

# INSPECTION REPORT

## REDCASTLE FURZE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thetford

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120905

Headteacher: Dr A Sheppard

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods  
21079

Dates of inspection: 14 – 17 October 2002

Inspection number: 251330

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St Martins Way  
Thetford  
Norfolk

Postcode: IP24 3PU

Telephone number: 01842 752 239

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Pearson

Date of previous inspection: April 2001

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs L Woods 21079	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Modern foreign languages	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs C Webb 9614	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr M Mayhew 22197	Team inspector	Foundation stage Art and design Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
Mr D Riddle 12721	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Mrs A Simpson 7420	Team inspector	Educational inclusion English as an additional language English Geography History Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Redcastle Furze Primary School is part of the Thetford Education Action Zone and is situated in an area of high social and economic deprivation. There are currently 270 boys and girls on roll, between the ages of 4 and 11 years, which makes it average in size. Most pupils come from the local housing estates and 24 per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The school has a small cultural mix, but with 64 per cent of parents not providing information, the exact proportion is not known. Three per cent of pupils are learning English as an additional language, with most speaking Portuguese as their first language. This is below the national average. Thirty-one per cent of pupils have special educational needs, under the new Code of Practice for the identification of such pupils, and nine have Statements of Special Educational Need. This is well above the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is well below average.

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

This is a greatly improved school, which has come a long way in a comparatively short time, under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. It now provides an effective education for its pupils, although it is the first to acknowledge that further improvements need to be made. The sense of teamwork and commitment from all staff is palpable and the quality of teaching is good overall, with a substantial proportion of very good and excellent teaching. This has led to significant improvements in standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Although these are below average for a significant minority of pupils, particularly in the current Year 6, pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities and make good progress. The school is very well led by the headteacher, with full support from governors and staff. Management by the headteacher and key members of staff is very good and the school provides good value for money.

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

- The quality of teamwork between all staff, and their shared determination to improve the school, are very good and create a very effective ethos.
- The quality of teaching is good and teaching assistants make an invaluable contribution to the quality of learning.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good overall.
- Very good provision for pupils' moral and social development, and very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, have had a significant impact on pupils' good attitudes and behaviour.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good.

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

- Standards in English, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology and religious education.
- Assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.

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

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

The school has made very good progress in addressing the issues identified at the time of the last inspection in April 2001, although it is the first to acknowledge that it has work still to do in consolidating these improvements. The leadership and management of the school are very good and have been significant factors in bringing this about. Teaching has improved considerably, from the unsatisfactory position at the last inspection, to good overall. As a result, standards in English have improved, as is evident in the results in national tests. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and is managed very well by the co-ordinator. Curriculum provision and assessment have been reviewed and consolidated, but these are the areas where more work needs to be done.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E*	E	C	B
Mathematics	E	E	D	C
Science	D	C	C	B

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E  
 very low                E  
                                  \*

The table shows that standards in English and mathematics have improved significantly over the past three years. In the 2002 tests for pupils in Year 6, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and above was higher than the national average in both subjects. However, the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was below average, affecting overall comparisons. In science, results at both the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 were similar to the national picture. Results also compare favourably with schools having a similar intake of pupils in all three subjects.

Pupils' attainment when they join the school is well below average particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress during their time in reception and in the infant classes, but early problems provide the school with a significant challenge and attainment in relation to the Early Learning Goals is below average by the time children leave reception. In the 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 2, attainment in reading and writing was well below average compared with the national picture. Compared with similar schools, attainment in writing was well below average and was below average in reading. In mathematics, standards were above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools. In both the infants and juniors, the school was delighted to exceed its targets, which were challenging, and this is the result of the hard work of the teachers throughout the school.

Pupils learning English as an additional language make very good progress in acquiring competence in English. All pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities, particularly those with special educational needs. The current Year 6, however, has a high proportion of these pupils and standards in English and mathematics are currently below average. Standards in science, geography, history, French and German, music and physical education are in line with expectations. In information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology and religious education, current standards are below expectations, but improving.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are happy to be at school and are interested in, and enthusiastic about, their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The vast majority of pupils are polite, considerate and friendly and behave well both in and out of the classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The school works hard to encourage pupils to develop as mature and thoughtful individuals, with noticeable success.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour are a testimony to the hard work of the staff and result from the good relationships throughout the school. Too many term-time holidays affect overall attendance and impact negatively on pupils' attainment and progress.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school, with nearly two-thirds of lessons seen during the inspection being good or better. The school makes full use of individual teachers' expertise in different subjects, which makes a very valuable contribution to the quality of learning. Teachers implement the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies well. Teaching in English and mathematics is good; basic skills in these areas are taught well, with pupils making good progress as a result. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and relevant, so that pupils' attention is fully engaged and the quality of learning is good. They are adept at involving all pupils in discussions and in ensuring all pupils work hard, by providing work which is matched well to their abilities. The very small number of unsatisfactory lessons occurred when these aims were not achieved in practice. In the reception classes, teaching staff involve children closely in their activities, by encouraging them effectively to think and talk about what they are doing. Older pupils are also fully engaged and work hard as a result. Teaching assistants provide invaluable support, particularly for boys and girls with special educational needs, and ensure they are fully included in all activities and make good progress as a result. Pupils learning English as an additional language are also well supported and make rapid progress in acquiring English.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All statutory requirements are in place, but some subjects do not receive sufficient emphasis. French, German and drama are valuable additions to the range of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Provision meets requirements and is managed very well by the co-ordinator. These pupils make good progress as a result.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Support from the local education authority and all teaching staff ensures these pupils are fully included in all activities and make very good progress in acquiring English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. It is good for their personal and spiritual development and satisfactory for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. This is central to the work of the school. All adults know the pupils very well and monitor their progress closely.

The school does all it can to involve parents in its life and work, and efforts are beginning to pay off. However, parental attendance at meetings is disappointingly low. Procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour are a strength, as are overall procedures for supporting pupils with special educational needs. The school is aware that the balance of the curriculum needs to be adjusted, to ensure all subjects receive appropriate attention.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has moved the school forward significantly in a relatively short time. Management by the headteacher, his deputy and all key staff is very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and provide valuable practical support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school is proud of the improvements it has achieved, but is very clear about where more work needs to be done and has effective plans to bring this about.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Teaching assistants in particular, make an invaluable contribution to the quality of learning. Specific grants are used well for the benefit of pupils.

Teaching and support staff are well matched to curriculum requirements and pupils' needs. The generous accommodation and satisfactory resources are used well. The leadership and management of the school are strengths. All staff share an equal commitment to ensuring all pupils are fully included and develop mature and responsible attitudes, and to providing a high quality of education. Whilst the school is carrying forward a significant sum from its budget, it has very clear plans for this, including provision of a very much needed nursery. The principles of best value are applied well to all its decisions, although governors need to take a more active role in monitoring spending decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Six parents attended the meeting with inspectors and 8.5 per cent returned questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>The school has high expectations and children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about progress.</li> <li>The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The very small percentage of parents expressing their views at the meeting and on questionnaires means that these cannot be taken as representative of parents as a whole. Inspectors agree with the positive statements above. Parents receive a good level of information about their children's progress, but sadly, attendance at consultation evenings is sparse. Homework is set regularly, but this is not always consistent between classes and inspectors agree this could be clarified.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. Very few children have spent time in pre-school education before entering the reception classes. At the time of the inspection, all had joined the school for the first time only a few weeks before. It is to the credit of the school's induction arrangements and the skills of the staff that nearly all of the children had quickly settled into school and were happy to attend. Children enter reception with well below the levels of attainment normally expected of children their age, including their language and communication, mathematical and personal and social skills. They make good progress in the reception classes, across all the areas of learning, but the majority do not meet the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup> by the time they enter Year 1.
2. Within the school population a high proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. The percentage of these pupils in each year group varies and this has an inevitable effect on standards in national tests each year. The school's measurable success in improving pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work, however, are impacting positively on their achievement in lessons and over time, and standards are rising steadily. The school carefully analyses results each year to identify differences between boys and girls and specific areas where improvements can be made. It sets realistic and challenging targets each year and was delighted to exceed these for pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 in the 2002 tests.
3. In the tests for 7-year-olds, over three-quarters of pupils reached the expected Level 2 or higher in reading and writing. Whilst this is well below the national average, it represents a significant improvement over the results from previous years. In mathematics, almost all pupils reached the expected Level 2 and nearly half achieved the higher Level 3. This is above the national average overall and well above average at the higher level. Compared with similar schools, whilst reading was below average and writing was well below, attainment in mathematics was well above average overall.
4. Good teaching is also impacting positively on standards for 11-year-olds. In the 2002 national tests, standards were average in English and science, compared with all schools, although below average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, standards in English and science were above average and were average in mathematics. This is a significant improvement on results in the 2001 tests, when performance in English and mathematics was well below average, both compared with the national picture and with similar schools. In both English and mathematics, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in 2002 was higher than that found nationally, but fewer pupils reached the higher Level 5. The school agrees that it now needs to focus on providing greater challenge for higher-attaining pupils to address this issue.
5. The school has very sensibly focused attention on raising standards in pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills, with evident success. Evidence shows that boys and girls achieve well in relation to their abilities in English, mathematics and science and make good progress. Overall standards in geography, history and music are in line with expectations for pupils' ages, but in art and design and religious education are below expectations throughout the school. Standards in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with expectations in the infants, but below in the juniors. In physical education, standards are below expectations in the infants, but

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<sup>1</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development.

in line with expectations in the juniors. This variation across the subjects is the result of a variety of factors. In physical education, for example, younger pupils are not well co-ordinated. Lack of effective subject co-ordination has impacted adversely on standards in art and design, design and technology and religious education. In ICT, teachers are not making full use of the subject to support learning across the curriculum. The school is fully aware of these issues and they are identified as priorities in the school improvement plan.

6. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards in line with their abilities and make good progress as a result of realistic planning to meet their needs. The fact that a number of pupils are no longer deemed to have special educational needs is evidence of the good progress made. Pupils learning English as an additional language also make good progress across the curriculum and very good progress in acquiring English, as a result of the effective support they receive from all staff.

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

7. The school continues to instil in pupils the positive values and good attitudes to work reported in the last inspection. From the time they start in the reception classes, children are welcomed into the school community. Many, however, have not had any pre-school experience and this is evident from their behaviour. Learning to share and do what they are told takes time, but understanding, sympathetic teachers and teaching assistants give them confidence to stay without their parents after a short time and, with persistent yet gentle persuasion and support, they soon enjoy school.
8. Pupils like, and are proud of, their school and the majority arrive on or before time in the mornings. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and registration provides a brisk start to the school day. Happy to be at school, pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their lessons. Although some concentration spans are short, and immature, silly attitudes can emerge, the atmosphere in most classrooms is happy, purposeful and busy. Any inappropriate behaviour is quickly quashed. All staff provide good role models for pupils to follow and relationships are good amongst peers and with adults. The school's practice of inclusion is good and pupils with special educational or other needs are well integrated and well supported by their peers. Teachers try hard to ensure that all are well motivated in lessons and enjoy some considerable success. In a Year 3 geography lesson, for example, gasps of indrawn breath were heard when the teacher tore up her lesson plan because she no longer had need of this as they had all done so well the previous session. This was a great boost to their self-esteem and they 'glowed' with pleasure at the announcement.
9. Pupils are polite and keen to practise their newly acquired foreign language skills on each other and visitors. 'Bonjour' and 'Guten tag' echoed around the corridors and playground during the inspection. Behaviour in classes, around the school and in the playground is good. Pupils know what is expected of them, understand why rules are necessary and most stay within the parameters. They sing the school rules song with great gusto in assembly. All are keen to have their efforts recognised and house points are counted eagerly; the younger ones like their 'stickers' and are eager to display as many as they can on their sweatshirts. Headteacher awards are special and proudly shared with others in assemblies. When sanctions are given, pupils agree these are fair. Few wish to repeat the experience if they are sent to the headteacher as a result of their failure to conform. 'Golden Time' is valued and any minutes lost are regretted. Detentions are an effective deterrent and few fixed-term exclusions are needed. There has only been one permanent exclusion during the past year.
10. Pupils develop a sense of natural justice and a strong moral code during their time in school and their moral development is very good. Pupils hold strong views and are not afraid to voice these, and enjoy thought-provoking discussions. During a lively debate in a

Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson, for example, some interesting and observant comments resulted, including the fact that the police would not have enough time to deal with other crimes if they spent all their time dealing with those who 'nick' from shops. Discussions on the 'right decisions' continued as they filed out to play.

11. Pupils' personal development is good overall and very good at the top of the school. All pupils are expected to, and do, help when asked to and they look after each other well. Social development is good throughout the school. Random seating at dinner times results in mixed age groups happily enjoying each other's company, which has a positive effect on their behaviour and attitudes to each other overall. Year 6 pupils wear their senior student sweatshirts with pride and most try to be good role models for the rest of the school. They use their initiative well, hold regular mini-fairs and spend the money raised carefully on planned projects of their own; outside play equipment for the junior playground is their next focus. Prefects have a high profile and are easily identified by their blue shield badges. They help the younger children in the playground and at dinner times, 'police' the external doors conscientiously during break times – 'go back and walk' was heard more than once! They take their role seriously and are disappointed when their peers do not respect their position. Prefects ensure that the school is a self-disciplining and self-regulating inclusive community, only resorting to the teachers when their maximum sanction of requiring any offenders to stand against the wall for five minutes is not effective in curtailing offending behaviour.
12. Representatives of the newly re-established school council are enthusiastic about their role and believe that they can effect change and will be listened to. They are keen to report their discussions to the governors and headteacher and look forward to reporting on their deliberations to the whole school during assembly time. However, little consultation with or 'feedback' to their classes takes place and the council is too adult-led, but once established it will play an important part in developing pupils' understanding of the democratic process and of their duties and responsibilities as citizens within Britain's multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society.

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

13. The quality of teaching in the school has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was judged unsatisfactory overall, but with wide variations. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in two-thirds of lessons and very good or better in over a fifth. Few unsatisfactory lessons were seen, and four were excellent.
14. Teaching in the reception classes is good, with over a third of lessons being very good. Teachers are well supported by their teaching assistants and have a clear understanding of the needs of young children and of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They plan their lessons well, ensuring a sound balance between activities directed by the staff and those chosen by the children. Consequently, children enjoy a range of activities that successfully build on their skills and knowledge across all the areas of learning. Classroom organisation is good, with the result that all children receive close attention and effective support for their needs. The staff and children relate very well to each other, resulting in children feeling comfortable and happy and eager to learn.
15. Teaching is good overall across the infants and juniors, with a significant proportion of very good and occasionally excellent teaching and only a very small amount of teaching which is unsatisfactory. As a result of this overall better quality teaching, pupils' rate of progress has improved, most notably in mathematics and in science.
16. Teachers mainly have sufficient knowledge of the subjects they teach. The school makes good use of teachers' individual specialisms, for example in mathematics, languages and music. This approach ensures that teaching is of the best quality and that all teachers

have opportunities for professional development through observing the work of more experienced teachers. However, there are some deficiencies in teachers' subject knowledge. For example, few teachers are sufficiently competent in art and design and in design and technology to meet pupils' needs fully in these subjects.

17. There are four good qualities of teaching that are common to most lessons across the infants and juniors and which have a positive effect on pupils' learning. First, teachers make very good use of support staff and other resources available to them. The school is fortunate to have a team of teaching assistants who work hand-in-hand with teachers and are sufficiently experienced and competent to take the initiative when required in lessons. For example, in a good science lesson for Year 2 pupils, the teaching assistant quietly but efficiently worked with lower-attaining pupils to ensure that they understood the tasks and concepts and that they were fully included.
18. Secondly, the management of pupils is good because most teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and expect pupils to take a responsible attitude to their lessons. This means that there is little time wasted, pupils meet teachers' expectations to behave well and usually focus on the tasks that teachers ask them to do.
19. Thirdly, teachers and pupils relate well to each other. This engenders a good working atmosphere and means that pupils trust their teachers and feel comfortable about asking them questions, particularly when they need to clarify their learning. For instance, there was much questioning from pupils in an excellent history lesson in Year 6, including those with lower attainment, about life in the 1960s and 1970s.
20. Lastly, most teachers plan their lessons well. Planning is usually effective in identifying appropriate work to take all pupils' learning forward, although this is not the case in every subject. For example, the planning for an unsatisfactory art lesson failed to identify sufficiently challenging tasks for the pupils to do. This resulted in unsatisfactory progress because the teacher failed to promote specific teaching points and pupils had little guidance.
21. In most lessons, teachers use questioning effectively, to encourage pupils to recall what they have already learnt and to make them think hard. Questions usually match pupils' levels of understanding, because teachers know their pupils well, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. For example, in a very good English lesson in Year 6 about the genres of writing, the teacher literally fired questions at the pupils. They responded enthusiastically, with answers that were succinct and to the point. This made pupils feel valued and essential to the progress of the lesson. Just occasionally, however, as in a religious education lesson in the juniors, the questions are not sufficiently searching, or are asked of pupils who have not reached a level of understanding to match the demands of the questions. This hinders progress, because pupils' self-esteem is lowered.
22. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to good effect. Indeed, several teachers apply the format of the strategies to most of their lessons in other subjects. This is effective, particularly in the first and last part of lessons. For example, teachers use the first part to explain to pupils what they are going to learn in the lesson. This encourages pupils' interest effectively, as in a Years 4 and 5 art and design lesson. The lesson moved at a lively pace and pupils learned well because of the element of expectancy achieved. Similarly, some teachers use the last part of lessons well, when they check with pupils what they have learned. This helps pupils to take responsibility for their learning and promotes their interest in the next lesson in the subject.

23. Teachers are very well informed about pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans for these pupils contain very clear targets and lesson planning takes full account of these targets. Teachers and their assistants are very effective in enabling all pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, to have full access to the curriculum and work hard towards meeting their targets.
24. Teachers' high expectations are apparent across the school. In almost all lessons, teachers are explicit about what they expect of pupils. In an excellent English lesson, for example, the teacher's enthusiastic yet firm instructions captured and held the pupils' attention. The pace she maintained and her questions and supporting comments ensured all pupils took an active part in learning throughout the lesson. However, teachers' expectations are not always as high as they could be in relation to the quality of recorded work asked of the pupils. Only infrequently do teachers remind pupils to produce their best quality work, or to use the skills they have learned in one subject to support work in another. For example, few teachers remind pupils to apply the skills they have learned in literacy lessons to their writing in other subjects. As a result, the quality of writing is not as good as it could be. In contrast, at the end of an introduction to an art and design lesson, the teacher in an infant class told the pupils that they should be 'creators of a masterpiece'. The pupils went off proudly and produced work of good quality.
25. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give praise when it is appropriate. This encourages pupils to try hard to improve. However, there is little guidance given in the marking about how pupils could do better. Pupils in the upper juniors do not know what levels of the National Curriculum they are achieving, nor what they need to do to achieve the next level; neither does marking consistently set targets for pupils to achieve against which they and their teachers can measure their rate of progress.

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

26. Curriculum provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and matches the quality of that identified at the last inspection. Teachers are very experienced and have fully implemented the new curriculum arrangements for children up to the end of the reception year.
27. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is very well enhanced by the addition of drama, French for all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 and German for Year 6 pupils, and a satisfactory programme for pupils' personal, social and health education. However, the school acknowledges insufficient time is devoted to art and design and to design and technology, which has an adverse effect on pupils' attainment in these subjects. The school makes good use of teachers, specialist knowledge in, for example, French, German and mathematics to good effect.
28. The school follows the National Literacy Strategy closely. However, although there is a good focus on specialist vocabulary in other subjects, the school has not yet formally identified all opportunities for teaching literacy across the curriculum. Similarly, the school very effectively follows the National Numeracy Strategy in mathematics lessons, but has not yet formally planned how elements of numeracy can be taught in other subjects. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used occasionally in other subjects of the curriculum, for example older pupils study the use of spreadsheets in mathematics and younger pupils use a simple graphics package in art. However the school agrees that overall use of ICT is undeveloped.

29. The curriculum is fully accessible to all pupils, with good quality medium-term and lesson planning to accommodate their different needs. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and the requirements of the Code of Practice are met fully. Effective support from teachers and teaching assistants enables these pupils, and those learning English as an additional language, to take a full part in lessons within classes. The school makes satisfactory provision for gifted and talented pupils, for example, in physical education and in mathematics, but this provision is at an early stage of development.
30. Members of the community provide satisfactory support, some coming in to listen to pupils read. The school is also developing very valuable links with a local supermarket. However, although there are some visitors to the school, such as representatives of the Christian faith and the local community policeman, this area of support for the curriculum is undeveloped. To the school's great disappointment, the local multi-agency day organised by the police was cancelled at very short notice in the summer. They have been assured, however, that this will take place next year. Pupils are prepared appropriately for the next phase of education, with Year 6 pupils making preliminary visits to the receiving secondary schools and return visits by younger pupils from these schools.
31. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities supports the curriculum, including football, netball, drama, music and a computer club. Older pupils, including those with physical disabilities, have the opportunity to enhance their foreign language skills by taking part in exchange visits to a linked school in Germany and to France.
32. The school has improved substantially the way it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The previous inspection judged at that time, that these aspects were satisfactory overall, although the school's provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development was judged unsatisfactory. This is not now the case. Indeed, the current inspection finds that the school provides well for pupils' spiritual development and very well for their moral and social development. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
33. As a result of visionary leadership and a more unified approach to teaching and learning by the staff, pupils are given better opportunities to develop personally. The staff have considered in some depth the approach they need to take to ensure that pupils learn in a secure and interesting environment and to give them the independence to mature as responsible citizens, capable of making measured decisions.
34. The school works hard to raise pupils' own perspective of themselves as valued individuals in a community that has common aims. Regular assemblies, which now fulfil the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship, often focus on attributes, such as personal beliefs, understanding of others' points of view, respect and tolerance. For example, one interesting whole-school assembly, using the symbolism of the 'Prodigal Son', encouraged pupils to reflect on the mistakes we make and on how we can always 'make a fresh start.' Short prayers on these occasions are meaningful and promote a spiritual dimension.
35. Most teaching successfully encourages pupils of all levels of ability to research, question and to contribute their own ideas to class discussions. For example, the teacher in a good history lesson brought about a period of silent reflection, followed by sensible discussion, when pupils were horrified to learn about the outrages inflicted by Vikings on monasteries. Reception class children were genuinely surprised and in awe when they learnt that carrots came out of the ground with dirt on and so did potatoes. They watched, fascinated, as red onions were unpeeled and then passed around for them to test the skin texture. Despite this positive picture, there is scope for the school to promote further pupils' spiritual development, for instance through giving them more opportunities to consider and express their thoughts and feelings about, and through, the creative subjects of art and music. The creative element of the curriculum, whilst satisfactory, does not

support pupils' cultural development as well as it might. During their French and German classes, pupils' knowledge of European cultures and mores increases. Learning about world religions in lessons is better than it was and is beginning to make a better contribution to pupils' knowledge of different cultures. Experiences, such as learning about African dance and religious festivals are also helpful in this respect. However, the school does not, however, sufficiently explore with pupils the increasing range of cultures and racial backgrounds evident in the school, nor their implications for the wider community.

36. The orderliness of the school on a day-to-day basis and the insistence on pupils following the school rules strongly encourage them to develop respect for each other and for the adults around them. Specific lessons regularly consider matters to do with moral principles. These lessons, called 'Circle Time' in the infant classes and 'Personal and Social Education' in the juniors, promote in pupils a wider knowledge and understanding of moral issues. For example, a good lesson in Year 6 taught pupils how to make sound decisions about occasions when they may be in danger. Some teachers prompt quality discussion in religious education lessons and use sacred texts as a means to compare and contrast the messages given about how we should live our lives. The high expectations of staff for all individuals to work together and to achieve are clearly apparent. Staff set clear standards in terms of social expectations. They strongly encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions, including the care of the environment, and fully value each pupil's contributions, both in lessons and around the school. The prefect system is a further example of how the school promotes in pupils a sense of their social responsibilities.

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

37. The school is very conscious of, and conscientious about, pupils' health, welfare and safety. It has good procedures to promote these important aspects, with a designated governor, representing good improvement since the last report. The comprehensive new policy is effective and understood well by all staff. Regular risk assessments are fully recorded and monitored. The school's practice of first aid is good, with trained first-aid personnel on site at all times and all incidents recorded. Procedures for child protection are good. More than one member of staff has been trained in child protection and teaching staff are aware of issues, although the designated teacher agrees this should be highlighted regularly at staff meetings.
38. The school continues to have the good systems for recording and monitoring attendance recorded in the last report and has raised the attendance percentage. Holidays during term time form the basis for most of the authorised absence percentage and are not encouraged. Certificates for 100 per cent attendance are awarded in the achievement assemblies every half term. The education welfare officer visits the school regularly to scrutinise registers and assists the school in encouraging good attendance and punctuality.
39. Support for pupils who have special educational or other needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator also teaches literacy in all classes and thereby gains an invaluable in-depth knowledge of her charges and where they may need additional support. This is excellent use of her time. The support for the few pupils who speak English as an additional language is good, both in class and from the visiting local education authority teacher.
40. All staff implement the school's policy for behaviour management consistently. These very effective procedures have improved since the last inspection and are very good. Procedures to promote and monitor pupils' personal development are sound. Although no specific records are kept, teachers know their pupils, and encourage each individual's



development, very well. Pupils are expected to help when asked to do so and to care for others; children in the reception classes wear their helper's hat with great pride. In Year 6, sixteen pupils are appointed as school prefects. Year 6 teachers also choose the head prefect, who has the power to recommend that those not fulfilling their duties appropriately are 'fired' and also to appoint replacements for those who do not wish to continue. School council representatives have been appointed by their class teacher rather than elected by their peers. The house system is not much used and no captains are appointed. The school plans to develop procedures to promote personal development further, now that overall behaviour issues have been addressed successfully.

41. At the time of the last inspection, the school had not sufficiently developed its systems for tracking and recording pupils' academic and personal progress. Since that time they have put in place an effective strategy for ensuring that attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is carefully recorded and followed through for each pupil. This includes performance in the national tasks and tests, the optional yearly tests and other assessments, which are carried out on an annual basis. It is now possible to see the rate of progress made by each child.
42. The youngest children are assessed very well in relation to the Early Learning Goals and other aspects of their development, such as their disposition to learning. This is done by regular observation and staff discussion, which then feeds into planning. It is a natural part of teaching in the early years and represents good practice, which other schools are keen to adopt. As pupils grow older, teachers make regular assessments in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils have individual targets in English and mathematics, which include their personal development, and these are mainly well pitched and helpful. Assessment is less consistent in other subjects, apart from ICT, and the strengths and weaknesses of individuals in subjects such as art and design, music, history and religious education are less well identified. Co-ordinators, however, monitor assessments and pupils' work to gain a comprehensive picture of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects.
43. There are very effective systems in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Targets on these pupils' individual education plans are very clear and suited to their special needs, and teachers take account of them when planning pupils' work. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Tracking of these pupils' progress is rigorous, so that improvements in their work can clearly be observed.
44. The school does not, however, identify or analyse the achievements of different ethnic groups. Good support is provided for the minority of pupils who are learning English as an additional language and some assessment is carried out for these pupils by an external support teacher. On the whole, pupils from different backgrounds attain well and make good progress but the school does not have the detailed information to make decisions about future support.
45. The school has a range of data, which it uses to review attainment and to establish priorities for improvement. It makes good use of information on individual pupils from their entry profiles and their end-of-key-stage tests. This feeds into curriculum planning and the management of support for pupils' individual needs. Some analysis is made of the performance of pupils by gender and in the strands of the core subjects, but other contextual factors such as ethnic background, free school meals or stage of language learning are not taken fully into account. Additionally, the measurement of the value added to pupils' education over the time spent in the school is at an early stage of development.

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

46. The school has worked very hard to establish the existing satisfactory relationship with the majority of parents and plans to develop this into a more equal partnership. However, despite the school's best efforts to involve more parents in their children's lives at school few, other than those of reception and Year 1 children, come in regularly. Parents who have close contact with the school are unstinting in their praise for what the school has achieved for their children and indeed for themselves. Last year's project, called SHARE, run as part of the education action zone family learning initiative, was very popular and proved a very worthwhile experience for both parents and children.
47. Parents' support for the school is growing steadily, although many are reluctant to voice this and some prefer to keep their distance however much they are encouraged. Approximately 20 per cent had signed the old home-school agreement, which is indicative of the difficulties the school has to overcome to engage with more parents. Response to the new home-school agreement, very recently sent out, is, however, much more positive. Too few help their children with work at home; although verbal communication is good, use of the home school diary is variable and is not an effective means of communication between teacher and parent. The school operates an 'open door' policy, teachers are happy to make appointments with those who have concerns and the friendly office staff will always help anyone in need. Parents' attendance at meetings, other than for consultation when appointments are arranged, is poor. However, when the Christmas Carol concert took place last year the hall was filled to overflowing.
48. Parents receive good-quality information from the school in the form of news and other letters, the school brochure and governors' annual report. Each term, they receive a report on what their child has been studying and what has been achieved. Most of these indicate where and how their child can improve and form the basis for discussion at consultation meetings. Parents find these helpful.
49. Parents are pleased that the reception teachers visit them at home before their child starts school. This gives them confidence and they value the support and encouragement they receive at the start of their child's first term. Those whose children have special education or other needs are encouraged to be involved in their individual education plans and the regular reviews. However, attendance is sparse and, as a result, parents and carers of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need are not sufficiently involved in the setting of appropriate targets for their children. Parents of children who speak English as an additional language are also well supported by the school. Standard letters for holidays and local visits, for example, have been translated into Portuguese to help the parents.
50. This term, the parent teacher association (PTA) has re-formed and, headed by the enthusiastic new Chair, is planning exciting fund-raising events, the first one 'hot off the press' as the inspection finished. Volunteers are ready to 'man' the school discos. A local branch of a large national supermarket has agreed to 'adopt' the school and take part in a fund-raising activity, involving the school, children and PTA. Any money raised will be used for the benefit of the children.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The school is very well led by the headteacher, with total support from staff and governors. His clear vision for its future includes many exciting developments and all staff share his commitment to providing a high quality education for the pupils and raising standards across the curriculum. Together, all involved in the work of the school create a warm, welcoming ethos, in which all adults and pupils are valued for their contribution and included in all aspects of its life.
52. The school is very well managed by the headteacher and key staff. Highly effective delegation of responsibilities ensures its smooth day-to-day running and, more importantly, makes all involved feel that their contribution is important and valued. The headteacher and his deputy work as a very effective complementary team, balancing innovation with practicality very well. The assistant head has a clear role in maintaining staff well-being, which she feels has improved enormously with the advent of the new headteacher bringing common sense and a 'breath of fresh air' into the school. The senior management structure is fluid, allowing individual staff to work to their strengths and avoiding unnecessary meetings. The sense of teamwork, however, ensures that all key staff are fully informed about all that is going on.
53. 'Key stage' co-ordinators keep a close eye on the work in the infants and juniors, overseeing planning and juggling with the changing balance of class composition. Managing discipline and behaviour is an integral part of their role and consistent implementation of school policies has had a positive impact on improvement in these areas. Their role in maintaining good morale is central to their work and the success of this is clearly evident. Subject co-ordinators keep a close, expert eye on their areas of responsibility, monitoring planning and pupils' work, and providing support and advice for colleagues. It is noticeable that those areas of the curriculum which lack co-ordinators are the ones needing most development and the school has appropriate plans to address this issue.
54. Monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough. The headteacher and senior staff share this role effectively and provide very good support for the teaching staff as a whole. All teachers are monitored on a regular basis, with detailed discussions contributing effectively to the performance management programme. Monitoring of pupils' work is most thorough in English, but effective assessment in mathematics, science and ICT provides a good picture of attainment and progress in these subjects. The school is aware of the need to extend this aspect of its work.
55. Although short of several members, the governing body meets its statutory requirements fully and takes a close interest in the work of the school. They bring a broad spectrum of expertise to their roles and monitor developments well through regular reports from the headteacher and key staff to committees and the full governing body. Many governors, including the chair of governors, are regular visitors, providing invaluable practical support and advice. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development and are very pleased with the improvements instigated by the new headteacher. However, whilst they are aware, and approve, of all initiatives, they do not take a sufficiently pro-active role in monitoring the value added by the school.
56. The school improvement plan is comprehensive. Drawn up in consultation with all staff, it already covers most of the areas for development identified by the inspection. Although governors do not play an active role in identifying priorities, they are fully aware of, and involved in, their implementation. High on the agenda is the establishment of the nursery, which will enable the school to address children's very low attainment when they start school much more effectively.

57. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. The co-ordinator, appointed since the last inspection, has had a very good impact on the provision for these pupils and the key issue has been addressed fully. The responsible governor has a very good understanding of their requirements and gives good support to developments for them. Teaching assistants are very skilled at enabling these pupils to have full access to the curriculum. Appropriate use is also made of outside agencies to help with pupils with special educational needs. Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is managed well. These pupils receive good support both from the visiting specialist teacher and, more importantly, in the classrooms by the teachers and competent teaching assistants.
58. The school is currently carrying forward an exceptionally high budget figure. However, planning shows all funds are earmarked for specific projects and current pupils are not disadvantaged in any way. A proportion of these funds, for example, will be utilised in the near future for the creation of a much-needed nursery. This is essential to help children with the development of appropriate skills before compulsory school age, as many currently join the school with very low levels of skills, for example in literacy and social development, and do not have access to pre-school experience. The deliberate policy of employing experienced teaching staff and a good range of teaching assistants has been very effective in raising pupils' attainment, for example in mathematics and for those with special educational needs, and will account for a significant element of funds carried forward. There are also firm plans in place to utilise some of these funds in the very near future to develop a science and design and technology room to enhance the curriculum. However, development planning could benefit from having greater detail of financial implications of initiatives to be undertaken.
59. Day-to-day management of the school's finances is satisfactory, with appropriate safeguards in place. The school ensures that they get value for money for new purchases. Members of the governing body work closely with the headteacher and bursar to ensure that available funds are spent effectively. There are informal systems in place for checking the effectiveness of spending but the governing body does not have any formal systems in place. The main recommendations of the most recent audit have been implemented. However, no audit has taken place since 1997 and there is no record of non-public funds being audited.
60. The school is fully staffed with experienced teachers, well matched to their curriculum responsibilities, and augmented by the two as yet unqualified members of staff who are at the outset of their training. Committed, well-trained and effective teaching assistants complete their number. The strong team spirit and corporate approach, evident in the close-knit staff room, make very positive contributions to the lively and welcoming atmosphere in school. Good induction procedures support new teaching staff, qualified and unqualified, and effective appraisal and performance management take place. The friendly, very approachable and accessible administration staff are fully involved as part of the school 'team', one making a particularly valuable contribution by playing the piano in assemblies.
61. The school has ample accommodation, indoors and outside, for the numbers on roll and provides a good range of specialist rooms, which include the newly created drama and music studio, attractive library, art room and gymnastics hall as well as a designated medical room. Classrooms are well organised and attractive displays on these walls and along the corridors celebrate pupils' work and enliven the environment. Accommodation effectively allows for pupils with physical disability to have full access to the curriculum. All is well cleaned and maintained, with any minor problems arising dealt with quickly and efficiently by the conscientious site manager.

62. Overall the school has sufficient, satisfactory resources to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Music is taught in the studio with high quality instruments and the Foundation Stage is well resourced. However, the equipment and materials for teaching design and technology are not well organised and are currently unsatisfactory. Whilst the resources for teaching pupils with special educational needs are adequate more use needs to be made of information and communication technology to support and improve their learning. Additionally, there are occasions when resources could be better suited to pupils' needs, for example, where a visually impaired pupil does not have access to enlarged text. The large, attractive library contains a satisfactory number of fiction books, although the range needs to be increased in order to meet the interests of all the older pupils.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

This is a greatly improved school, which has come a long way in a relatively short time. In order to consolidate these improvements, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- i) raise standards further in English, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, design and technology and religious education by:
- overall, providing more focused challenge for higher-attaining pupils;
  - in English by:
    - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills across the curriculum, for example reading and writing in other subjects;
  - in information and communication technology, art and design and design and technology by:
    - improving the confidence and competence of staff to teach the subjects,
    - giving pupils more opportunities, on a regular basis, to learn creatively about a wider range of methods in art and design,
    - reviewing the schemes of work to establish where these subjects can be used to complement learning in other subjects of the curriculum,
    - teaching pupils how to achieve better quality than they do in their finished pieces of work;
  - in religious education by:
    - ensuring that all teachers have sufficient knowledge of the subject,
    - monitoring and evaluating more closely the quality of work that pupils achieve,
    - raising teachers' expectations for pupils to write independently more often than they do, so that finished pieces are of high quality, the result of pupils' own thinking, and writing skills are accurately applied;

*paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 16, 24, 27, 28, 29, 62, subject sections*

- ii) improve assessment by:
- improving the quality of marking to provide pupils with more information on how they could improve their work,
  - drawing together the range of assessment data it has and carrying out a more detailed analysis in order to
    - prove its effectiveness,
    - monitor all groups of pupils equally effectively,
    - plan strategically for future development,
  - developing assessment in all subjects in line with the good practice in English, mathematics, science and ICT.

*Paragraphs 25, 42, 44, 45, subject sections*

In addition to the issues above, the following points could be included in the governors' action plan:

- make fuller use of the community to support the curriculum and improve pupils' cultural development; (30, 35)
- make greater use of existing opportunities to promote pupils' personal development; (40)
- increase the role of the governing body in monitoring the work of the school and budget spending and arrange for an audit to take place. (55, 58, 59)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	4	13	31	25	3	0	0
Percentage	5	17	41	33	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	270
bNumber of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	56

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	84

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence (2000 / 2001 figures)

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence (2000 / 2001 figures)

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	17	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	22
	Girls	12	11	16
	Total	30	30	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (70)	77 (73)	94 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	18
	Girls	11	12	11
	Total	29	31	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (70)	80 (91)	74 (61)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	29	13	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	20	26
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	34	31	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (53)	74 (63)	90 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (49)	64 (61)	90 (82)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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



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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	88	20	1
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	1	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	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	174	2	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	24.5

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	264

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001 / 2002
	£
Total income	685 995
Total expenditure	659 961
Expenditure per pupil	2 374
Balance brought forward from previous year	104 102
Balance carried forward to next year	130 136

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	270
Number of questionnaires returned	23
Percentage returned	8.5%

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	39	9	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	39	9	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	52	0	17	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	30	30	9	4
The teaching is good.	44	39	13	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	17	22	9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	36	43	17	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	48	9	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	9	78	4	9	0
The school is well led and managed.	36	43	13	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	61	4	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	23	17	4	13

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The very small percentage of returns means that the views expressed above cannot be considered to represent parents' views as a whole.

## **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**

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

63. Children make good progress in this area of learning and attainment is in line with expectations for their age. Across the Foundation Stage, they gain confidence in choosing activities, because staff provide a sensitive structure to develop this skill. They constantly encourage children to feel confident about what they can achieve because they give each child close attention when they do their work and successfully encourage them to listen closely. For example, when changing for physical activities or when learning the sounds represented by simple pictures in a reading session, teachers are adept at encouraging all children to 'do their best' and to take a full part at whatever their level of capability. The children respond well and are proud of what they can do because the teachers and teaching assistants always give the most appropriate levels of praise. Children play well and share the equipment, for example when using construction equipment, but they need the presence of an adult to help them to interact with each other. This is because most children have not had the range of experiences of co-operative play normally found for children of this age. For example, children using a simple mathematics game had difficulty doing it on their own without adult guidance.
64. Teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants promote children's sense of responsibility well when they ask them to take the register to the school secretary and to take responsibility for equipment. It is a measure of how well this is achieved by the speed with which most children clear away after they have finished their work although, at this early stage in their schooling, the adults still need to give considerable direction. Children show interest in their work and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Some concentrate for considerable periods, for example when they play with the equipment in the 'activity' room, or when they take part in sessions aimed at developing their numeracy skills. Staff make a point of reminding children of the need for politeness. On several occasions, children were heard to say 'Please' and 'Thank you' to each other.

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

65. Children make good progress in this area of learning because the teachers place great emphasis on extending their range of experiences, thus increasing their vocabulary and understanding. Nevertheless, attainment is below expectations; most children's range of vocabulary is very limited for their ages and many do not have enough confidence or the capability to express themselves clearly. Teaching is very good and staff work very hard to rectify this situation, whether in whole-class discussions, for example when talking in 'Circle Time' about taking care of property, in 'focused' learning activities, or incidentally throughout the day. Staff make a point of valuing each child's contributions and use questioning skilfully to support them to express their thoughts and feelings. Of particular note are the ways teachers support children who are at the early stages of learning English, because English is not their first language. After only a few weeks, these children are already able to communicate simply in English and are thus gaining the confidence to take a full part in all the activities.
66. Most children's reading skills are at a very basic level, although a few recognise their own names when they are written down. A small minority write their names, but most have poor pencil control, or have no knowledge of letters and the sounds that they represent. The teachers have adopted a formal approach to teaching children about letter sounds. They agree, however, that most children require more opportunities to choose structured play activities for themselves designed to develop their early writing and reading skills.

Despite enjoying stories, most children find it difficult to listen with concentration to stories that they hear from a tape recording. However, they respond well to stories told to them by a teacher or teaching assistant. For instance, they listened reasonably well to the story of 'The Giant Watermelon', but their low level of language ability meant that the majority of children were unable to articulate simple responses to questions, such as 'What are they doing?' and 'Who's this?' By the end of reception, some children write reasonably clearly, especially when they copy writing in their books done by teachers, but few write independently any more than a few words. Similarly, whilst many recognise and read out a range of simple words, their reading skills are by this time still below the level normally found.

### **Mathematical development**

67. Although below expectations for their age, children make good progress in their mathematical learning, from a very low starting point on entry to the school. Indeed, it was noticeable during the week of the inspection how well children progressed in their ability to count when, by the end of the week, several of them could count independently up to five, and some to ten. Progress is good because of good teaching. Teachers take every opportunity to promote children's knowledge of numbers, such as using registration time to practise counting. They particularly make learning about numbers fun when they use strategies that relate to children's familiar experiences. For example, one teacher gets children to count by making 'Mexican waves', as in a football crowd, and another by counting a number of 'Teddies' that the children have brought to school. Children enjoy 'counting songs', such as 'Five Little Ducks' and 'Five Speckled Hens', which help them to understand the concept of subtraction. However, despite these strategies, and more, most children find it difficult to understand the concept of 'one more' and 'one less'. Some children recognise and name numbers to ten that they see written down and, during the week of the inspection, they learned to recognise the number and value of 'zero'.
68. By the end of the reception year, most children understand the meaning of 'more' and 'less' and assemble objects, such as drinking straws, in order of size. They use correctly the terms 'round', 'circle' and 'square' to describe shape, although their ability to write numbers correctly remains low. Whilst the teaching of mathematics is good overall, the lowest ability children need many opportunities to engage in play activities that promote mathematical experiences. Sometimes their learning in formal situations palls because they lose concentration. This is recognised by the staff, who use this first half term of the year to assess each child's needs fully, whilst building a range of relevant activities for children to choose freely.

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

69. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is below expectations for their age. However, they build on their general knowledge to help them understand more about the world around them well, as a result of very good teaching. Teachers are very aware that most children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very limited. For example, many of them have not come across a number of common fruits. Consequently, when the children are presented with a range of fruits and vegetables, they are fascinated and keenly use their senses to find out about them. They look closely at the similarities and differences and are surprised, for example, when they see the 'veins' on a cabbage leaf. There is a sense of wonder as the teacher cuts open an apple and describes how the pips will grow into new apple trees. Children learn simple scientific processes when the teacher asks them to predict what they will find in a potato and then they find out whether they were correct.
70. Role-play in a range of play activities further enhances children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and their social development. They pretend to be shoppers

and shopkeepers in the 'supermarket', asking for prices and making shopping 'lists'. Children enjoy these activities and behave very well, but many have poorly developed communication skills. This inhibits their ability to learn from each other.

71. Children become familiar with computers and other equipment that helps communication. They use a 'telephone' to hold pretend conversations and, later, will control a tape recorder so that they can listen independently to story tapes. Already, some children use a mouse and deftly 'click' on objects on a computer screen to make them 'move'.

### **Physical development**

72. Children make good progress in developing their physical skills, as a result of good teaching. They have good opportunities to take part in outdoor play activities when they use a range of tricycles, scooters and other wheeled toys, which some children already control well. It is a confined space for so many children to use at once, so it is a measure of their competence in controlling their toys that there are very few accidents. Staff have good oversight of the children during these periods and look forward to the time when the classes will be able to share wider outside resources with the school's nursery, soon to be built. Children's hand and feet co-ordination improves well when they take part in more formal physical activities in one of the school's halls. At first, some children have poor co-ordination but, with the diligent help of the teacher and the teaching assistant, most of them achieve an element of success, in which they take pride. By the end of the session, all children could jump 'on the spot' and half of them could hop.
73. Children's control of tools and equipment is generally below what is normally expected for their age. Many find it difficult to use simple scissors, play dough to make models of fruits, or to control a pencil or other mark-making equipment. Staff provide a wealth of opportunities for children to develop these skills, which is apparent from the classroom organisation. One room is given over to the provision of large and small play equipment and each of the main classrooms has a 'writing corner', 'office' area and craft area. Children use a range of small equipment such as jigsaws, in which they develop their hand/eye co-ordination.

### **Creative development**

74. There is good provision for children's creative development. Teaching is good and children make good progress towards meeting the Early Learning Goals by the time they transfer to Year 1. At this early stage in their education, children delight in experimenting with paint. They use paints freely to create pictures of themselves, or mix them together to make autumn pictures. Some paintings have no particular form, but are attractive and interesting pieces in themselves. Children try to print patterns with shapes and some patterns show the care that they take to make their work tidy. Creative activities such as these, when children work together in small groups, are invaluable for developing their language and social skills, although conversation between children tends to be monosyllabic. When led by the teacher as a whole class, children are more confident to share their ideas about the work they have done. They explain how they have made their collages about fruits and show that they know the names of the colours they have used.
75. Children enjoy taking part in musical activities and gain confidence to sing together as they learn the words and tunes of nursery rhymes, such as 'Humpty Dumpty'. In one session, they sensibly selected percussion instruments with which to experiment. Most children learned to follow the teacher's instructions to start and stop playing their instruments because the teacher had high expectations for them to do so. They followed instructions to play loudly or softly and some managed to keep a reasonable rhythm. Some children have difficulty in playing their instruments at the same time as singing, but these aspects improve as they practise, such as in the song 'I like bananas, you like bananas'.

## ENGLISH

76. There have been important improvements in English since the last inspection. The school has worked very hard to put in place strategies to raise attainment and these efforts are being successful. Leadership of the subject is now strong, assessment is thorough and the quality of teaching is good. As a result, gains in attainment for 7- and 11-year-olds have been achieved. However, these gains have not had time to be secured and longer-term improvements throughout the school are still to be consolidated. Inspection findings show that by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards in English are below average.
77. Pupils come into the school in the reception year with very low standards in speaking and listening and the majority have had no pre-school experience to develop their linguistic skills. From this very low starting base, pupils make good progress in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. There is a lot of ground to make up, however, and standards for 7-year-olds in the 2002 national tests are well below the national average. They compare more favourably with those found in similar schools and the value added by the school is good. A significant proportion of pupils at this age do not read simple books with fluency and expression, and they struggle to write sentences unaided. The majority write simple stories, captions and accounts, but there are few pupils who produce imaginative, well-constructed writing or who read widely across a range of demanding literature.
78. In the juniors, pupils continue to make good progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6. In the 2002 national tests, there was a marked improvement in the standards achieved and attainment was average compared with the national picture and above average compared with similar schools. However, achievement at the higher Level 5 in reading or writing was below average and, in the current Year 6, a significant group of pupils is working well below the national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their previous attainment and the nature of their needs. Pupils who have recently arrived in the school and are learning English as an additional language are making very good progress.
79. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are still underdeveloped. From the very low base of skill and experience on entry, there is still much for the school to do in helping pupils to listen well in a variety of situations and to use spoken language in more formal and increasingly complex ways. There is little evidence of formal teaching of good speech habits through presentation, role-play, debate or structured discussion, although the oral nature of French and German lessons make an important contribution to this.
80. Writing skills are improving, but there is still much for the school to do in extending the range of writing for a variety of purposes and for different audiences. Too often, the pupils are writing for assessment purposes rather than for a reason, which would be real to them. The school also needs to think more carefully about opportunities for writing in other areas of the curriculum. There are some good examples of letter writing using information and communication technology and, in some classes, of extended writing in history or geography. However, overall there is too much writing that is restricted to simple sentences or labels and opportunities are not always taken in different subjects to give meaning to this important skill in a way which will extend pupils' understanding.
81. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and mainly good, with examples of very good and excellent teaching seen. This pleasing situation is due to the considerable efforts the school has put into supporting, training and developing teachers. The National Literacy Strategy is now well embedded in the school and all lessons are carefully planned with a coherent structure and clear organisation. Less experienced and less confident teachers are supported very well by more experienced colleagues, who share their planning and classroom strategies effectively.

82. In the best English teaching, the pace of the lessons is fast and demanding. Pupils understand and respond well to high expectations of their performance and working behaviour. Teachers' energy, enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject matter is communicated very clearly to pupils and gains a very positive response. Focused questioning means that all pupils are fully involved, at a level which is appropriate for the individual, and the teacher knows exactly what are the next steps for learning. Activities are pitched well for pupils' differing levels of attainment and the good quality support given in the classroom from teaching assistants has a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Where teaching could improve even more, is in the positive use of marking to give focused feedback to the pupils. Marking of English work is often confined to correction of mistakes and general statements of encouragement. There is little reference back to the learning objectives or to the steps which pupils need to take next to improve their work.
83. Pupils' attitudes to English are very positive throughout the school. They are eager, willing and enthusiastic about learning. In class, they enjoy the experiences presented to them and this means that they concentrate well, take a pride in what they do and believe that they can achieve. The oldest pupils are particularly good at working with each other. They collaborate well in group work and show considerable maturity in their working relationships. Pupils talk happily about their work, for example describing the books they are reading. They answer questions willingly and move sensibly from one activity to another. Their relationships with teachers and adult helpers are characterised by politeness and respect.
84. Pupils are beginning to use the library well. It is an attractive resource and pupils are taught how to use it and encouraged to borrow books to take home. They enjoy their time there. Most pupils however, are still at an early stage of finding their way around its organisation. Their skills in retrieving information and using it in their work are still at a very basic level. Many pupils have limited opportunities for reading outside school and do not see books as a major part of their lives. Pupils are beginning to use the Internet as a tool to extend their knowledge and discover new information, but this can be developed further across the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. There has been good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection, with results in national tests showing steady improvement. In the 2001 national tests for 7-year-olds, results were average compared to attainment nationally and above average compared with similar schools. Results for 2002 show a further improvement, with above average standards against the national picture and well above average standards against similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving higher levels have improved significantly. Inspection findings show standards by the age of 7 are on course to be average.
86. The 2001 national test results for 11-year-old pupils were in line with those for similar schools, whereas at the time of the previous inspection they were above. However the results of the 2002 tests show a significant improvement in the percentages of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5, with girls doing better than boys, as is the case nationally. Current Year 6 pupils' work is below average, but the two classes have a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and have had a range of teachers in their previous school year. The national test results at both 7 and 11 represent good progress and achievement for the majority of pupils, who start school with low levels of attainment.
87. By the age of 7, pupils count forwards in twos to one hundred competently and write out simple equations based on multiplication by two. Most count forwards in tens, but are less confident counting backwards. Pupils carry out simple addition, using coinage and have a



satisfactory understanding of doubling and halving. They identify full hours on an analogue clock face. Pupils work competently in centimetres and millimetres when carrying out simple measurement. They recognise common two-dimensional shapes such as triangles, rectangles, pentagons and octagons from their properties. Pupils also identify common three-dimensional forms such as cubes, cones and spheres from their numbers of edges and corners and understand the concept of simple symmetry. However, pupils have too few skills, or opportunities, to use information and communication technology to support their mathematics.

88. By the age of 11 pupils use calculators accurately to support work in numeracy. They have a sound understanding of the concept of ratio. Pupils begin to see the relationship between decimals and fractions, but weak number skills limit their progress. Similarly, where Year 5 pupils use formulae and spreadsheets in a computer program, their understanding is limited by weak number concepts. However, they interpret data from a bar chart and explain their findings competently. Pupils discuss their work sensibly and explain how they have carried out calculations.
89. Teaching and learning is good overall; in over half of lessons during the inspection it was very good. Good planning is a significant factor, with work well suited to all pupils' prior attainment. Introductory and concluding sessions are very well used, for example, to develop number skills and to reinforce concepts covered in lessons. The structure of lessons leads to pupils being well motivated and able to work independently. Very effective use is made of an advanced skills teacher for numeracy, to work with a range of other year groups. Good support from teaching assistants is very effective in enabling pupils to make progress, particularly those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. For example, one pupil at an early stage of English acquisition works with another teacher who is able to speak to her in French and thus help her to access the work. Where pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn, for example in Year 6, they have access to similar work to the rest of the class. Teaching is well supplemented by a club for higher-attaining pupils. Teachers are effective in encouraging pupils to explain how they work out number problems and to examine a range of ways to solve such problems.
90. In a minority of lessons, teaching and learning is less effective when introductory sessions are too long, leading to pupils' lack of concentration. Use of resources, such as an overhead projector, needs to be properly planned, so that pupils are not given too much information at once.
91. The subject is very well managed. Very good application of The National Numeracy Strategy has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and achievement. Training of teachers and teaching assistants has been a further positive factor. The curriculum is well supplemented by 'Early morning work', which is numeracy work carried out by pupils during the registration period. Very good assessment systems are in place that help with planning of future work. Good analysis of national test results identifies areas of the curriculum that need a higher focus, in order to improve pupils' attainment. However, overall insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support work in mathematics. There is also a need to formalise systems for teaching numeracy to support other subjects of the curriculum.

## SCIENCE

92. Evidence shows that standards in science are on course to be average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents a significant improvement over standards at the time of the last inspection for younger pupils, when they were below average in Year 2. In the teacher assessment for science in Year 2 in 2002, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was well below average. However, this group of pupils, now in Year 3, has a significant percentage identified as having special educational needs and assessment was realistic in relation to their abilities. In the national tests for 11-year-olds, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and above was average and was above average when compared with similar schools. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls and standards have been rising steadily over the past four years. This is all credit to the school's determination to raise standards and to improved teaching in the subject.
93. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory and are good in two fifths of lessons seen. Teachers have a sound understanding of the subject, although there was some evidence of incorrect marking in the sample of work for last year, which the school has noted. They work hard to make lessons interesting and stimulating and the vast majority of pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenges provided. In the infant classes, very good joint planning ensures that all pupils cover the same topics, so that those in mixed-age classes are not disadvantaged. In a good Year 1/2 lesson, pupils' made thoughtful contributions to the discussion about drugs being dangerous, with both the teacher and her assistant working hard to include all boys and girls in this. Literacy and numeracy skills were used well, as pupils listened closely to the story of a visit to the doctors and then sorted various packaging of sweets and drugs into sets. Displays show pupils have a good understanding of the changes which occur as they grow and food which makes a healthy diet. Lively designs of healthy meals enliven the classroom walls.
94. Older pupils understand the earth's position in space and have a sound factual knowledge of factors, such as gravitational force and orbits of the earth and moon. In a good lesson, pupils' knowledge and understanding was assessed effectively through challenging questioning and a written exercise. Pupils were very interested in the topic and concentrated hard both during the discussion and when completing their work. The oldest pupils have a sound understanding of soluble and insoluble materials and factors affecting the rate at which the former dissolve. The teacher's skill, expertise and enthusiasm are shared well with pupils and they are engrossed in investigating saturated solutions. Good resources ensure all boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, are actively engaged in practical work and they have a clear understanding of fair testing. However, pupils find it difficult to manage the small equipment in the 'mini labs' and the results of their experiments are not accurate.
95. The knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator manages the subject very well. Detailed planning ensures all elements are covered fully and effective assessment at the end of each unit ensures the school has a clear picture of individual pupils' attainment and progress. Marking, however, seldom challenges pupils to improve their scientific thinking and little use of ICT is evident. These are areas which could be improved.

## ART AND DESIGN

96. Despite some good teaching seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment in art and design remains below that normally expected of pupils' ages. This is the same judgement as that made at the previous inspection and is mainly because pupils still do not have enough opportunities to learn about, or experience, art and design across a sufficiently wide range of mediums. Much of the artwork seen consists of simple outline pencil drawings from close observation, or scenes from memory, painted in primary colours or drawn with wax crayons. The results of such work are often disappointing, because pupils are not consistently taught how to produce good-quality work, for example exploring tone and texture, or experimenting imaginatively with colour. However, this is not always the case. Two good lessons seen in the infants contributed well to pupils' skills in using pattern to build pleasing forms and to experiment with tonal washes. Teachers helped their pupils to use some earlier observations they had made of buildings around the town effectively. Pupils enjoyed the choice of materials given to them and, consequently, many pupils produced good-quality work that reflected independent creativity.
97. Sketch books used throughout the school contain some good-quality work. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have used their books to record carved shapes and artefacts that they saw in a local church. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 use their sketch books well to practise and produce some carefully drawn faces in pencil. These finished pieces show that pupils have followed their teachers' instructions to think carefully about proportion and balance. Nevertheless, most pupils do not have the opportunity to transfer their sketching ideas to a larger format, or to experiment with a range of representational forms.
98. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the four lessons seen in the inspection, three were of good quality and one was unsatisfactory. Common to the former lessons was the good support and guidance given by the teachers to the pupils about what they needed to do to develop their skills and to produce work of good quality. These characteristics were absent from the unsatisfactory lesson, when pupils were unclear about what they had to do and received little guidance about technique, materials or about what skills and standards they were expected to achieve. Nevertheless, pupils showed their interest and enjoyment of the work, as they did in the other lessons.
99. The analysis of work showed that, when teachers set challenging tasks and explain them carefully, many pupils are capable of achieving high results. For example, some paintings of tulips, by a Year 6 class, demonstrated pupils' ability to use water-colouring, shading and observational skills to good effect. Similarly, pupils in one of the good lessons painted attractively the clay pots that they had made in a previous lesson because the teacher, aided admirably by a teaching assistant, discussed with them how they could achieve the desired effects and, consequently, learned at a good rate. Nevertheless, work in three dimensions is still an aspect of art and design needing development across the school. This is also true of opportunities for pupils to explore the work of artists, despite some isolated good work seen in the infants, based on the work of Paul Klee, and of some work in the juniors as a result of studying a painting by Vincent van Gogh. The use of computers in art is developing. Pupils in the infants have produced some attractive work about houses, based on the use of geometrical shapes. Some of the finished works show interesting use of the program's 'spray' facility.
100. The re-establishment of the art and design room is a positive step towards raising standards and classes in the juniors are already making good use of it and its resources. However, too few teachers use their own classroom facilities; nor do they develop pupils' artistic skills in other subjects, such as history or religious education, where pupils are required often to simply 'colour in' work sheets or simple outlines that they have drawn themselves. The co-ordinator has worked hard to establish resources for the subject. She agrees that there is a need both to raise teachers' competence and confidence to teach

the subject and to explore ways of raising further the profile of art and design across the school curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Only one lesson was observed as the timetabled time during the inspection was shared with art and design. From an analysis of previous work it is apparent that the standard of work achieved by 7-year-old pupils is typical of this age, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The standard of work of pupils by the age of 11, however, is below what would be expected.
102. By the age of 7, pupils use simple hand tools, such as scissors and sewing needles, with appropriate accuracy and care. They use modelling as a design technique when working with textiles to produce finger puppets satisfactorily. They have adequate skills in evaluation, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. For example, they evaluate the taste of a range of fruits and, as a result, make choices of how to produce a fruit salad. This links well with the school's focus on healthy eating.
103. By the age of 11, standards of pupils' work are below expected levels, due mainly to insufficient time being allocated to this subject. Pupils produce labelled sketches of their design ideas, for example, when making simple air-powered models. However, they do not produce a range of design ideas from which they can make informed choices before making an item. Pupils make card pop-up mechanisms, but practical work shows low-level cutting, stitching and colouring skills. Lack of suitable resources restricts how some pupils can proceed. They evaluate their products, making sensible comments about how they made them, but do not take account of their original design intentions when doing this. Pupils make satisfactory observational drawings to record existing containers, but then have a restricted range of materials from which to work. They evaluate a range of existing types of bread, but there is no evidence of them having made bread. The tools and equipment for work with resistant materials and for food technology are not easily accessible to pupils. This leads to older pupils not working with food at appropriate levels and having insufficient skills when working with constructional materials. Pupils have too few opportunities to work with construction kits for modelling.
104. In the one lesson observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory, with the teacher and teaching assistant working well with pupils on an individual basis, ensuring that all took a full part in the lesson and made satisfactory progress. Other evidence indicates that teachers do not have sufficient understanding of the requirements of this subject. There is no evidence of planning for pupils to work at higher levels.
105. Design and technology did not have a co-ordinator at the time of the inspection. Whilst the school is following a nationally recognised scheme of work, staff have had no training in its use and there is no development plan for the subject. This has a negative impact on the standards of pupils' work. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' work in this subject. Teachers' planning is monitored, but not pupils' work or the teaching of design and technology. The absence of an assessment system makes it difficult to plan work according to pupils' prior attainment and there is no system for checking the accuracy of teacher assessments of pupils' work. There has been little development of design and technology since the previous inspection, with school priorities directed elsewhere. A co-ordinator has been appointed to start after half term to address this position.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

106. Few history or geography lessons were seen during the inspection, although a range of work was available in pupils' books and folders from this year and last. There were also some good displays in the school, which showed work in progress. Pupils in both infant and junior classes achieve standards in line with those expected for their ages and make steady progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress. Learning is carefully planned to cover the main areas of the National Curriculum and to provide a development of skills as the pupils grow older. A minimum amount of time is devoted to these subjects, however, and there is scope for increasing the range of learning in which pupils are involved. It is not always clear how the school ensures the progress of pupils who are taught in mixed-age classes and teachers' planning could define this more explicitly.
107. Younger pupils make and use simple maps with co-ordinates, making a useful contribution to their numeracy skills. They locate familiar places in their immediate locality and make links with the rest of the world through holidays, the food they eat and pupils' own backgrounds. They look at the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale to gain a sense of how famous people influenced the world today. As a result, they begin to gain an understanding of the difference between past and present and an emerging idea of chronology.
108. Junior pupils develop a greater understanding of map skills satisfactorily, by using maps of differing scales to compare and contrast. They use grid references and common symbols and gain an understanding of the use of maps for different purposes. In history there is some exciting teaching of the features of historical periods. In Year 6, for example, pupils examined artefacts from Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. They interviewed adults who had memories of those times and described the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence. This lesson was a valuable experience for the pupils, because it made history come alive for them.
109. Teaching is satisfactory in history and geography. Teachers prepare and research well and present carefully planned lessons. One co-ordinator manages both subjects effectively. Resources are good and most classrooms have stimulating displays, including reference books. Maps and globes are in use in classrooms, although timelines, to reinforce and consolidate a sense of chronology, are not in evidence.
110. The development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through history and geography is not robust. Research into the Battle of Salamis through the Internet as well as some extended writing about Ancient Greece, helps pupils to broaden their understanding. Mathematics skills are used in measuring distances on maps and interpreting scales but, in general, these cross-curricular skills could be developed much more as some potentially rich opportunities are missed.
111. Pupils have a limited range of personal experience on which to draw when looking at the world around them and the world in the past. The school does not always give enough attention to providing real, first-hand experiences such as those seen in Year 6, which can open up their pupils' lives.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are close to expectations for pupils' ages by the end of Year 2, but below expectations by the end of Year 6. Although this is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection, the school has made significant progress in improving teachers' expertise in the subject and in making better use of available resources. All classes have timetabled lessons in the ICT suite, which are

planned carefully to ensure all curriculum requirements are met. Teaching is good overall and all staff benefit from support and advice from the knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator.

113. Younger pupils, for example, use a graphics program confidently to create lively pictures of houses in connection with their topic on '*Can Buildings Speak?*'. They understand the different functions of the program, but are not good at co-operating with each other in sharing control of the mouse. The lesson is well planned and the teacher and her assistant work very hard to maintain pace and concentration, despite the sometimes silly behaviour of a minority of pupils. As a result, a considerable amount of work is completed, at levels appropriate for pupils' ages. Pupils in Year 3/4 use a spell-checker with reasonable accuracy to edit a pre-entered piece of text on Ann Frank, but this work is at a level below expectations for their age. Considerable frustration results from hardware failure, although the teacher and co-ordinator explore every avenue to overcome this. Additionally, the teacher has not made specific links to either history or literacy and this is a wasted opportunity. Similarly, whilst Year 3 pupils make sound progress in entering information into a database, the focus of the lesson is on developing pupils' ICT skills, rather than on understanding its use to support their learning. Their below average literacy skills in spelling create an additional problem, as the search function does not recognise their instructions.
114. By contrast, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very well motivated by their work on spreadsheets, because the work is interesting and relevant. The former manipulate a budget for wet play games with reasonable competence, receiving effective support from the teacher and her assistant. The majority understand how to create formulae for adding and multiplying, making a useful contribution to their numeracy skills. Pupils in Year 6 are working at a similar level, which is below expectations for their age. However, they make good progress in understanding the value of spreadsheets as they enthusiastically investigate the profits made by an imaginary school tuck-shop.
115. All boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, are fully included in lessons, but ICT is not used specifically to support those with learning difficulties, for example, using reinforcement programs for English and mathematics. Additionally, whilst subject policies have been revised to identify how ICT can be incorporated, lessons are not linked as closely as they could be to other areas of the curriculum. Part of the problem is the unreliability of current hardware, which is below the level of provision found nationally. The school is looking forward to a significant improvement in this, as a result of central funding, in the near future. The enthusiastic and experienced co-ordinator provides invaluable support and advice for his colleagues, which supplements the useful government funded training, which is almost completed, very well. He has exciting plans for the development of the subject.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

116. The school has very effectively extended its provision for teaching modern foreign languages and improved the quality of this since the last inspection. All pupils learn French and those in Year 6 have additional lessons in German. The focus is firmly directed on spoken language and pupils of all ages cheerily and confidently greet visitors, staff and each other in both languages. Standards in spoken French and German are appropriate for pupils' ages and this is promoted very well by the high quality of teaching.
117. Teaching in the infants is good and in the juniors is very good, with many of the latter lessons being excellent. Two teachers take responsibility for all lessons, but all teachers support language learning, for example, taking registers in French. Younger pupils greet each other rather shyly, but correctly, saying '*Je m'appelle ...*' with reasonable accents.

They know the words for numbers to ten and for many colours, and learning is good as these are consistently reinforced in both English and French throughout the sessions. Older pupils build effectively on their vocabulary and hold short question and answer conversations competently. The teacher's excellent accent in both French and German and her knowledge and understanding of the subject ensure the pace of lessons is fast and furious, and the quality of learning is very good. All boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, are fully included in conversations, with the bulk of the lesson being conducted in the appropriate language. Evidence shows that the oldest pupils develop an appropriate written vocabulary during the course of the year.

118. Language expertise is also used to very good effect with some pupils whose first language is French. They take core lessons in English and mathematics with the specialist teacher, which makes a very valuable contribution to their progress in these subjects and in learning English.
119. Co-ordination is very good. The co-ordinator's enthusiasm and expertise ensures commitment to high standards is realised in practice and she takes responsibility for planning throughout the school. Teaching all the older pupils, she has an effective overview of progress. Residential visits to both countries are open to all pupils who wish to go and these make a valuable contribution to their personal, social and cultural development as well as adding an additional exciting dimension to learning a language. The school has been recognised for its specialist teaching in modern foreign languages by the British Council.

## **MUSIC**

120. Standards in music meet expectations for pupils' ages. Music plays an important part in developing pupils' self-esteem, particularly for those with special educational needs, and all pupils' contribution to music is valued.
121. Teaching is mainly satisfactory and sometimes good and very good. The teaching of simple rhythms and the identification of the sounds made by different instruments in a lesson based around African music help very young children to develop their aural skills. Older pupils learn to identify note lengths and move towards an understanding of notation. When teachers have a good grasp of the subject, pupils are challenged to learn new skills, to make informed choices and to evaluate their performance. Confident teachers use specialist vocabulary correctly and encourage pupils to listen with discrimination to the sounds made by instruments so that they can improve. Where teachers are less confident, pupils enjoy the experience of making music at a simple level, but are not helped to practise and explore the possibilities of the instruments and therefore do not make so much progress.
122. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, are keen to make music together. On occasions, their listening skills are good. They show insight and creative imagination, but sometimes use the instruments carelessly through lack of experience and will not take time to evaluate their progress.
123. The school sees music as a valuable part of the curriculum. This is evident in the full participation of all pupils in singing together in assemblies. They show real enthusiasm and enjoyment as they celebrate together. Recorded music is used successfully to develop their appreciation skills. Music lessons provide opportunities to play percussion instruments, to compose, to listen to music and to learn more about its elements. The school has invested in a very good music and drama studio, which provides an excellent space for music making away from the main classrooms.

124. There are good resources for music and enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership for the subject. This is now leading to higher standards and providing the expertise needed by other teachers to develop their knowledge and expertise in the subject. However, there is no evidence of ICT being used to enhance the subject and there are few opportunities for more talented pupils to have specialist instrumental tuition. Also, pupils have limited experiences of a range of music outside school. Opportunities for singing and performing in concerts during the year exist, but no regular chances to play instruments with others as part of an ensemble or to develop individual instrumental skills.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

125. By the time pupils are 7, their work is below what would be expected at this age. This appears to be a decline since the last inspection, but is mostly attributable to the low level of physical co-ordination of many of these pupils. By the age of 11, the standards of work pupils achieve are typical of this age.
126. By the age of 7, pupils in dance lessons follow each other's running and skipping movement accurately and mime carrying a heavy parcel. However, their lack of co-ordination and sense of rhythm limits how the majority of pupils respond to music. Pupils work with reasonable accuracy, with a partner in dance, and mirror their movements. However, some pupils have low powers of concentration, which limits their progress.
127. By the age of 11, pupils know the function of a warm up session and how it affects the body. In gymnastics, pupils produce appropriate symmetrical and asymmetrical balances, working on apparatus, and link these with other movements to produce a sequence. They evaluate their own and other pupils' work sensibly, which helps them to improve their gymnastics. The vast majority of pupils learn to swim at least 25 metres by the age of eight. However, the lack of swimming for older pupils limits opportunities for this aspect of their physical development. Many eight-year-old pupils have undeveloped physical co-ordination, which means that they require a long time to master a simple dance step.
128. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the subject and this is reflected in good-quality planning, leading to well-balanced learning opportunities for all pupils, which they enjoy. Teaching assistants working with pupils with special educational needs ensure that they have full access to the work of lessons. Where offered good challenges, for example, to refine individual gymnastics sequences, pupils are well motivated, respond in a mature way and their work improves. Teachers use good questioning techniques to help reinforce pupils' learning, for example, about the benefits and effects of a warm-up routine.
129. Teaching is less effective in lessons that do not include suitable warm-up or cool-down routines. In one dance lesson, the teacher was unfamiliar with the music being used and was unable to plan how pupils should respond to this. In another, the tempo of the music was too fast for the dance step that pupils were practising.
130. The post of co-ordinator is undeveloped. The recently appointed co-ordinator has no responsibility for monitoring teaching. Although no teaching of athletics or team games was observed during the inspection, the school satisfactorily follows a commercial scheme of work, which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum is supplemented by football and netball activities for older pupils and pupils with a talent for football take part in a scheme at a football academy. There is, however, no system for assessing pupils' work to help with future planning.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. The last time the school was inspected, standards at 7 and 11 in religious education were below those expected, mainly because the subject was taught infrequently. Standards remain below those expected, but pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make better progress than they did because the subject is now taught regularly in each class. The school has made good progress in raising the profile of the subject in a very short time. However, there has been too little time since the previous inspection, and the implementation of new strategies, to effect improvement and for pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject to have reached normally expected levels.
132. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection, all of them in the juniors. However, from talking to some pupils in Years 1 and 2, and from looking at samples of their work, it is clear that they have made a good start in learning about religious concepts. For example, following a visit to a church, they talk about how they think it is a special place and describe ceremonies that take place there, such as weddings and Christenings. Some higher-attaining pupils write perceptively in some depth about their feelings when in church, such as 'it's quiet and makes you want to respect the things.' Pupils in the juniors study a range of world religions and, by the time they are in Year 6, many appreciate some similarities and differences. However, below average literacy skills in the lower juniors means that most of these pupils produce written work of poor quality. Teachers often ask all pupils to complete worksheets, which necessitate 'colouring in' drawings or copying writing, instead of more challenging written work appropriate to their individual levels of attainment. Although a considerable amount of time is used in discussion, pupils do not record what they know as frequently or independently as they might.
133. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are introduced to some sophisticated issues and vocabulary, such as how the Creation is represented in different religions and the meanings of a range of words associated with religions. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils took a full part in discussion when they talked about 'rules for life' as expressed in the Bible and the Qu'ran. They were able to do this because most understood the vocabulary of the text chosen by the teacher. As a result, pupils could compare the Five Pillars of Islam with the Ten Commandments and ask relevant questions to take their learning forward.
134. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but ranges from unsatisfactory to good. Teachers now use the locally agreed syllabus and government guidelines to good effect in their planning; consequently, pupils now make satisfactory progress in their learning, from a very low starting point on entry to the school. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because the teacher's knowledge is not sufficiently detailed to competently support pupils' learning. Boys and girls across the infants and juniors take a full part in lessons and they take a real interest in discussion. Many pupils, particularly the older ones, are keen to ask questions of their teachers, showing that they want to learn.
135. Teachers who lead assemblies are skilled at including aspects of the syllabus and the school is developing its use of visitors to the school well in order to enhance pupils' learning. An assembly about 'caring' effectively reminded pupils of similarities between the Jewish, Moslem and Christian faiths in this respect. A visiting vicar to the two Years 4 and 5 classes gave pupils another person's perspective on what the Bible means to her. This session showed how interested the pupils are, because their questions were both sensitive and searching.
136. The subject is led satisfactorily by the co-ordinator, who is beginning to monitor at first hand the work of the teachers in lessons. This is a positive step towards raising the quality of lessons to a consistently high standard and towards ensuring that pupils' learning

proceeds at a good rate. Nevertheless, some teachers too easily accept work from pupils that is not finished or is not their 'best work' and there is no evidence of ICT being used to support teaching and learning in the subject.