence through its 'Resourcefulness, Resilience and Reflectiveness' initiative. There is satisfactory monitoring of attendance and effective liaison with the education welfare service. The school follows up any unexplained absences on the first day.

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

29. The school's overall links with parents are good. Parents provide very good general and financial support to the school. They hold very good views of what it provides and achieves – an improvement since the time of the last inspection. The school values its partnership with parents and has good relationships with them. The involvement of parents in the school is very good and their contribution to their children's learning is good. In the previous inspection report the school was described as having close and effective links with parents who were very much involved in their children's learning. The positive relationship has been maintained. Parents also continue to have a good impact on their children's learning. There were parental concerns with annual reports and homework which, to some extent, continue to apply. Parents' concerns with pupils' behaviour no longer apply.

30. The school communicates frequently with parents and overall, the quality of information is satisfactory. The governing body's annual report to parents and the prospectus are both unsatisfactory because in each there are a number of statutory omissions. There are frequent general newsletters, written in a friendly style, which ensure a good general communication link with parents. The school arranges useful curriculum evenings for parents, but there is no systematic provision of curriculum information for parents in all classes. However, the weekly newsletters and curriculum information sheet provided for parents of younger pupils are very informative. The effectiveness of these arrangements has been assessed by a parents' questionnaire and may soon be extended to all classes. Additionally, there is regular good quality informal contact between class teachers and parents. Therefore, parents' information about their children is broadened by their discussions with staff throughout the year. Appropriate arrangements are in place to keep the parents of pupils with special educational needs full informed about their children's progress.
31. There are two opportunities each year for formal consultation and these are very well supported. Some parents would welcome an additional formal opportunity following the issuing of pupils' annual reports in the summer term. Some parents also have concerns with these reports, which they feel are too impersonal and do not reflect the staff's considerable knowledge of pupils. The reports provide information on all subjects and include useful general comments. Although not routinely related to National Curriculum levels, they do provide full and informative comments with clear descriptions of what pupils know, understand and can do in English, mathematics and science. They also contain useful learning targets. However, they are much less informative in the other subjects and also contain an unnecessary amount of information which is unrelated to individual pupils.
32. Most parents are satisfied with the provision of homework, though some feel there are inconsistencies in application between classes. Homework is organised systematically and provides parents with a valuable opportunity for involvement in their children's education, but many would welcome clarification of the arrangements. Parents' perceptions of the school are very good and they are appreciative of the educational direction and support for pupils. Parents feel that the school is accessible, that they are welcomed and that the staff are approachable. They also feel that the school is responsive to their concerns, that parental support is welcomed and that staff can be approached at any time.

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

33. Overall management at the school is very good. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The headteacher provides very effective leadership. He is a major driving force behind the school's significant improvement over the past few years. He has had a very clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and with an equally proactive and motivated staff has

raised standards in key academic areas and many aspects of the school's provision - including the quality of the teaching and relationships with parents. Although having a significant teaching responsibility himself, the headteacher has taken on a relatively large number of subject co-ordinator roles. This, however, has not adversely affected his capacity to carry these out very well. As it is a small school, other members of the teaching staff also have a number of co-ordination responsibilities which they also carry out very effectively. Standards and teaching are both monitored regularly and all subjects have relevant action plans for improvement. Appropriately, the main and continuous focus is on English, mathematics and science, with the other subjects being monitored in turn as part of a written rolling programme which reflects the priorities outlined in the school's detailed development plan. The headteacher provides most of the time required to release the co-ordinators to carry out their monitoring roles. There is a senior teacher who – with the head – forms a senior management team which meets regularly to discuss emergent issues and to plan ahead. Routine administration is effective. The school does not suffer from unnecessary bureaucratic demands or from difficulties in recruiting staff.

34. Management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and all statutory requirements in respect of these pupils are met. Policy and planning both reflect the most recent Code of Practice and the special educational needs co-ordinator is very well informed about all recent developments. She has also kept staff and the named governor appropriately informed. She regularly monitors individual education plans and is currently trialing one on a new format. She has a clear view of where the provision could be made even more effective - currently, for example, re-organising the duties of support staff to make more efficient use of their time. The role of the governing body in strategic oversight of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is, however, underdeveloped. Management of the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and this has impacted significantly on the very good improvement made since the time of the last inspection. Hilmarton is a very inclusive school and all pupils – including those from minority religious communities and those with special educational needs – are very well supported in accessing the curriculum and all aspects of school life.
35. The governing body is very knowledgeable and highly supportive of the school. It satisfies its statutory duties well. Some individual governors support teachers in lessons and most – including the chair - are regular visitors to the school. All governors have subject or aspect responsibilities and visit on a rolling programme drawn up by the chair to meet staff, observe lessons and monitor the progress of subject and aspect action plans. There are finance and premises committees which help the governing body as a whole to operate more efficiently. For the time being – as many governors are new to the role – curriculum issues are suitably dealt with at meetings of the full governing body. A strategy for performance management is fully in place. The headteacher supplements this very well through regular professional review meetings with all staff to discuss issues such as individual responsibilities, performance management targets and progress towards the targets set in school development plan action plans. At the time of the inspection, there were no newly qualified teachers on the staff. However, the most recently qualified teacher was supported well when she began working at the school just over two years ago.



36. Strategies for financial planning and monitoring are good and support the school's developmental priorities very well. Appropriate powers of delegation of spending to the headteacher are in place and the finance committee has relevant terms of reference. A suitable level of financial support is purchased from the local authority. There is, however, no comprehensive policy to define the various management and administrative roles of all the parties involved in the oversight of the finances at the school. A drop in the school's carry forward of money is related to the recent building works and is now in the process of being rectified. The relatively minor weaknesses found in the most recent audit have all been addressed. Grants provided to support teacher training and other areas are used well for the required purposes. The school has good regard for the principles of best value. For example, it carefully analyses its results and compares these with similar schools in the area. It carries out regular reviews of the financial viability of various local authority services that it purchases and makes changes where appropriate. A number of quotations are obtained before making major purchases. Parents and pupils are regularly consulted. The school is in a continuous process of self-review.
37. The ratio of pupils to teachers is slightly above the national average, while the number of support staff is around average. All staff are highly committed to improving standards and the quality of education available for the pupils, and have a very good capacity to achieve this. Resources are sufficient overall and there are strengths in those available to support English, mathematics, geography and information and communication technology. There are weaknesses in resources for design and technology. Where there are relative deficiencies in the school's own supply of specific resources – such as those required for assessing pupils with special educational needs – these are supplemented by loans from the local authority or from other schools. There have been recent improvements to the accommodation and this is now satisfactory overall. However, facilities for indoor physical education are insufficient and inevitably impact adversely on standards, and access for the physically disabled, should this be required in the future, is inadequate. This is a very effective school. Ethos is very strong and the school provides very good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors and staff should address the following matter in writing the action plan, in order to raise standards and improve the provision the school makes yet further:

Raise standards in information and communication technology at the end of Year 6 by:

- improving staff confidence in delivering the subject;
- increasing the use of information and communication technology to support learning across all the subjects of the curriculum;
- using available resources more efficiently.

(see paragraphs 1, 78, 79, 80 and 81)

The school has identified this issue as a target for improvement in its most recent development plan.

In addition to this key issue, there are some less important weaknesses which the school should consider for inclusion in its action plan. These involve improving the spiritual content of school assemblies, further raising standards in investigative science, more finely catering for the needs of pupils with different levels of attainment in science, constructing a policy for child protection and ensuring that the brochure and governors' annual report to parents fully meet statutory requirements, and are found in paragraphs 3, 20, 27, and 60.

## 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

22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	6	14	4	0	0	0
Percentage	11	22	52	15	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		113
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		6

#### 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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	2	9	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (92)	82 (92)	82 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	7	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (92)	64 (92)	82 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	4	9	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	9	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (83)	69 (67)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	10	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (83)	77 (83)	100 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

The numbers of pupils have been omitted as there was less than eleven of each gender in the age groups.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	89	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

**Teachers and classes**

**Financial information**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	28

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	64

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	251693
Total expenditure	263769
Expenditure per pupil	2488
Balance brought forward from previous year	24605
Balance carried forward to next year	12529

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	113
Number of questionnaires returned	37

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	14	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	22	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	81	19	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	38	11	0	0
The teaching is good.	97	3	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	32	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	8	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	14	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	81	14	0	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	76	24	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	24	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	22	16	0	5



## **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**

38. Children start school in the September of the school year in which they are five and attend part-time or full-time after the first few weeks depending on their age and need. There are currently 21 children in a reception/Year 1 class. Children's attainment on entry to the school is, on balance, average. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all areas of learning because of very good teaching. Many children are on line to exceed the Early Learning Goals in several areas of learning by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage, except mathematical development, physical development and creative development, where attainment is as expected for children.
39. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good and all children achieve well, a significant improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are planned in detail using the Foundation Stage curriculum very effectively to meet the children's needs. The teacher and her teaching assistant work superbly together as a team and this has a very positive impact on children's learning. For example, in a literacy session they took part in a role play activity to demonstrate how to listen to each other talking about their news. Several children were immediately able to identify what they were doing wrong and one child confidently told the teacher to 'Just listen because when someone is talking you must look at them and listen'. Both are extremely skilled at targeting their questions to support children's learning. For example, both adults singled out pairs of children who were finding it difficult to share their news with each other and questioned them very effectively to encourage them to talk to each other. As a result both children became more confident and willing to participate in the whole class discussion. Adults have extremely high expectations and as a result children know what is expected of them and work very hard to achieve. Behaviour management is excellent and as a result children quickly learn what is expected of them. Consequently they are polite and interested in their activities. Very good plenary sessions enable the teacher to assess knowledge and understanding gained in the lesson, and this information is used very effectively to plan each child's next stage of learning.
40. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good and indicates the importance the school places on purposeful learning experiences in all areas of learning for children of this age. This makes a significant contribution to the good progress that the children make towards achieving - and often exceeding - the Early Learning Goals, and ensures a smooth transition to the work of the National Curriculum in Year 1. There are plenty of very good opportunities for children to visit places of interest. Visitors to the class support the children's learning. For example children last year visited Calne library, local parks and farms. Visitors to school included the Fire Service and a group of musicians with their guitars. Photographic evidence indicates that the outdoor area is used well in fine weather but there is no covered area to allow these activities to take place outside on a regular basis. Provision for

children in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the last inspection.

41. Assessment procedures are very good for children in the reception class. The teacher has been involved in trialling the new nationally recommended assessment procedures for children at the end of the Foundation Stage and has set up very comprehensive systems to enable her to collect and use relevant information during the year. These assessments support children's learning very well and she uses the information very effectively both to plan activities to meet the needs of the children and also to identify children with special educational needs. They are also used to set individual targets and to set new ones when the target is achieved. A procedure to track individual children's progress, recently introduced by the authority, is being used very well. Very good induction procedures ensure that the youngest children quickly settle into the routines of school. Parents are invited to a meeting before the children start school and again early in the autumn term. Very good links are established and children are very well prepared for school. Children are invited to complete a booklet with their parents to bring to school on the first day. Further consultation meetings are held during the year, so that parents can find out about progress. An annual report is sent to parents at the end of the school year. Links with the local playgroup are good. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The teacher has worked very hard to develop her co-ordinator's role and to ensure the significant improvement of both provision and teaching since the last inspection. Accommodation is spacious and there is a good range of resources that are used very well to support children's learning.

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

42. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning as a result of excellent teaching. Most children exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter the next stage of their learning in Year 1. In lessons they are very interested, extremely well motivated and well able to share equipment. Many already, at the start of the school year, know the routines for tidying equipment away at the end of a session and are willing to help each other. Individual children have responsibilities such as ringing the bell to announce the end of a session, collecting and giving out the milk, checking the weather and taking registers to the office. All children know the difference between right and wrong and extremely well planned opportunities are provided for the children so that they know and understand the rules in the school. For example, in one lesson children were introduced to a poem written by the teacher to reinforce one of the golden rules to walk around the school sensibly and quietly. The very high level of the teacher's charismatic approach induced remarkable interest in the lesson. Reward systems are used very effectively to raise self-esteem and to support children's learning. The quality of teaching for this area of learning is excellent. This enables the children to make good progress in their learning so that when they start in Year 1 most children are confident, independent learners. Achievement is good.

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

43. All children, including those identified with special educational needs, make very good progress in their learning and by the time they enter Year 1 of the National Curriculum many exceed the early learning goals. Extremely good quality teaching ensures that the needs of all children are being met. Most children speak clearly and confidently in a range of situations. For example, during one lesson many were able to tell each other about their weekend activities. Those less confident received very good support from adults to enable them to make their contribution to discussions. They listen well to adults and each other, having been provided with a very good range of learning opportunities to develop these skills. For example, during a role-play activity the adults demonstrated very effectively the consequences of not listening, which were identified by the children. They were also able to listen very carefully to a tape recording of different sounds in a house and to identify the sounds. Many are able to name initial letter sounds and to use them when spelling unfamiliar words. They all show a keen interest in books and from listening to pupils in Year 1 read, it is evident that many children, by the end of the Foundation Stage, are reading simple text and keywords with accuracy and some fluency. Higher and average attaining children can write more than one sentence, sometimes using full stops and capital letters accurately. Individual ideas are developed in short sections and spellings are phonetically plausible. Lower attaining children begin to use familiar letters from the alphabet to convey their meaning. They are able to tell an adult what they have written. The quality of teaching is excellent and this impacts well on children's learning. As a result all children are achieving well.

### **Mathematical development**

44. By the time the children start Year 1 of the National Curriculum most children achieve the Early Learning goals for mathematical development. They confidently join in number rhymes such as 'The Grand Old Duke of York' and are able to sort small construction equipment according to colour. By the end of the Foundation Stage higher and average attaining children can add and subtract accurately to five and use non-standard measurements, such as cubes, to measure parts of the body. Most are beginning to tell the time and to name some familiar three-dimensional shapes. Lower attaining children can measure parts of their body with support and can count to 10. They are beginning to add two numbers to five with support. The quality of teaching is very good and all children are achieving well.

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

45. Children's progress in this area of learning is good and all children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. By the end of the Foundation stage many children exceed the expected levels of the Early Learning Goals. Children are able to sort a range of furniture into the different rooms and many can explain their use. For example, they know that the wardrobe belongs in the bedroom. Many can identify the sounds from a house such as the telephone and a washing machine, Very good links are made with other areas of the curriculum - such as reminding the children of the need for personal hygiene when they identify the sound of running

water from a tap. By the end of the year children can name members of their family, placing them on a family tree in chronological order. They can predict what might happen when bubble bath is put into water and observe what happens. They record their observations in pictures and tell an adult what they have seen. For example one child said ' It makes bubbles; bubbles will come out and float'. Children design and make a hand puppet. They tell the adult what they like about the puppet and give one suggestion of what they would do next time to improve the quality of their work. Photographic evidence indicates that very good use is made of the local area to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them and this has a very positive impact on children's learning. For example, children visited a local garden centre and then planted their own potatoes and vegetables to make vegetable soup. The quality of teaching is very good and the teacher has very good knowledge of the needs of young children. A stimulating learning environment is created for the children and there are very good cross-curricular links. For example during topic work based on 'Where do we live?' the teacher used every opportunity to develop children's language and communication skills, particularly the group of children identified as having speech problems.

### **Creative development**

46. Very little evidence was available during the inspection because it is early in the term but from looking at classroom displays and from some observations, children reach the expected levels of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. They use a range of techniques such as marbling, bubble painting and using a salad spinner, to create an attractive picture of a butterfly. They make pictures of their own faces, by looking in the mirror and then choosing their own materials. They can use glue to stick different coloured material to card to make a pattern to decorate the walls of the playhouse. However, this activity was very teacher directed and children had no opportunity to develop their own creativity or cutting skills. The teacher's planning indicates that these skills are developed well in a range of other planned activities. When using construction apparatus to build houses children used their imagination well to explain why they had put so many people in their house. They explained 'It is a party and lots of people are arriving on the trailer'. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, and activities are very well planned to develop the children's creative skills effectively.

### **Physical development**

47. By the time the children start the National Curriculum in Year 1 most are reaching the Early Learning Goals for physical development. Achievement is good. Children are provided with many opportunities to handle small tools, such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors and their manipulative skills are developing well. They can roll mould and squeeze the play-dough into shapes and explain what they are doing. In the playground they show an appropriate awareness of space, of themselves and of others. No planned physical education lesson or outdoor activities lesson were observed during the inspection - so it is not possible to give a judgement on teaching in this area of learning.

## ENGLISH

48. Standards have risen since the last inspection from average to above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are similar to those attained in the National Curriculum assessments of 2001, for which national comparisons are available, but slightly lower in Year 6 than the even better but unvalidated results of 2002 because of differences in pupils' attainment on entry to the school. Most pupils are uniformly above average in their speaking and listening, reading, and writing skills by Year 2 and Year 6. This shows that their achievement in all skills is good because their attainment on entry is broadly at the expected levels. Both boys and girls contribute to lessons to much the same extent, and all regularly behave well, displaying very good interest and enthusiasm for their work. The good standards are the result of a well-structured curriculum and good use of the National Literacy Strategy, adapted to meet the pupils' needs. At the time of the last inspection there was no scheme of work and little planning for continuity. Regular monitoring has helped to ensure that teaching is now at least good and often very good, when formerly about half of it was unsatisfactory. These improvements continue to have a strong positive impact on pupils' learning.
49. Standards in speaking and listening are above average by Year 2 and by Year 6. Throughout the school pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. In Year 2, they understand and respond to a variety of everyday classroom and other familiar instructions, statements and questions. Their ability to respond in clear speech, using standard English, is above average. Most pupils use a wide vocabulary and frequently speak in properly constructed sentences. A lower attainer, for example, commented: 'I like books about animals and insects', evidently distinguishing the two correctly. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good listening skills because their teachers insist on a high standard of listening. By Year 6 pupils listen attentively to their classmates so that their own contributions to discussions are relevant and focused. Moreover, they speak well to each other, often with just as much respect as they show to adults because of the consistently good examples that adults give to them. A Year 6 girl turned unselfconsciously to a boy at a neighbouring table to ask politely 'What is the title, please?' This was a simple but effective demonstration of clarity and courtesy. Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly and there is an increase in their breadth of vocabulary as they move through the school. This is partly a result of targeted vocabulary being consciously planned by teachers, an aspect of lessons in all subjects. All teachers regularly use good strategies for promoting speaking and listening; for example 'brainstorming', good questioning to promote discussion, oral summaries, and at times role play (although this was not much in evidence during the inspection week except for the youngest children).
50. Pupils' standards in reading are above average by Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils are taught an appropriate variety of reading skills - such as letter sounds and using pictures and context to help make sense of words. In Year 2, lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, read sentences accurately, recognising key words from the reading scheme because these have already been highlighted and reinforced in earlier work. Although they read to adults, they are learning to be independent and are already expected to work without much intervention. Average and higher attainers offer opinions on events and characters, and some make confident predictions regarding what a book may be about. In Years 5 and 6, pupils read with much fluency and accuracy. Even lower attainers read aloud with some expression. The range of books read independently includes

such authors as Jacqueline Wilson and Astrid Lindgren. Lower attainers refer briefly to the text to support opinions but make only tentative deductions. Average attainers make sensible inferences about what may happen next in a story, and higher attainers infer from their reading the likely conclusion. They are also starting to identify themes. Pupils use their research skills well. In Year 6 pupils effectively explained their use of the library for help with a history project. They have also used the Internet effectively to locate information for a design and technology task. Parents regularly give good support by hearing their children read at home, and some parents regularly take their children to the public library. Good use is made of recordings to support reading for pupils with dyslexia.

51. Standards in writing are above average by Year 2 and Year 6. There is regular attention to spelling. Homework is used appropriately to support this. In consequence the majority of pupils write in a clear, intelligible script by Year 2. Work in books shows increasing accuracy and letter formation - although handwriting is rarely joined. Lower attainers in Year 2 produce short sentences with well-linked ideas that are beginning to engage the reader. Spelling and punctuation are satisfactory. Average attainers punctuate their work well, but its content does not develop to the same extent. Higher attainers use more complex punctuation such as speech marks well and introduce detail into longer sentences to hold attention: 'We played on our bikes seeing how fast we could go. We went extra fast.' Opportunities to write for a variety of different purposes throughout the school are satisfactory. By Year 6 there are good opportunities for pupils to write factual accounts and they recount events well. There are increasing opportunities for creative writing because the school has already identified a shortcoming in this area and is striving rapidly to address it, but pupils' work contains, for example, no poetry. Year 6 pupils produce good examples of extended writing, showing a good sense of attention to detail in accounts of school residential visits. The vast majority of pupils are technically competent, but there are few examples of pupils being strongly aware of the power of words and using them adventurously to fullest effect. Average attainers tend to use mundane or borrowed images, for example: 'It was a dark and stormy night.' The highest attainers, however, are starting to introduce greater originality: 'Chas McGill would be fun to know: loyal and kind yet dangerous and devious.' Pupils with special educational needs benefit particularly from information and communication technology software to improve their use of adjectives so that they achieve as well as their classmates. In several lessons, however, information and communication technology resources were available for pupils of all levels of attainment but remained unused because teachers had not planned their exploitation.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in the school and has improved since the last inspection. There are examples of very good teaching throughout the school. A key feature of the school's approach lies in the very good relationships between pupils and teachers. These are well demonstrated by effective questioning which draws everyone in, and by the value teachers place on all pupils' contributions to discussions. In consequence pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well and subsequently support their reading and writing. Teachers plan carefully, and clearly identify what the learning for each lesson will be. These aims are clearly explained to pupils in simple language at the start of the lesson. This



gets the lesson off to a brisk start and helps pupils pay attention to what they are learning. The teachers ask a good range of questions, often directed at particular pupils to match their attainment or to hold their attention. A wide range of teaching methods is used, which helps to involve all pupils in their learning. Examples include paired or group discussion, asking questions and 'brainstorming'. Speaking and listening, reading and writing develop in a balanced way because teachers make sure that each skill receives appropriate emphasis. The management of pupils is consistently very good, enabling lessons to run smoothly without interruption and pupils to learn well. Learning support assistants work well alongside teachers so pupils, especially those with special educational needs, have the benefit of more individual attention to further their learning. Marking is regular and positive and includes the setting of personal targets for pupils. Homework is regular and is used well to support learning, although not always precisely linked to the lesson it follows. All lessons finish well. Teachers carefully review with the pupils what they have learned by asking key questions or asking pupils to talk about what they have learned. This helps to reinforce the pupils' new knowledge and further their speaking skills. Consequently, they talk about what they have learned and have good knowledge of their own learning.

53. The leadership of the subject is very good. Documentation is comprehensive and there has been very good monitoring of teaching. Very good assessment systems have been established, which allows the school to track each pupil's progress carefully through the school. The information gained from assessments is used well and contributes to raising standards in English. Resources are good, with many new reading books recently purchased to expand effective class libraries. The school library is, however, small both in terms of space and content, which does not help pupils to develop their skills as well as it should.

## **MATHEMATICS**

54. Standards in mathematics are above the national average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, as is the consistently good teaching across the school. As a result progress is good and all pupils are achieving well. Progress made by pupils' with special educational needs is also good in relation to their prior attainment. The results of the 2001 national tests were below the national average at the end of both Years 2 and 6 and both test results in 2001 were well below average when compared with similar schools. However, the 2002 results indicate a significant improvement on results for several years previously. Results this year, although expected to be above those expected for their age, are not expected to be quite as good as 2002, because these pupils' progress has been tracked very well and evidence indicates that this group will not attain quite so well. The school is a small school and the number taking tests each year fluctuates as does the standards achieved.
55. By the end of Year 2 most pupils understand the basic language of number, have a good knowledge of place value to at least 100 and can quickly recall addition and

subtraction facts to 20. Higher attaining pupils use a range of written methods to add and subtract two-digit numbers and to solve simple division sums with remainders. Average attaining pupils can accurately add and subtract two-digit numbers and use their knowledge of multiplication tables to solve simple problems. Lower attaining pupils understand the basic methods for addition, subtraction and multiplication but are not always accurate. Most pupils can use standard and non-standard measurements for weighing and measuring and handle money to one pound. Higher and average attaining pupils recognise simple fractions as parts of whole numbers and lower attaining pupils understand halves and quarters of a whole object. Most pupils can name simple two and three-dimensional shapes. Younger pupils can sort objects according to colour and type and use their knowledge of pattern and shape very effectively to identify patterns around the room.

56. By the end of Year 6 most pupils confidently use their understanding of place value to add, subtract, multiply and divide large numbers beyond 1000. Many are able to use a range of strategies for multiplying two-digit numbers by two-digit numbers. They can show remainders as decimals or fractions and can convert percentages to fractions. Higher and average attaining pupils understand and use the probability scale from zero to one and construct and interpret a range of graphs. Lower attaining pupils can interpret data using tally charts and bar graphs. Most can find the 'median' and 'mode' of a set of data, and higher attainers also determine the 'range' in a set of data. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 can add and subtract money and give change, relating their knowledge effectively to real life situations. They can use and interpret simple graphs and pictograms. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 are confident to explain their methods of working and are in the habit of checking their work for accuracy.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and sometimes very good, and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Planning is in detail and, on most occasions, effectively meets the needs of all pupils in the class, taking into account both age and ability of the pupils. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 class, pupils were provided with a good range of practical activities to support their learning. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils were expected to sort the shapes using more than one category. All teachers have very high expectations. Most lessons have a brisk pace, which is maintained appropriately throughout the lesson. Subject knowledge is good and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on both the planning and the delivery of the subject. Teachers have very good classroom management skills and create a calm purposeful working atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate and learn. Pupils respond very well to this and behaviour in lessons is good, with pupils eager to learn and enthusiastic about their work. Teachers provide good opportunities for self-assessment for the pupils. For example, in one lesson the teacher asked the pupils if they understood the methods of working, and when several looked bewildered the teacher explained clearly what they would be doing for the rest of the week to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Teachers target individuals effectively so that they can assess individual attainment and also to support pupils of different levels of attainment in the class, to enable them to make good progress. All staff are good

role models and use praise effectively to promote learning Teaching assistants are effective in supporting individuals in the classroom. They are very well briefed by the teachers and work very well with them. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher and assistant worked extremely well together to support pupils' learning. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson the teaching assistant very effectively supported a small group of pupils that find learning difficult to ensure that they made the same progress as the rest of the class during the lesson. Marking is positive but sometimes inconsistent. Pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve their work. Also, they not always able to look back on their work to check whether they have achieved the learning objective of the lesson.

58. Assessment procedures are very good and are used very effectively to track the progress of both groups of pupils and individuals. Weekly assessments are used very well to plan activities to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The use of assessment has had a very positive impact on raising standards in mathematics across the school. There is a little evidence of the use of information and communication technology in mathematics. Older pupils use the computer to collate and interpret information in graphs. There are satisfactory links with geography where pupils collated information from a traffic survey and produced pie charts. In history pupils used their knowledge of data handling to investigate the changes of population over the last two centuries. The contribution of mathematics to pupils' moral and social development is satisfactory. For example, in both Years 1 and 2 and 5 and 6 pupils were effectively encouraged to work in groups and to support each other with their tasks. Management is very good and as a result of very effective monitoring, provision and standards in mathematics have improved significantly in the last two years. The school has recently held an evening for parents to share with them how mathematics is being taught in school and to enable them to be able to support their child with their learning at home. Resources are good and are used well to support pupils' learning.

## **SCIENCE**

59. Although fluctuating from year to year because of the small numbers of pupils in each group, standards in science are now better than they were at the time of the last inspection. This is reflected in the results of the 2002 statutory assessments of pupils at the end of Year 6 (SAT's), which were well above the previous year's national average and above average compared with similar schools. The results of the 2002 teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 were also well above the 2001 national average. The school's trend of improvement in the Year 6 science assessments over the past few years is well above the national trend. Standards in the current Years 2 and 6 continue to be above average. As children enter the school with expected levels of knowledge and understanding, this indicates that their achievement overall is good.
60. Year 1 pupils successfully predict what would happen if they put food colouring in water. They carry out their investigation and record their findings in pictorial form. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are all aware that light comes from a range of different sources and many are conscious that light is necessary to support life. They are

able to carry out independent research to support their findings. Year 4 pupils realise that the various properties of different materials make them suitable for different purposes. They successfully carry out a range of tests to see, for example, how hard different materials are, how absorbent they are and whether they will float or sink. Year 5 pupils have some understanding of the relationship between weight and mass and appreciate that some materials can return to their previous state after cooling. Most Year 6 pupils are clear that the earth's rotation is the reason for the phenomenon of day and night. Many recognise that the amount of daylight alters according to the season – but frequently do not understand why this is. Some investigative work is carried out and most older pupils understand the need for fair testing in an experiment. However, investigative science as a whole is not as well developed in the school as the more knowledge-based elements of the subject – particularly at the more advanced levels.

61. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in science lessons vary from satisfactory to very good, and are good overall. They are generally very interested in the subject and often quite excited by it. Conversely, their very excitement sometimes leads to situations where some younger pupils can become over-exuberant. Pupils concentrate well during preliminary discussions. Most are happy to contribute their own ideas and to listen to those of others. During paired and group activities in Years 5 and 6 there are very good levels of co-operation and pupils focus very well on their tasks. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4, however, are easily distracted. The quality of teaching is also good overall. In the best lessons clear learning objectives are shared with the pupils at the outset and re-visited at the end, which helps them to appreciate how much they have achieved. Pupil management is frequently very good and this reflects very well on attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Resources – such as those used in one lesson seen during the inspection to demonstrate different light sources – are used effectively to stimulate the pupils. In some lessons, however, discipline is not always successful in keeping all pupils fully on task. In some lessons, also, work is not effectively matched to the needs of groups of pupils with different levels of attainment. This adversely affects the potential achievement of some pupils – particularly those with higher levels of attainment.
62. Planning for science is based on national guidelines and this effectively ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support the subject. There are suitable structures in place for assessing pupils' progress. The subject is co-ordinated well by the headteacher, who has a good understanding of where it now needs to be developed further.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

63. Standards in art and design are at the expected levels at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection. Year 1 pupils successfully use sponges to print patterns in the form of bricks - linking this to their topic 'Where do we live'. Most Year 2 pupils can distinguish between portraits and self portraits and successfully discuss the work of Van Gogh. They compare different facial features - and to some extent the way that personality traits are reflected in these – before completing

pencil sketches of a partner's eyebrows. They previously created effective pastel drawings of various fruits. Year 3 and 4 pupils look at features of the work of famous artists such as Klee and Kandinsky and adapt these to their own crayon and pastel pictures. Some are able to evaluate their work but several are unsure of how to use this self knowledge to improve their outcomes. They also produce attractive fabric and scrap material collages of the local church. Year 5 and 6 pupils use pastels, chalk and black sugar paper to reproduce the effect of urban skylines at sunset. No three-dimensional work was seen during the inspection – although records indicate that some has taken place in the past and that some is planned for in the future. The school's own action plan for the subject indicates this element of the subject to be an area for development.

64. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons vary from satisfactory to very good, but are good overall. Some of the youngest pupils in particular behave very well. They listen carefully to their teacher's instructions and then carry these out successfully without direct adult intervention, which has a positive impact on their learning. Other pupils in Years 1 and 2 are enthusiastic about their tasks. They behave well and co-operate successfully in pairs. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4, however, find it difficult to concentrate on their work. Teaching is also good overall – but has yet to impact on standards. In the best lesson seen during the inspection, the teacher effectively demonstrated the techniques being explored. Her planning was comprehensive and she worked closely with a very able support assistant to support the pupils' learning. In all the lessons seen, methods were appropriate to the lesson objectives and kept most pupils interested in what they were doing. In one lesson, however, the pupils were sometimes not managed in a firm enough manner, and their behaviour deteriorated slightly as a result.
65. Planning for art and design is appropriately based on national guidelines and fully meets statutory requirements. There are suitable structures in place for assessment and record-keeping. The co-ordinator is very clear about where the subject needs to be developed further and has produced a relevant action plan for this. There is some use of information and communication technology to support the subject – some art programs, for example, have been used – but there is scope for this to be developed further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

66. Owing to timetabling arrangements it was not possible to observe any lessons in the subject in Years 1 and 2. One lesson was seen in Years 3 to 6. Judgements are largely based on photographic evidence, an examination of the small amount of pupils' work available, discussions with staff and pupils and the examination of planning documents. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were below average by the end of Year 2. The school has made good progress in addressing the shortcomings identified in the last report. There is now an appropriate policy and a coherent scheme of work, which enables pupils to develop their skills in a balanced way. There is now monitoring of planning and teaching and a formal assessment system in place to determine how well pupils learn.

67. Pupils in Year 2 described with interest how they had made puppets and were able to explain some of the processes involved. They did not always recall the precise sequence of their work but did have a clear notion of planning and sketching before beginning construction. Photographic evidence of model vehicles made by the class from such materials as card, rolls and foil suggest that pupils know how to assemble components in a variety of ways. Annotated pictures of their work in textiles to create 'Joseph's Coat' show that with support they have taken measurements, and have, for example, suggested ways to improve the sleeves which did not at first fit properly. The photographs also illustrate their enthusiasm for the subject. Work sheets completed by higher attainers show that although they make no clear reference to designs for a specific need they generally evaluate what they are doing. This aspect is less evident in the work of average and lower attainers. Pupils in Year 6 generate ideas through 'brainstorming' and research: for example, the qualities of different kinds of biscuits. Lower attainers show that they have considered a range of designs and materials for shelters - some linked to their work on Vikings - and produce basic sketches. Average attainers include more detailed drawings and higher attainers make precise measurements. Designs for slippers show the selection of materials and decoration - with concern for the users' views - and a logical sequence of construction. Plans for such artefacts as fairground rides involving pulleys and cogs appear unrealistic. There are few explanations for choices and no indications that any have been evaluated or actually constructed.
68. The outcomes in terms of pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding indicate that teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but there is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement. There was no evidence, other than by outcome, that tasks are geared to the needs of the range of pupils in a class. Teaching and learning were very good in a Years 5 and 6 food technology lesson because of the teacher's very good questioning. This involved everyone and made them think hard about the appeal to the customer of both the product and its presentation. Thanks to this approach, pupils with special educational needs achieved as well as their classmates. All pupils participated with interest, showing very good attitudes and behaviour. A scrutiny of pupils' books and of photographic evidence shows that in the longer term teaching in Years 3 to 6 is only satisfactory - because there has been limited emphasis on testing and evaluating what works well and what could be improved. The presentation of work indicates that pupils' attitudes are generally good.
69. The curriculum is now good, making use of national guidelines. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' development in literacy, thanks to an emphasis on vocabulary. Pupils used information and communication technology to explore possibilities for the construction of shelters. Measurements involved in various tasks satisfactorily reinforced pupils' numeracy skills. The head teacher as subject co-ordinator is well organised and monitors teachers' planning and teaching. He has recorded much improvement over the last year. Good assessment procedures are in place, aligned with national guidelines. Resources are barely adequate to deliver the curriculum fully. Sufficient switches and motors are available because these also support the science curriculum. There is a lack of more basic equipment

including tools such as bench hooks, snips and glue guns, which consequently restricts pupils' opportunities.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

70. Standards in geography are as expected of pupils at the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have a sound understanding of their local area and are beginning to show awareness of places beyond their own locality. Most can draw a map of their route to school and describe any significant buildings they see on their way. They name some of the places around the world visited by Barnaby Bear and locate them on a map of the world. They begin to discuss the significance of different climates and recognise some of the physical features of places. This term pupils have taken a walk around the village identifying significant features and important buildings as part of their work about their own locality.
71. Year 6 pupils show their knowledge, skills and understanding in studies of a range of places and environments across the world. Pupils, in Years 3 and 4, can correctly name places on a map of the British Isles and use Ordnance Survey maps to find key features in their village. They produce newspaper reports on the advantages and disadvantages of visiting their village. They research the places where their parents go to work and collate the information on a graph. Pupils respond appropriately to geographical questions and most are able to find a country on a world map to visit for a specific type of holiday. For example, one group of pupils thought that they would go skiing in either France or Canada. In Years 5 and 6, pupils identify significant countries in the news on a map of the world and research information about these, such as the population, the name of the capital city and neighbouring countries. Pupils make sound use of information from members of the local community when they look at the environmental issues surrounding the amount of traffic travelling on the main road through the village.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This judgement is made from looking at samples of pupils' work, planning and talking to pupils. Only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Long and medium term planning is satisfactory and the school has appropriately adopted the national guidelines to address the issue of planning for logical progression of skills. Short-term planning is sometimes brief and does not always indicate how the needs of the different age and attainment groups are being met.
73. Assessment procedures are good. The school has adopted a simple system of three steps of grading, but this is not yet sufficiently linked to the National Curriculum attainment targets for geography to make accurate assessments of the skills each pupil has acquired. Links with other areas of the curriculum are satisfactory. Pupils use their mathematical skills well to record and interpret information on graphs. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication

technology skills to collate results from their traffic survey and to produce pie charts. Geography makes satisfactory contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils often discuss events in the news across the world, such as in Afghanistan. Subject management is very good and the whole school has worked hard to improve standards in geography since the last inspection. This has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Resources are good and have improved since the last inspection. The local environment, visits, and the annual residential visit for older pupils are used effectively to enhance pupils' learning and have a positive impact on achievement.

## **HISTORY**

74. Standards in history are as expected of pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress in their learning. By the end of Year 2 many pupils demonstrate their developing sense of chronology by ordering family pictures from a baby to adult. They begin to recognise that their own lives are different from those in the past. For example, they compare the life of Florence Nightingale with nurses today. They look at toys used by children in the past and know that in Victorian times children were not allowed to play with their toys on Sundays. They describe the materials used for toys, particularly jigsaw puzzles, during the Victorian era and know that many of the toys were wooden. They compare their visit to Weston-Super-Mare with old postcards of the town to observe changes. They also experience what it was like to visit the sea-side during the Victorian times by riding on a tram and having donkey rides on the beach. They recognise some of the differences and similarities between nineteenth century life and their own.
75. By the end of Year 6 pupils can satisfactorily use factual knowledge to describe aspects of the past both in Britain and in the wider world. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 recall using a range of sources, including artefacts, information books and the Internet to gain knowledge and understanding of life in Ancient Egypt. They also visited an exhibition in a local museum and attended workshops, during the visit, to support them in their learning. As a result pupils talk confidently about crime and punishment, Egyptian Gods and life in these times. They each recall making an independent study of the history of a town or city, such as Salisbury, Rome and Venice. Most pupils are also able to use questionnaires, compiled themselves, to find out from their parents and grandparents about life in the 60s and 70s during the time of John Lennon, one of the Beatles. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 use photographs well to answer questions about the life and times of Henry VIII. They recall some of the events during the Second World War; in particular being an evacuee and life in their own village.
76. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. This judgement is based on an analysis of planning, samples of pupils' work and from discussions with pupils. Planning is based appropriately on a two-year rolling programme and teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. Teachers are putting a strong emphasis on developing



pupil's historical skills through discussions, by using artefacts, photographs and other sources of information and less emphasis on recording. As a result there is a limited amount of written work in some year groups. However, pupils are well able to explain their thoughts about the past. The use of skills in other areas of the curriculum to support teaching and learning in history is developing satisfactorily. For example, pupils use their mathematical skills to record and interpret information about population changes over the past two centuries. Pupils use the Internet to research information. However the school has not yet sufficiently developed cross-curricular links to teach historical knowledge and understanding in literacy lessons. The contribution of history to the provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to find out about their own culture through local studies and the cultures of other countries.

77. Management of the subject is very good. The policy has been effectively reviewed and the school has adopted the nationally suggested guidelines for teaching history. This has successfully addressed the issue in the previous report of having no scheme of work to ensure continuity and progression of skills. The subject is being effectively monitored in order to raise standards and as a result pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Assessment procedures have been effectively introduced and individual pupils' progress is now being tracked. However, assessment in history is in the early stages of development and the next step, appropriately identified by the school, is to link the assessment grades to National Curriculum attainment targets. This will give the teachers a clearer picture of the skills acquired - as well as what each pupil knows and understands. Resources are good and the school makes good use of visits and visitors to school to enhance pupils' learning. For example a member of the local community talked to pupils about life in the village during the Second World War. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 visited a museum in Swindon to look at an exhibition and to attend workshops to support them in their learning about Ancient Egypt.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

78. Standards in all strands of the subject are broadly average for Year 2, which represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average. By Year 6 standards remain below average because recent improvements made in the subject have not had time to make sufficient impact on pupils' learning. Pupils' overall achievement is, therefore, unsatisfactory. The school has made great strides in addressing the issues identified in the last inspection report. It has purchased new hardware and software, teachers have undertaken training, a comprehensive, nationally recommended scheme of work has been implemented, and detailed assessment procedures have been introduced. Pupils now achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 2. By Year 2, pupils use the mouse well to log on and to select from an on-screen menu. They word-process text effectively, showing competent use of the keyboard. This work supports their literacy skills. They save and print out their work. There was no evidence to support their use of tables or sounds or of their use of information and communication technology for investigations. A group of Year 2 pupils talked with interest about their use of information and communication technology both in school and at home. They have used a program to alter an image of a teddy bear by dressing it in different clothes. They effectively described what happened when they programmed a 'Pixie' device and made it move around the floor. In their books lower attainers have recorded accurately the steps involved in this process. Average attainers identify everyday devices such as televisions and washing machines that respond to commands and signals, illustrating them in their books. Higher attainers do the same work as others but with clearer illustration. Photographic evidence and the

limited notes made by pupils suggest that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, undertake much the same tasks with much the same result.

79. By Year 6, pupils' books show that higher attainers at least have downloaded information from the Internet through suitable safety filters, and retrieved information from CD-ROM to support a design brief. Average attainers have discovered that imprecise framing of questions leads to imprecise results, making, for example, Internet use 'frustrating'. The vast majority of pupils enters data carefully on spreadsheets and is beginning to produce graphs and charts from this. Pupils have little experience of interrogating such information to explore patterns or make predictions. They have not used equipment with sensors to monitor physical data, and have done little to compare and contrast information and communication technology with alternative methods. There is no evidence to suggest that they have used information and communication technology to make predictions. They have not explored an information and communication technology model.
  
80. The elements of information and communication technology observed in lessons, such as support for work about homes and furniture in Year 1, were taught well. Conversations with pupils and examination of the small amount of work retained indicate that the quality of teaching in the Years 1 and 2 classes is satisfactory overall, and results in sound learning. This is because work is suitable for the ages of the pupils - but there is little to indicate that tasks are precisely matched to their levels of attainment. On several occasions in Years 3 to 6, computers were present in some subject lessons, switched on, but remained unused. Pupils of all ages are well managed and generally they work at a good pace. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and assistants to play a full part in lessons. Specialist software for literacy helps them to improve for example their use of adjectives, and listening stations are well used to help pupils with dyslexia read better. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson on spreadsheets, teaching was good. Objectives were clearly set so pupils knew what they were going to do and, as the lesson progressed, good questioning helped them to see how well they were meeting demands. Although Plymouth Brethren children did not handle the computers, they completed similar work on paper so they were able to join in fully with the plenary discussion relating to graphs produced. The tasks completed showed that pupils in Year 5 reach broadly average standards, which are naturally below average for Year 6 even though they represent good learning both within the lesson and over the past year. The standards reached show that over the longer term pupils are taught satisfactorily.
  
81. Boys and girls have good attitudes towards the subject. They are eager to learn new skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 work in pairs or in small groups, where the older help the younger. Teachers ensure that pupils take turns to use the equipment, but pupils do not need close supervision to share and work together successfully. The head teacher co-ordinates the subject well and has enabled standards to rise significantly over the past two years. He has introduced a nationally recommended scheme of work to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. He has increased significantly the resources available so that the ratio of pupils to computers is better than average. They are not always efficiently deployed: several computers are arranged together in a small suite but the lack of a large screen or raised monitor means that pupils have difficulty following the teacher's explanations to the whole class. Through monitoring the headteacher is aware of the strengths and areas for development in teaching. Staff have received basic training through New Opportunities Funding but this has been slow to have sufficient impact to raise standards to where they should be by Year 6. Plans to share with all staff the expertise already in the school through focused 'in-house' training, especially in the use of information and communication technology throughout the curriculum, must be brought forward as a priority.

## **MUSIC**

82. No music lessons were seen – as these all took place outside the period of the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to judge standards or the quality of teaching in the subject. Examination of documentation and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that a full and broad curriculum for music which satisfies statutory requirements is being provided.
83. Year 6 pupils, for example, told inspectors how they were given the opportunity in recent lessons to compose music, record this in conventional notation, and perform it using percussion instruments. They also spoke of recent opportunities they had to listen to and appraise music from both European and non-European cultures. Music in Years 3 to 6 is taught by a specialist teacher and a number of pupils have peripatetic violin tuition. The overall music curriculum is enriched by a number of school or class performances such as last Christmas' 'Rock around the Flock' and Class 1's 'Miss Skellybones'. There has also been a recent musical appreciation day which involved singing, drumming and making musical instruments, and an African drumming day. These were both appreciated by the pupils spoken to by the inspectors. There was no singing, however, in the assemblies observed during the inspection which was a missed opportunity to support standards in this strand of the subject.
84. Planning is appropriately based on national guidelines and there are suitable structures in place for assessing pupils' progress in music. There is little evidence, however, of the use of information and communication technology to support the subject. The subject is well co-ordinated with, for example, some teaching having been monitored and a relevant action plan for improvement in place.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

85. The school appropriately teaches different aspects of physical education at different times of the year in order to make the best use possible of the weather and the facilities that are available. During the inspection, therefore, it was only possible to see games activities. The standards seen in these were at the expected level at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Records provided by the school indicate that standards in swimming are above, and in some cases well above, the expected levels. The last inspection judged standards in physical education overall to be above the national expectation.
86. Higher attaining Year 1 and 2 pupils are able to trap balls and pass them back to a partner. Some can pat a ball in the air with a bat at least five times without dropping it. Less well co-ordinated Year 1 pupils, however, find it difficult to catch a ball accurately. Most Year 3 and 4 pupils are aware of the need for a preliminary 'warm up', but only a few know the reason why. Most carry out a range of ball skill activities at an appropriate level and can evaluate their performance in terms of both physical and social skills. About a quarter of Year 5 and 6 pupils can dribble a ball very competently. During an 'invasion game', for example, they had good ball control and a high level of avoidance strategy. The skills demonstrated by most of the

remainder are at the expected level. The majority of the pupils evaluate their performance well and take relevant action to improve.

87. Most pupils enjoy physical education lessons and join in activities with a good degree of vigour. They are sensitive to others' needs and space. They have due regard for their own and others' safety and co-operate well with one another. Teaching is good overall. Activities frequently provide a good level of challenge for the pupils and methods employed ensure an increasing level of difficulty to tasks as the lessons proceed. This impacts well on pupils' developing skills. Pupil management was good in one of the three lessons seen during the inspection, but more variable in the other two with, for example, some pupils allowed to chatter when they should have been listening to their teacher.
88. Appropriate strategies for planning and assessment are fully in place and these ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met and that pupils' progress can be carefully monitored. There was no evidence during the inspection, however, of information and communication technology being used to support the subject. All pupils - including those with special educational needs - are included well in lessons, with additional adult support when appropriate. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator and a governor have monitored lessons and a relevant action plan for improvement has been constructed. Indoor physical education lessons take place in a nearby church hall as the school has no facilities of its own. This is unsatisfactory and inevitably has an adverse impact on standards.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

89. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. This finding is the same as that of the last inspection. Both boys and girls in Year 2 are able to suggest what might be considered 'special', such as things they value and places they appreciate. From these they develop the understanding that religious places such as churches and synagogues are special to worshippers and must be treated with respect. They have a growing awareness of aspects of religious symbolism. For example, after a visit to the local church, lower attainers, including those with special educational needs, drew and labelled a good range of features such as the 'eagle' lectern, bell and cross. Average attainers carefully noted that 'The bell rings every hour. Higher attainers gave fuller explanations: 'The bells tell us when it's time to go to church' and 'Jesus died on the cross.' They are aware of some key traditions of the Hindu faith such as the story of Rama and Sita and the celebration of Divali. Higher attainers are beginning to compare the celebrations of Divali and Christmas, but overall pupils do not offer many reflections to contribute to the development of their own values and beliefs. By Year 6 pupils are able to separate the 'financial' from the 'intangible' in lists of precious things. Average attainers for example explain 'what music means to me' and higher attainers point out the value of family as well as possessions. In their books pupils offered only simplistic conclusions that the message of the story of Jonah is 'to be good and pray' and notes on Islam include no explanations of the

practices involved. In a lesson observed, however, pupils reflected that many issues affecting values are not precisely clear but may involve a moral dilemma.

90. The pupils are interested in the subject. They listen well to their teachers and settle quickly to tasks. The vast majority contributes satisfactorily to discussions, willing to express their points of view because teachers value what they have to say. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good because teachers and pupils relate very well to each other. Teaching and learning are good overall. A good range of methods - including whole class discussion, brainstorming, individual and group activities- keep the pupils interested and impact well on their pace of learning. There are good links with literacy because key vocabulary is emphasised, but opportunities to reinforce discussion through written tasks are not regularly taken. Pupils do not, therefore, build up as useful a record of their studies to support future learning and develop their writing as well as they should. There was no evidence that information and communication technology is used to support learning.
  
91. Planning for religious education is based on nationally recognised guidelines. Although largely Christian in focus, the provision has due regard for aspects of other major world religions. Whilst its content succeeds in meeting the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, the school has not checked that it does so in the most appropriate way. It has not made use of the syllabus' assessment system, which emulates those for National Curriculum subjects and provides a useful framework to support pupils' gains in knowledge. There is a good range of resources and the school makes good use of its links with local Christian clergy as well as visitors of other faiths to broaden pupils' understanding. Parents of Plymouth Brethren pupils come to the school to give them religious education lessons independently.