

INSPECTION REPORT

ASH GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124028

Headteacher: Mr N M Addison

Reporting inspector: Mr A Morgan
21100

Dates of inspection: 28th February – 3rd March 2000

Inspection number: 186704

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: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Lea
Trentham
Stoke-on-Trent

Postcode: ST4 8BX

Telephone number: 01782 658 977

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Leary

Date of previous inspection: January 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr A Morgan	Registered inspector	Information technology	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further?
		Design and technology	School's results and achievements
Mr W Walker	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school work in partnership with parents
Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Geography	How well does the school care for its pupils
		History	
		Religious education	
Mr B Bowen	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed
		Physical education	
Mrs J Fisher	Team inspector	Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Under fives	
Mrs E de Lancey	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
		English as an additional language	
Mr G Alston	Team inspector	Science	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Art	
		Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Ash Green Primary School is situated in the south-western suburbs of Stoke-on-Trent. The school has its own 30-place nursery unit which offers part-time education during morning or afternoon sessions. The school stands in an area where unemployment is below the national average. Parents' occupations include professional, clerical and skilled manual workers and the self-employed engaged in a variety of trades. The housing stock is composed of residential estates of owner-occupied properties. The majority of pupils live in the immediate vicinity of the school with a minority travelling from the surrounding district. Around twenty per cent of the pupils come from nearby Blurton which is an area of some social disadvantage. Ash Green is a very large primary school with a pupil roll of 516, comprising 266 boys and 250 girls. In addition, 45 children in total attend the nursery part-time. Children are admitted to the nursery at the start of the school year in which they are four. They transfer to one of the two reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection 26 children attended the morning nursery, and 19 children the afternoon nursery; the majority of the 59 children in the reception classes were under five years of age. Almost all the children admitted to the school have had some form of pre-school education. The children's attainment on entry represents a wide spread of ability, the broad range of which reflects the diverse backgrounds from which the school draws. Overall, attainment is average on entry to the reception classes. The roll has fallen slightly in recent years because of a general decline in the child population. Two per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language which is higher than in most schools nationally. All these pupils are fluent in English, and they come from a variety of Asian backgrounds. Six per cent of the pupils take up the entitlement to free school meals which is below the national average. Of the 13 per cent of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below the national average, 0.1 per cent have a statement of special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which provides an effective education for all its pupils and where standards of work and behaviour are high. The quality of the teaching is good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. By the age of 11, nine-tenths of the pupils attain the national standard in science, over three-quarters in English and three-quarters in mathematics, with half the pupils attaining above this standard in science and about a third in English and mathematics. The school is well led and managed and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The standards in English, mathematics and science at both key stages are high.
- Children under five make a good start to their education.
- The proportion of good and very good teaching is high.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, senior management team and governors are good.
- The procedures for assessment are effective in helping to raise standards.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development promotes very good attitudes to work, high standards of behaviour and very good relationships.

What could be improved

- The implementation of the school's planned programme for the evaluation of teaching.
- The development of pupils' library skills through the provision of a library with a good range of books.
- A revision of the deployment of classroom assistants to make the best use of their skills by drawing on the examples of good practice already evident in the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1996. It was found to provide a sound education for all its pupils within a supportive learning environment. Since then the school has maintained its strengths and improved in many areas. Significant improvement has been made in the quality of teaching. At Key Stage 1, high standards in English have been maintained, and standards in mathematics and science have improved. At Key Stage 2, standards in English, mathematics and science have improved. At both key stages, improvements in standards in information technology and religious education have been achieved. The significant improvement in religious education, at Key Stage 2, results from the increased opportunities that pupils now have for reflection on spiritual matters. In response to the key issues identified in the last report, the school has established effective systems for evaluating academic standards and assessing pupils' performance, enabled pupils to develop as independent learners and improved its financial management. The new headteacher is responding effectively to the matters not yet fully resolved. He has put in place a system for evaluating teaching and is addressing the provision of curriculum guidelines through the school's preparation for the new National Curriculum. Although improved standards reflect the increasing high expectations of all staff, some inconsistencies in expectations remain at Key Stage 1.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	B	B	C
Mathematics	B	C	B	D
Science	A	A	A	A

Key

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

Inspection evidence indicates that, by the time the pupils are eleven, they attain standards in science well above the national average and in English and mathematics above the national averages. This matches the results of the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds in these subjects. The trends over the last four years show pupils' standards in science were well above national averages, and in English and mathematics above national averages. In comparison with similar schools, pupils attain standards in science well above the national average, in English matching the national average and in mathematics below the national average.

Baseline assessment indicates that children's attainment on entry to statutory education is average. The results of the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds in mathematics were well above the national average, and in reading and writing above the national averages. In reading and writing, inspection findings match these results. In mathematics, inspection findings indicate that pupils do not currently attain these high standards, although they remain above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils attain standards in mathematics which are above the national average, and in reading and writing, standards which match the national averages.

At both key stages, inspection evidence indicates that the differences in the performances of boys and girls match the national trends. The school has attained the targets it set for pupils last year and has set appropriate and challenging targets for next year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils display very good attitudes to school and they are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development by encouraging them to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. Relationships are very good throughout the school.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good. There is very little unauthorised absence.

Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, and their very good personal development, relationships with staff and each other, and behaviour in the classroom make a strong contribution to their attainment. The school's plans for a new school library and improved recreational facilities at lunchtimes indicate its commitment to improving these high standards further.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

In the lessons observed, teaching was excellent in one per cent of them, very good in twenty-six per cent, good in fifty per cent, satisfactory in twenty-two per cent and unsatisfactory in one per cent. Strengths in the teaching of children under five include teachers' understanding of early education, the effectiveness of their planning and their high expectations and very good management of children. Teaching strengths at Key Stage 2 include teachers' very good management of pupils and their effective use of resources. At Key Stage 1, although satisfactory, the following emerged as areas for improvement in teaching: the teachers' expectations and management of pupils and their use of resources. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching of English and mathematics is good; at Key Stage 1 that of English is good and that of mathematics satisfactory. Literacy is taught well at both key stages, numeracy is taught well at Key Stage 2 and satisfactorily at Key Stage 1.

The school meets the needs of all its pupils. In the subjects inspected, children under five and pupils at both key stages achieve well in almost all aspects of learning. The exception is at Key Stage 1 where, in a few lessons, a few pupils do not work as effectively as they should.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children under five is good. All pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 follow a rich curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and meets all statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The good provision for these pupils, especially the good levels of support they receive from classroom assistants, results in their making good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This very good provision, informed by the school's personal and social education programme, has a positive impact on the pupils' personal development and their attainments.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of care for its pupils.

The school enjoys the support of the large majority of parents and maintains good relations with them. The staff issue good annual reports to parents to keep them informed about their children's progress. The school and parents work effectively in partnership to promote pupils' learning. However, a minority of parents are concerned about the inconsistencies in the regularity with which homework is provided.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. It is enriched by the high quality provision for dance, instrumental tuition, educational visits, numerous visitors to the school, including theatre groups, and an extensive programme of competitive sports. Good procedures are in place for assessing and evaluating pupils' academic performance and personal development. Careful analysis of test results is used very well to guide planning and provide appropriate support to raise attainment.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and the senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are committed to the school's continuing success and effectively fulfil their statutory requirements. Individual governors support the school well through their regular involvement in its daily activities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The new headteacher has established effective procedures for evaluating pupils' personal development and academic performance. He has recently put in place a programme for evaluating teaching.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes effective and efficient use of its resources.

The school is well led and managed. The new headteacher has made a good start analysing pupils' attainment to assist the school in raising standards further. The senior management team plays a positive role in leading the work of other teachers. The governing body is very active in taking the school forward. However, curriculum co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the quality of teaching in their own areas of responsibility. The school makes good use of the principles of best value. The school has an adequate number of qualified staff. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although the development of a new library has rightly been recognised as a priority for the school. The satisfactory range of learning resources is effectively used.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • Their children like the school. • They feel comfortable approaching the school. • The school expects their children to work hard. • The teaching is good. • The school is helping their children's personal development. • Their children make good progress. • The standard of behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like homework given on a more regular basis across the school. Other parents believe their children have sufficient homework. • A minority of parents would like the school to increase the range of extra-curricular activities it provides. • A minority of parents would like more information about their children's personal and social development.

The inspectors agree with the positive views of the overwhelming majority of parents. They agree that there are inconsistencies in the regularity with which homework is provided and that the school would benefit from clarification in this area. The inspectors recognise that a range of homework is provided across the school. They concluded that the curriculum is enriched by the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Pupils' annual reports meet statutory requirements and the school provides regular opportunities for parents to discuss their children's personal development and progress with the teachers.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Children under five make a good start to their education. They enter the nursery with a wide range of experiences and skills. The provision for all areas of learning is good and the children make good progress. The results of baseline assessment show that the attainment of the children entering the reception classes is average overall in their personal and social development, English and mathematics. By the time they are five most children attain beyond the nationally agreed standards in personal and social education, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They work at the early stages of the National Curriculum. They make good progress and achieve well. In physical development, children attain the national standard and make satisfactory progress. Children are helped to reach these standards by the good quality of the teaching and the adult support they receive.

- 2 The results of the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds in mathematics were well above the national average (level 2), and in reading and writing above the national averages. At the higher level (level 3), they attain very good results in reading, and good results in writing and mathematics. In reading and writing, inspection findings indicate that pupils are on course to attain similar results. In mathematics, inspection findings indicate that pupils are not currently attaining these high standards, although they remain above national averages, because there is a lack of consistency in teachers' expectations and in their insistence that all pupils work steadily to build on their prior attainment. Teacher assessment in science indicates that pupils attain standards well above the national average at both the average and higher levels. In science, inspection findings indicate that the pupils are on course to attain similar results. The trends over the last four years show pupils' standards in reading and mathematics were above national averages, and those in writing matched national averages. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment in mathematics is above the national average, and in reading and writing, their attainment matches national averages.

- 3 Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils in Year 6 attain standards in science well above the national average and in English and mathematics above the national averages. This matches the results of the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds in these subjects. By the time the pupils are eleven, they attain very good results at the higher level (level 5) in English and science and good results at this level in mathematics. The trends over the last four years show pupils' standards in science were well above national averages, and in English and mathematics above national averages. In comparison with similar schools, pupils attain standards in science well above the national average, in English in line with the national average and in mathematics below the national average. At both key stages the differences in the performances of boys and girls match national trends.

- 4 The school has attained the targets it set for pupils last year and has set appropriate and challenging targets for next year. The staff have introduced a number of tests in Key Stage 2 to help them monitor the progress of groups and individual pupils, and set personal, group and year targets for future performance. The results of the headteacher's evaluation of standards and the setting of precise targets are reflected in the school's current development plan.

- 5 The pupils achieve well in English, science and mathematics at both key stages, reflecting the positive contribution of the established literacy strategy and the developing impact of the recently introduced numeracy strategy. Pupils' competence in literacy and numeracy is supporting their learning effectively in the different subjects of the curriculum. As they move through Key Stage 1 pupils of all abilities make good progress in English and science. The large majority of pupils make good progress in mathematics; however, towards the end of the key stage, a small minority of pupils of different abilities do not make steady progress. During Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- 6 As pupils move through Key Stage 1, they listen with improving attention and display increasing self-assurance when discussing their work. They read familiar text accurately, sample new literature with growing confidence and develop strategies to decipher new words. They build on their early writing skills and develop as independent writers. Their library skills are not sufficiently developed as they do not have opportunities to search for books within an established classified system. Pupils improve their number skills and develop their concepts of space, shape and measures. They use their increasing understanding of mathematics to explore the world around them. However, when using mental methods many pupils are unclear about the appropriate strategies to use and they take too long in arriving at a solution. During scientific discussions and investigations, pupils develop a clear understanding about their senses and the range and properties of materials.
- 7 During Key Stage 2, pupils build usefully on the knowledge, skills and understanding gained in their first years at school. They exchange ideas and express opinions with greater assurance. They develop their literacy skills as they read more challenging books with growing fluency and expression. They write increasingly detailed factual accounts, and improve their handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Pupils' library skills remain unsatisfactory because they do not have access to an established library classified to the Dewey system. Pupils consolidate their knowledge in all aspects of mathematics and develop their skills in practical situations to increase further their understanding of its use and application. Although pupils' ability in computation is sound they have insufficient practice to refine their skills and develop efficient strategies. They continue to increase their scientific knowledge and develop their experimental and investigative skills in their explorations of all aspects of science; for example, undertaking a rigorous analysis of a mixture and devising appropriate procedures for its separation into the different materials from which it is made.
- 8 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress towards the appropriate targets set for them. This is because the teachers plan the tasks effectively and the classroom assistants provide good support for each of the pupils. For example, the quality of help given to special needs pupils investigating the properties of mathematical shapes was instrumental in helping them complete the tasks competently.
- 9 By the ages of seven and 11, pupils attain standards in information technology which are above national expectations and all pupils achieve well because they make good progress. They develop their ability to use information technology and employ their increasing skills to support their learning across the curriculum. They use a range of equipment appropriately and handle information and communication in text and pictures effectively. They develop their understanding of the use of information and communication technology through their exploration of simulations and their efficiency in operating controlled systems. For example, exploring carefully the relationships between prey and predator to develop their understanding of food chains; and devising successfully a series of increasingly complex commands to create floral patterns. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils attain standards in religious education which are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils achieve well in this subject because they build effectively on their previous knowledge. They

acquire an understanding of Christianity and the beliefs and values of other cultures. Pupils achieve well in art by the age of 11 and satisfactorily in geography and history by the ages of seven and 11. Because of timetabling arrangements there was insufficient evidence upon which to judge achievement in art by the age of seven, and in design and technology, music and physical education by the ages of seven and 11. However, although timetables prevented lesson observations in Years 2 and 6 judgements, on the intervening years, confirmed pupils displayed good attitudes to their work and achieved well.

- 10 Dance has a significant place in the school's curriculum and for which it is nationally recognised. During the inspection the performances of one class, and the work of one of the teachers with a group of pupils of different ages, during an out-of-school activity, indicated the very high standards that pupils achieve. Pupils experience a wide range of dance styles and have opportunities to respond to a variety of stimuli including carefully selected music and poetry. Much of this work is linked appropriately to pupils' other curricular topics; for example, their study of the rain forests. Timetabling arrangements meant that it was not possible to see a full range of lessons throughout the school in this area of the curriculum to enable judgements to be made across the school as a whole.
- 11 Pupils show an increasing control over the range of materials, tools and techniques in art and refine their understanding of the work of famous artists. In design and technology, they broaden their construction methods in making a range of products with a variety of materials. They use their evaluations of their work to increase the quality of their next products and to refine further their understanding and skills. In geography, pupils describe satisfactorily the ways in which peoples of the world improve or damage their environment; and they increase appropriately their knowledge of the different regions of the world. In history, pupils describe the characteristics of past periods and societies, and through their studies of other people's lives they recognise how things have changed over time. The pupils' musical performance and appreciation is supported through their tuneful singing and playing in assemblies. Pupils practise their skills enthusiastically in games and compete willingly. In gymnastics they display agility and build effective sequences of controlled balances and movements. Physical education is enhanced by regular extra-curricular activities and locally organised competitive sports.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 12 All pupils display very good attitudes to learning. In the nursery and reception classes, children settle quickly into the school's routines and establish a very positive approach to learning. Through both key stages pupils enjoy school life and are keen to learn and work hard. They are well motivated and responsive to the positive praise and encouragement offered by all staff and to the good quality of the teaching. Pupils enjoy showing and discussing their work with both adults and other pupils. In a few isolated instances, a few pupils find difficulty in sustaining their concentration and motivation to stay attentive for extended teacher presentations. These instances are in lessons where the teaching is less well targeted to the individual needs of those pupils.

- 13 Pupils' behaviour is good. For example, at morning break times, which the school has staggered to allow pupils ample space to play, pupils interact with each other in a thoughtful manner. They obey the playground rules and play purposefully and sensibly. However, at breaks when pupils are confined to classrooms, due to inclement weather, behaviour in a few classes in Key Stage 2 is boisterous. There was no aggressive behaviour or bullying observed during the inspection. In conversation with pupils they express no concerns about these issues and confirm they know what to do if they should feel threatened. There have been no exclusions from the school in recent years; this is below the average for schools of this size. Pupils accept and respond well to the school's positive behaviour policy, which is followed carefully by staff in order to maintain the positive and caring learning environment. During the inspection pupils behaved very well in the vast majority of lessons and quickly settled to work with positive effort. However, in a few lessons where the teachers' skill in managing pupils is not consistently effective, some pupils misbehave intermittently during whole class sessions and do not listen to the teacher. As a result, they do not make the steady progress they should.
- 14 Personal development of pupils is very good throughout the school. Pupils are eager to accept responsibilities, acting as classroom monitors, helping staff and tidying their own desks and classrooms. The school is tidy and free of litter. This is in part due to the pupils' respect and ownership of the school and grounds. They collect litter and place it in the tidy bins provided. Older pupils take general care of the younger and less confident pupils. Relationships are very good between all adults and pupils and between pupils themselves. For example, at lunch times there is a very positive and respectful manner between pupils, teachers and lunchtime personnel. In lessons, pupils respond positively when they are given opportunities to show initiative or to be responsible for their own learning. For example, during an information technology lesson, pupils in Year 2 designed the layout for a page of text and pictures, enlarging and reducing illustrations appropriately and using a spell check facility to monitor their writing. They work well collaboratively and support each other positively as they work.
- 15 Pupils are eager to come to school and several arrive early. The rate of attendance matches the national average. Pupils come to school regularly and on time, enabling the staff to make a prompt start to the day and to lessons. There is very little unauthorised absence. The good quality attitudes, behaviour, personal development, relationships and attendance across the whole school enhance the pupils' achievements through their readiness to work hard and sustain a brisk pace to their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 16 The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is good overall and makes a significant contribution to the extent to which pupils acquire new knowledge, develop their understanding and learn new skills. The quality of teaching was judged excellent in one per cent of lessons seen, very good in twenty-six per cent, good in fifty per cent, satisfactory in twenty-two per cent and unsatisfactory in one per cent.
- 17 The quality of teaching for children under five in the nursery and the reception classes is good; in the reception classes it was very good in one-third of the lessons observed. The staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They have very high expectations of the children and they respond appropriately. The teaching of basic skills is good because staff provide a range of challenging contexts across all areas of learning in which the children practise and improve their developing skills of literacy and numeracy.
- 18 At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching was judged very good in nine per cent of the lessons observed at that key stage, good in fifty-two per cent, satisfactory in thirty-five per cent and unsatisfactory in four per cent. At Key Stage 2, where there was an

example of excellent teaching, the quality of teaching was judged very good in thirty-two per cent of lessons seen at that key stage, good in forty-three per cent and satisfactory in twenty-three per cent. Teaching at Key Stage 2 has improved significantly since the last inspection, and the weaknesses identified in the last report have all been overcome. During most lessons across the school, the majority of pupils make good progress in their learning because of the good support and guidance they receive from the staff. The most effective learning was observed in the early years and Year 6 classes.

- 19 At both key stages the quality of teaching in English is good overall; it is consistently very good in Year 6 where teachers show great enthusiasm for the subject and the pupils are interested and highly motivated to learn. Teachers' planning takes account of the national literacy framework and good opportunities for speaking and listening are incorporated into lessons. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy is good. Teachers challenge pupils' thinking and help them to develop their responses and think purposefully about the language they use. As a result pupils make useful gains in their learning, acquire a good range of skills which they use well to support their learning in other subjects. Teaching methods display a suitable balance between direct teaching with an emphasis on clear exposition and probing questions, and group work for pupils to practice what they know and work at a level which challenges their abilities further.
- 20 The quality of teaching of mathematics at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory; one example of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of mental mathematics and opportunities for pupils to explain their strategies are not exploited. The teaching of the basic skills of numeracy is sound. At Key Stage 2, the teaching of mathematics is good, it has improved since the last inspection. The teaching of the basic skills of numeracy is good. Teachers' planning follows the numeracy framework with an opening session of mental and oral mathematics, followed by designated group activity and concluding with a class session to review the work done. This process has been usefully established within the school's mathematics curriculum; however, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to practice recording computation activities.
- 21 Teaching and learning in science is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers build effectively on pupils' previous learning and revise, consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding. Teachers' own knowledge and understanding of the subject are secure and they plan and organise their lessons well. There is an emphasis on investigative work in science throughout the school and this is taught well. Teachers offer good guidance and clear instructions in the planning of investigations and in obtaining and considering evidence. Pupils develop successfully useful skills to help them make predictions, to observe carefully, and to reflect on their findings. Teachers stress safety factors effectively through considerations of care for others and good working practices; for example, the dangers when using a night light, and the need for care in setting up and clearing away and for hygiene after working with materials.

- 22 At both key stages teaching and learning in information technology and religious education is good. The shortcomings identified in the last inspection report have been overcome. Teaching and learning in art is good at Key Stage 2; teachers help pupils reflect on their work and share ideas with each other. At both key stages, teaching and learning in geography and history is sound. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about teaching and learning in art at Key Stage 1 and in design and technology, music and physical education at both key stages. A significant number of pupils benefit from good quality peripatetic music teaching.
- 23 The pupils with a statement of special educational needs are well supported. They receive good individual help in the classroom from support staff and have access to all areas of the curriculum. Individual education plans, which describe the school's strategies for supporting pupils' progress towards clearly stated targets, are in place for all pupils requiring them. They are well structured and identify appropriate and realistic goals. Pupils achieve well and make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual plans. Teachers plan tasks based on these pupils' needs, and support staff are well briefed to work with small groups; as a result pupils make good progress. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson when pupils recorded the main incidents in a story, the support assistant helped those who had difficulty in expressing their ideas. She helped them in recalling the story and describing what happened. Higher-attaining pupils are well catered for, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are set in Key Stage 2 for English and mathematics; teachers make good use of these arrangements to further extend pupils' learning through challenging tasks and well-chosen questions appropriate to the different groups.
- 24 Positive features of teaching demonstrated throughout the school include secure subject knowledge which gives them the confidence to develop pupils' questions and extend their learning. For example, in an information and communication technology session, pupils in Year 6 resolved the difficulties they had encountered by being helped by their teacher to draw on their own established knowledge. Teachers use a good range of methods to develop pupils' learning; this includes securing a good balance between their own exposition and the provision of practical experiences for pupils. This enables pupils to experiment confidently and use their developing knowledge effectively. For example, pupils in Year 4 drew imaginatively on an opening video sequence to help them decide their own designs and colour range. Teachers ensure that pupils know what to do and provide appropriate activities and resources to enable them to make good progress in their learning. For example, in design and technology, pupils in Year 6 were required to plan their own response to a given task, identify their resources, and evaluate outcomes to help them modify their decisions as the work proceeded. In the best lessons, teachers challenge and inspire their pupils and they work at a good pace, especially at Key Stage 2. Creative introductions gain the pupils' attention and questions are used effectively to establish and consolidate pupils' previous learning. Very good relationships with pupils encourage them to make valuable contributions to the lessons and demonstrate the extent of their own knowledge and understanding. There are good examples of collaborative work in English, science, information and communication technology and design and technology. For example, pupils work in pairs and groups to plan and carry out their tasks; their sharing and challenging of ideas help them modify and improve their practice and this has a positive impact on their learning.

- 25 Overall, teachers manage their resources well to support pupils' learning. Learning resources are well used and readily deployed to assist pupils' learning. Their collection and return are used effectively to develop positive work habits and establish co-operative routines amongst the pupils. Support staff make a significant contribution in supporting specific groups of pupils. However, there are examples across the school of inconsistencies in their role during whole class sessions; for example, during the opening and closing sessions of the literacy and numeracy hours. In these instances there are good examples of the clear role they have in supporting groups or individuals, but on other occasions they are passive observers or engaged in some very basic classroom routine. These latter examples are not effective uses of their expertise.
- 26 In almost all classes, throughout the school teachers sustain very good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Pupils follow clearly understood routines and settle quickly to their tasks. As a result behaviour is very good. The exception is in Key Stage 1, where in a few instances, the teachers' management of pupils is uncertain and pupils do not work consistently as effectively as they should. On one such occasion learning was unsatisfactory.
- 27 The school has responded positively to the planning issues raised in the last inspection and established a clear, uniform framework within which the teachers plan effectively. They plan together in year groups and this ensures that all pupils are provided with the same experiences in each of these groups. Planning for pupils under the age of five is good; it integrates successfully with the early stages of the National Curriculum and takes account of those children who are ready to make further progress in their work. Teachers make good use of schemes of work. They draw effectively in their planning on the clear guidance, structured, termly units and opportunities for areas to be revisited and studied in greater depth. This forms the basis for their medium-term planning in which they highlight appropriately suitable resources and assessment opportunities. This enables them to plan for consistency in coverage and continuity across the school in pupils' learning programmes. Lesson planning identifies clear objectives for learning and generally gives good attention to pupils' different rates of development. In the best lessons, it ensures that there is sufficient pace and challenge for higher-attaining pupils and pupils of all abilities make effective gains in their learning.
- 28 Teachers make good use of their day-to-day assessment of pupils' work. They intervene effectively and challenge pupils to help them improve their work and extend their learning. Books are regularly marked and, although there were good examples of teachers giving written guidance to help pupils improve their work in English, this is not consistent practice across the school.
- 29 The school promotes the active participation of parents in their children's learning and is running a number of workshops to help foster their involvement. Throughout the school the teachers set homework tasks in reading, spelling and number facts. Pupils in Year 6 receive regular homework, but elsewhere in the school homework is not provided on a regular basis.

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

- 30 The school provides a curriculum, which is broad, balanced and relevant and successfully promotes the intellectual, physical, moral, social and personal development of all its pupils, including those with special educational needs. It complies with statutory requirements and meets the school aims. The provision for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been systematically overcome. The curriculum for children under five in the nursery and reception classes is good and results in the children making good progress in almost all areas of learning. Additional time is allocated to the teaching of the literacy and numeracy strategies and used well to raise standards further. The staff have worked hard to implement the guidance in the frameworks and broaden the English and mathematics curricula. The school has effective strategies for teaching the key skills of literacy and numeracy and these are strengthened by opportunities for pupils to apply and develop them in other subjects. Despite the reduction in times available for some subjects, the school is successfully maintaining appropriate provision in all areas of the curriculum.
- 31 The personal, social and health education policy is good and well integrated into the curriculum. Sex education is taught through appropriate topics and themes and due attention is given to substance misuse through the drugs education programme which is supported by the local police.
- 32 All policies, many recently updated, are now in place and reflect the school's aims. The well-constructed schemes of work have relevant objectives which reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. These schemes provide a clear framework for planning. They are well adjusted to suit the school's needs and give good guidance for teachers' short and medium-term plans by identifying the development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- 33 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are clear processes for identifying such pupils at an early stage in their education. Individual educational plans are written for all pupils on each stage of the special needs register. They cover comprehensively literacy, speech and language, numeracy, behaviour and moderate learning difficulties; they contain relevant short-term targets linked to appropriate strategies. Class teachers and special needs support staff work closely together and ensure that pupils who are withdrawn from classes for extra support are covering the same subject work at a level appropriate to their needs. Provision fully meets the requirements of the code of practice and statutory reporting requirements.
- 34 The school is fully committed to equal opportunities and has regard to all statutory requirements. The staff ensure that all pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits. They plan their work to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. They are concerned to develop pupils' abilities whether academic, artistic or sporting. Girls and boys are encouraged to take part in all activities. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy equal access to the full curriculum and the total range of the school's activities; this is enhanced by the quality of the support from classroom assistants and midday supervisors.

- 35 The curriculum is enriched by educational visits and visitors to the school. Regular touring roadshows on topics such as 'The Victorians', 'World War 2' and 'The Egyptians' enhance pupils' learning. Education in the arts is well provided for, especially through the school's dance programme. Pupils of all ages gain valuable learning experiences from educational visits to sites of local interest and further afield, such as Hoo Farm, Shugborough Hall, and Tatton Park. There is a good, well-attended, extra-curricular programme which includes sporting, musical, dance and drama activities. Pupils have worth-while opportunities to develop their special interests and talents: In sport, through clubs and competitive team games; in dance, through the school's very successful dance club; and in music, through individual instrumental tuition in brass, flute, clarinet, cello, violin and recorders. A significant number of opportunities are provided for pupils to perform with others and pupils are developing a good sense of audience and occasion. The school is proud of its musical productions, which are of a high standard. All pupils take part in these events, such as Christmas musicals and carol services. Pupils participate in local community events. For example, they sing and play their recorders at the Parish Church Garden Party. This provision makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
- 36 The school's links with the local community and beyond make a significant impact on the pupils' learning. There are strong links with the local Anglican church, and the vicar and curate are regular visitors to the school and active participants in leading worship in assemblies. In association with the church the school set up 'The Y Now Club' to provide Christian fellowship to mark the millennium and celebrate 2000 years of Christianity. The contribution of visiting speakers makes a considerable impact on the pupils' learning. For instance, pupils gain immensely from first-hand discussion with a Christian priest and a member of the Jewish Faith. The pupils visit the local area in connection with their studies in geography and history. The school's outstanding reputation for dance has helped it in developing links beyond its immediate community with invitations to perform in a variety of venues around the country. The school has established international links with a school in France through which the pupils of both schools have been able to exchange information. This adds further enrichment to their studies of the world. Donations from local businesses are used appropriately by the school to secure additional learning resources.
- 37 The school maintains sound links with local schools, especially the secondary school to which the majority of pupils transfer. To help in developing this partnership the school has co-opted the deputy headteacher of the secondary school onto its governing body. Appropriate arrangements are made to help the pupils in their transition to secondary education with preparatory visit in the summer term and opportunities to join in recreational activities. Close, formal links are maintained for pupils with special educational needs and informal curriculum links in mathematics and science. There is strong liaison between the schools in relation to dance.
- 38 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. It creates an environment which fosters good social attitudes and respect for moral values in which all pupils are encouraged to contribute to the life of the community. There is a positive working atmosphere engendered by the staff's care and consideration for their pupils as well as the clear values they promote. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the provision for spiritual development.

- 39 Through many well-planned opportunities, the staff help children under five to reflect and pray. The staff foster an understanding of Christian festivals and traditions and those of other faiths. They encourage the children to participate appropriately in school assemblies. All staff help the children to discuss their feelings and the care of others. They present the children with opportunities to reflect on the world around them. Staff place a high priority on children's social development. They provide a secure environment and are particularly successful in helping children settle into the routines of school life. The staff's good provision and high expectations establish firm guidelines to promote good behaviour. They offer the children a wide range of opportunities for them to learn to work together harmoniously.
- 40 The school makes very good provision for the spiritual development of its pupils. From their early days in school pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their lives, their relationships and their place in the world. Prayer has a prominent focus in the daily routines of all pupils and they are helped progressively to develop an understanding of their own beliefs and a perception of the beliefs of others. The daily acts of collective worship, shared by the whole school community, are broadly Christian. They are often based on stories from the Bible or from other cultures and creeds; these help to broaden the perspectives of pupils and they always carry a strong moral message. Religious education also makes an important contribution to this aspect of pupils' development. It offers pupils opportunities to extend their understanding of other religions and to consider their own beliefs and those of others. In science pupils ponder the range and variety of living things and wonder at the extent of the universe. The school is successful in developing pupils' aesthetic awareness through literature and providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own experience and empathise with that of others. Spirituality is fostered through well-told stories and stimulating teaching. For example, pupils, and many parents, were enthralled by a dramatic class presentation involving music, dance and touching testimony by pupils to the importance of their family in their lives.
- 41 Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school succeeds well in its stated aim to encourage the moral development of pupils. As the pupils move through the school the staff help them to distinguish between right and wrong. By their own courteous and caring behaviour staff provide good role models and they rarely miss an opportunity in the classroom to emphasise the importance of always seeking to make the right and the moral choice when faced with difficult decisions. They encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour by involving them in the setting of class rules. Staff help pupils to understand the importance of care and respect for the environment through well-chosen activities. Teachers plan good opportunities to discuss a range of moral issues, such as bullying, through the careful selection of poetry and stories. When pupils gather together to share experiences, this provides further occasions for pupils' feelings and concerns to be addressed in a secure atmosphere. Staff use assemblies well to present strong moral messages; for example, pupils are led to reflect on the ephemeral nature of money and the lack of resources in parts of the world.
- 42 The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Throughout the school there is much emphasis on the concept of the school as a family and pupils develop an early understanding of the implications of living in a community. Teachers provide many occasions when pupils work together in small and large groups and encourage them to value and respect one another's contributions. Celebration and Commendation Assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to recognise and affirm the achievements of others. The school welcomes all pupils and values the distinct contribution they each make. Staff prominently display the school rules, and, for older pupils, they supplement them with a statement of rights and responsibilities and a classroom code of conduct which the pupils help to write. All the teachers provide opportunities for pupils to show initiative in the daily routines and through these responsibilities develop an understanding of society. For example, pupils help in the classroom, ring bells at the start of the day and distribute and collect registers. Team

games, musical activities, school productions and residential visits foster the idea of collective responsibility. The staff promote extra-curricular competitive team sports to develop an understanding of fair play and sportsmanship. The school develops a sense of citizenship and community responsibility by giving pupils the freedom to organise charitable fund raising, which they do with great enthusiasm and considerable success.

- 43 Provision for cultural development is good and is reflected in many areas of the curriculum. The staff promote pupils' appreciation of their own culture as well as the diversity and richness of others through literature, music, geography, history and religious education. This is particularly apparent in the school's celebration of dance as an art form and in which it has achieved significant success, notably through performances which have taken place at the concert hall in Birmingham and which are planned to take place in the Millennium Dome. It is also clear in the school's development of local studies and its exploration of the traditional craft of pottery through which pupils are encouraged to produce poetry and models about this local industry. In religious education, staff help pupils become aware of the celebrations and symbols associated with the major religions of the world, including Judaism, and Hinduism. Visits to places of worship such as a church, a synagogue and a Sikh Temple, provide valuable insight into religious beliefs and practices. The school offers a range of books which reflects pupils' own and other cultures, but there are insufficient resources to develop pupils' appreciation of art and music from around the world

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 44 The school provides good educational and personal support and guidance for all of its pupils. Teachers know their pupils well. Very good relationships are a strength of the school and play a central role in the recognition and fulfilment of the pupils' needs. The school has good arrangements for monitoring and eliminating bullying and oppressive behaviour, should they occur; no such incidents were seen during the inspection. Although occurrences are few, they are recorded by the headteacher in the official report book. The school's behaviour policy contains clear expectations of good conduct and outlines appropriate rewards and sanctions. It is consistently applied by all staff. The Health Education Policy is detailed and relevant and enables pupils' personal needs to be met. Personal targets concerning attitudes and behaviour are set and progress towards them monitored by the pupils themselves and staff. Continuous records of personal development are kept for individuals throughout their school life and contain thoughtful input from teachers and pupils. The pupils' personal achievements are regularly celebrated in Commendation Assemblies. The school's procedures for providing personal support are very effective in promoting a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school, which allows staff and pupils to concentrate on their main purpose of teaching and learning and so raise achievement.

- 45 The school's systems for evaluating and supporting pupils' academic development are very good. The school has progressed considerably since the last inspection in developing a comprehensive system to assess the attainment of individuals as well as to evaluate the overall performance of the school. A very clear and rigorous new policy for assessment, recording and reporting has been implemented systematically throughout the school. The assessment procedures for the children in the nursery and the reception classes are good and used well. They include careful planning and assessment of what children know, understand and can do, in all the areas relevant to children of this age. These procedures are used early, to identify the specific needs of the children when they enter the nursery and again when they enter the reception classes. Useful day-to-day assessment notes of all the children are kept and used to plan future work and also to set targets for the children's future learning.
- 46 Assessments in English and mathematics are made through national standardised tests in each year from Year 2, and results carefully analysed to evaluate pupils' progress consistently from year to year. The data collected is used effectively to raise standards by highlighting individual pupils for particular help; for example, through additional literacy support, and identifying areas of the curriculum for development, such as comprehension skills. It is also used to adjust school organisation to provide smaller teaching groups based on prior ability in mathematics, and to set realistic and challenging targets for individuals and the school, based on past performance. Profiles built up by teachers' observations and day-to-day records in their notebooks are used effectively to support less formal assessment across all curricular areas and to inform the teachers' planning. The school successfully supports pupils with special educational needs through well-established procedures which meet the national code of practice and ensure the pupils' early identification, and the monitoring and targeting of appropriate support. The effective links with outside agencies make a positive contribution to the quality of education of these pupils.
- 47 Teachers throughout the school are very sensitive to the needs of the pupils and they show warmth and understanding in their relationships with them. Effective links have been maintained with appropriate health and educational support agencies. The school has made a renewed commitment through the home-school agreement to work closely with those who have parental responsibilities for the pupils. The arrangements for child protection comply fully with local authority guidance. The designated person has taken part in appropriate training and has shared the resulting information with colleagues. However, there has been no recent training for staff to give them a greater understanding of child protection issues and advise them on how to make best use of the curriculum to build preventive approaches to child protection. The school is aware of this training need and has appropriate plans to address it. Records of attendance are carefully analysed and evaluated and prompt action is taken to investigate any unauthorised or unexplained absence. The governors have a very responsible attitude towards health and safety. The policy has been reviewed and makes good provision for regular risk assessment. Reports are given to the full governing body at each meeting. No matters of serious concern were identified during the inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 48 A strong and mutually beneficial partnership has been developed between parents and school. This enriches the educational process and has a positive effect upon pupils' learning; for example, through the good support parents give their children at home, and the range of information provided by the school. The great majority of parents have expressed very positive views of the school. They confirm that their children are happy at school and that they find the teachers very approachable. They particularly appreciate the progress made by their children and their high standard of behaviour, the management of the school and the quality of teaching. Parents play a very important role in supporting the work of the school; for example, through their very active role on the governing body and their valuable assistance in the classroom. Parents bring a range of skills and experiences which significantly enrich the quality of pupils' education. The staff appreciate the contribution that parents make and work with 'College in the Community' to secure training opportunities for them.
- 49 The school provides good quality written and verbal information for parents; for example, the school's comprehensive prospectus, curriculum evenings and explanatory notes for those not able to attend, and regular, informative newsletters. Parents of children under five are given helpful guidance through induction booklets and pre-school visits. They bring their children into school in a morning and some join in with the 'Welcome Activities' until the child has settled. Pupils' annual reports offer a clear indication of their progress and identify appropriate individual targets for achievement; they comply fully with statutory requirements. Consultation evenings are held regularly in the spring and summer terms and during the latter parents have an opportunity to discuss their children's reports with their teachers. Parents of children with special educational needs are actively involved in the regular reviews of their development and kept well informed of their progress. A very successful Parents and Teachers Association holds many social events to promote the partnership between parents and school, and to raise money for resources.
- 50 Very good procedures have been established to ensure that parents of children new to the school are made welcome. Teachers discuss fully with parents the capabilities of their children and provide them with advice and guidance as to how they can best support their children's education in the home. The school gives parents appropriate information about each term's curriculum and about the work their children will be exploring during the forthcoming year. The school has introduced a home-school agreement to make explicit the perceived commitments of parents, teachers and pupils. It is too early to judge its effectiveness. The school is planning to develop its partnership with parents further through the provision of a 'Before and After School Club'. Although the school has taken the lead on this imaginative initiative parents have been consulted extensively and kept fully informed of developments.
- 51 Parents play an important part in improving the quality of their children's education. At home, they listen to their children read, help them to learn spellings and number facts, and support their individual research. By making time to help their children at home, parents show the importance they place on their children's education and this improves the standards they achieve. As yet the school does not have a clear policy on homework and consistent practice is not established across the school. A minority of parents has indicated dissatisfaction with the present arrangements. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to record that the school does provide useful information and appropriate guidance to enable parents to plan for and support much of the work that is covered in the classroom.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 52 The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior management team, the members of which are very proactive in their roles of key stage managers and curriculum co-ordinators. In the year since his arrival, with the support of the staff, the headteacher has taken a very active role in maintaining and improving the high standards achieved by the pupils. In the drive to move standards even higher, he has concentrated on the careful analysis of pupils' performance across the school, using the outcomes to set both school and individual targets for improvement. However, the terms of reference for the management structure of the school are not clearly set out and this leads to some lack of clarity in the roles of curriculum co-ordinators, especially in the area of evaluating the quality of teaching.
- 53 The school sets out its aims very clearly in the school brochure for parents. These aims concentrate on pupils becoming literate and numerate, and enjoying full and equal opportunities to become well-balanced individuals with enquiring minds. They are very well reflected in the school's work. The school has become a community with a clear emphasis on the care, security and happiness of pupils and with a strong commitment to their welfare and academic progress.
- 54 The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties very effectively. A new committee structure has been implemented recently. The finance committee allows all members to have an input into its recommendations on spending. Individual governors have taken the roles of overseeing provision for literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, special educational needs and health and safety. They liaise closely with the relevant members of staff. They have agreed academic performance targets with the staff that are both sensible and achievable. Governors are frequent visitors to school. Following the lead of the very committed chairman, the governing body as a whole is playing a full part in shaping the future direction of the school. They bring wide expertise and experience to the school and are very involved in formulating school policies in many areas, including the provision for literacy and numeracy. They know the school well, being aware of its strengths in attaining high standards, in teaching, its strong tradition in dance and music education, and its commitment to the provision of equal opportunities. They have a clear vision of the school as a family and have set appropriate priorities on further rises in academic standards and improving the accommodation.
- 55 In the time since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress towards improving the evaluation and development of teaching standards. This area has been given a fresh impetus with the arrival of the new headteacher. Teachers' long, medium and short-term plans are closely scrutinised by curriculum co-ordinators, alongside the pupils' completed work. A programme for lesson observations has been planned to begin in the current term with the headteacher taking principal responsibility for this. However, it has not been developed to enable co-ordinators to assess the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in their subjects. The cycle of the appraisal of teachers has been interrupted following recent government initiatives, although arrangements for their professional development satisfactorily support the priorities identified in the school development plan. This plan is an effective document covering the main areas of action for the year. There is a strategic overview of future areas for development and consolidation. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are appropriately involved in evaluating the outcomes of action. However, there is no indication of the timescales or forum within which these evaluations are to take place. The measures taken by the school as a whole to support its targets are very good. The careful analysis of school performance leads to all pupils' achievements being recognised and areas for further progress being planned on an individual basis. Very good teamwork is evident across the school and teachers ensure that support staff are well aware of the learning needs of the pupils. New staff are well integrated into school life and the school is

fully capable of providing for the needs of trainee teachers.

- 56 The school's finances are well managed. School priorities are well supported through the careful consideration of the implications of spending. The school budget is designed to support planned identified priorities, such as the provision of sufficient classroom support staff. Curriculum co-ordinators are asked to complete a review of their areas of responsibility each year so as to identify necessary items of expenditure and this leads to a clear overview of the school's current position with regard to resources. The school's finance committee meets at least once a term to make recommendations to the full governing body. The headteacher and bursar work closely to ensure that spending is scrutinised and properly accounted for. The last audit of the school's accounting procedures was carried out two years ago and its recommendations have been implemented. The school has taken very effective steps to ensure that developments in technology are used to support both academic progress and the efficiency of its data processing systems. The newly-developed internet website is particularly noteworthy, using highlights of the school's recent successes well to promote the school as a forward-looking and active place of learning. Grants received for special needs provision and for better computer facilities have been well used to support developments in these areas. The Parent Teachers' Association has also provided money for improvements to pupils' working conditions such as in funding better lighting for classroom areas.
- 57 The school has an adequate number of teachers who are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the National Curriculum, children under five and pupils with special educational needs. Support staff are effectively deployed and they make a valuable contribution to the quality of educational provision. They are appropriately qualified and work closely with class teachers to ensure a consistent approach in their teaching; this has a beneficial effect on the pupils' good progress. Nonetheless, the best use is not consistently made of this support in some lessons, particularly during the opening and closing sessions. The work of the staff with responsibility for administration, lunchtime supervision, premises and cleaning is effective. The warm and professional reception, and welcoming approach from the administrative staff are indicative of the school as a whole. All staff work together as a mutually supportive team for the benefit of all the pupils. This teamwork contributes significantly to the caring ethos of the school and the high achievement of the pupils.
- 58 The Early-Years co-ordinator's expertise and broad experience ensure good leadership and management for this important phase of education. This is displayed through the sensitive induction programme, the good curriculum provision and the consistent quality of the teaching and learning. The two special educational needs co-ordinators manage provision for pupils with special needs effectively. Their enthusiasm and empathy for these pupils are especial strengths. The school shows a strong commitment to supporting pupils with special needs and invests more money than it receives by providing extra assistants to help these pupils in the classroom. The quality of this support is good.
- 59 The school follows the local authority's induction programme for newly qualified teachers and all staff take part in a useful induction programme appropriate to their responsibilities. All staff benefit from an extensive programme of professional development carefully targeted to the school's priorities and the staff's individual needs. For example, classroom staff training for the introduction of both the literacy and numeracy strategies, and support staff training for computer assisted learning, National Vocational Qualifications and the Certificate for Midday Supervisors. The school does not have formal systems in place to evaluate this programme and determine its effectiveness.
- 60 The accommodation has been reorganised to provide better facilities for learning. These are having a significant impact especially on the provision for information and communication technology. Overall, the school has adequate accommodation and

teaching resources for the needs of pupils. There are sufficient classrooms for the pupils on roll. The Key Stage 1 hall is well equipped and roomy and there is a good all weather games facility. Good and creative use is made of the converted alcove areas. Resources are good for the younger pupils, and in the areas of mathematics, information technology and design technology. Library resources are unsatisfactory, however, as there is no well-organised library and insufficient information books for research purposes. This has led to pupils being less aware and experienced than they should be in the recognition and use of systems of classification and the opportunities it affords for research.

- 61 Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in leadership and management. It is well led and teamwork is evident amongst all staff throughout the school. Members of the governing body have become very pro-active and involved in developing all aspects of school life. The school's management is well placed to lead the drive to improve standards further.
- 62 The school has a lower than average income per pupil than most schools. From a diverse social background, pupils enter the school with overall average attainments. In their time at the school, they reach and maintain high standards in most areas. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63 In order to continue to improve the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- * develop pupils' library skills through the provision of a library with a good range of books, as proposed in the school's building development programme; (paragraphs: 6, 7, 43, 60, 77, 80, 104, 116)
- * implement the school's planned programme for the evaluation of teaching through classroom observation by:
 - extending responsibility to the senior manage team;
 - providing training for curriculum co-ordinators to develop their management skills in evaluation. (paragraphs: 52, 55, 96, 111)
- * revise the deployment of classroom assistants to make the best use of their skills by drawing on the examples of good practice already evident in the school. (paragraphs: 25, 57, 82, 88, 89)

In addition to the key issues above, the following should be considered by the governors for inclusion in the action plan:

- * develop the range of pupils' strategies for solving mental mathematics problems at Key Stage 1; (paragraphs: 6, 20, 84, 88)
- * increase pupils' opportunities to practise written recordings of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division activities at Key Stage 2. (paragraphs: 7, 20, 85,90)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	86
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1%	26%	50%	22%	1%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	516
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	85

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

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	28

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	36	39	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	31	35
	Girls	36	38	38
	Total	65	69	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87(83)	92(93)	97(98)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	35	35
	Girls	38	39	39
	Total	69	74	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92(91)	99(90)	99(96)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	38	38	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	27	35
	Girls	32	30	36
	Total	60	57	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79(78)	75(70)	93(90)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	27	37
	Girls	35	33	37
	Total	61	60	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80(79)	79(81)	97(93)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	506
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, 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)	18.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.3
Average class size	32.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	166

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	61.8

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	769,659.00
Total expenditure	761,065.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,418.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,880.00
Balance carried forward to next year	27,474.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

539

Number of questionnaires returned

331

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	3	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	39	53	4	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	52	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	49	21	4	4
The teaching is good.	47	47	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	53	20	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	43	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	44	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	29	53	14	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	38	52	3	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	53	5	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	39	16	7	18

Other issues raised by parents

Forty-two parents wrote to the inspection team. The major areas to which these parents referred were management, behaviour, homework and standards. In total and content their comments reflected the results of the survey. In addition, individual parents raised particular and personal issues.

Although the eight parents who submitted written comments about homework wanted more for their children, it was not clear from the survey whether those disagreeing with the statement wanted more or less.

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

64 Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the standards attained by children under five and the weaknesses identified in the curriculum and teaching have been overcome. By the time they reach the age of five most children have attained beyond the desirable learning outcomes¹ in personal and social education, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They work at the early stages of the National Curriculum. During their time in the nursery and reception classes the children achieve well and make good progress in these areas of learning. In physical development, they attain the standard expected for their age and achieve satisfactorily, making sound progress in this area of learning.

Personal and social development

65 Children respond well to the secure environment that staff provide, in both the nursery and the reception classes, and they settle very quickly into the routines of the school day. They develop positive attitudes to work and behave very well. In the nursery, the children gain confidence through a wide variety of well-planned activities which they are eager to explore. They co-operate with other children in small groups; for example, they construct a 'hotel' using large bricks, play in pairs in the 'canteen', and read nursery rhyme books together. Children work independently and persevere when matching picture cards; they take turns when playing games. They understand the difference between right and wrong. By the age of five, children work together in larger groups and show greater independence in selecting activities. They demonstrate initiative in choosing appropriate resources and take responsibility for tidying them away; for example, when sorting out materials to test whether they repel or absorb water. The quality of teaching of personal and social development is good. Staff work effectively together to provide a secure environment for the children and sustain very good relationships with them. They demonstrate their awareness of the children's personal needs and use praise effectively to encourage them to try even harder. Staff have high expectations of the children and through their sensitive management produce a very good ethos in which the children strive consistently to make their very best efforts.

Language and literacy

66 The development of children's language and literacy skills is given a high priority in both the nursery and the reception classes, and by the time they are five most children are confident users of English. The children in the nursery listen carefully to stories and rhymes and join in enthusiastically with the familiar refrains. They extend their vocabulary through discussion and demonstrate good speaking skills when they communicate with their friends in the 'Postman Pat' corner. In the reception classes, most children speak at length about things that interest them. Higher-attaining children use a wide and precise vocabulary; for example, 'phonemes and graphemes', 'repel and absorb'. In the nursery, children enjoy books and they know that words and pictures convey meaning. They handle books with care and talk about the stories eagerly. They recognise their names, a number of initial letter sounds and identify familiar words accurately. In the reception classes the children enjoy the enlarged texts used in the literacy lessons. They identify the titles and authors of books, read more words by sight and improve their phonic knowledge. Higher-attaining children understand the use of full stops, capital letters and speech bubbles. They read simple books accurately and talk confidently about the characters, setting and plot. All children develop good skills of early writing. Nursery children use marks, pictures, letters and words well to communicate meaning. They copy their own names legibly

and show good pencil control. In the reception classes, higher-attaining pupils write independently, with the aid of a word bank and effective adult support. The teaching of language and literacy is good. Staff plan a good range of speaking and listening activities. To help children improve their skills, staff intervene sensitively and talk with children as they work, promoting the use of appropriate vocabulary. They read aloud to the children and provide valuable opportunities for them to join in with rhymes, songs and poetry. Staff's good choice of books stimulates the children's interest in reading and almost all the children are quick to identify their favourite books and authors. They teach phonic and early writing skills well and link them effectively. Staff develop role-play well and successfully encourage the children to extend and use their developing vocabulary in all aspects of language and literacy. Staff give children daily opportunities to use the computers to reinforce reading skills and sound-tapes to develop their listening skills.

Mathematics

- 67 Since the last inspection children's mathematical understanding has improved. Children in the nursery count successfully to 10 and beyond and begin to solve simple problems; for example, identifying the number that comes between 6 and 8. By the time they are five, children use mathematical language competently to describe the names of shapes, such as circle, rectangle, and square. They cut a clay 'cake' into halves and quarters successfully, and compare the sizes of objects correctly. They order numbers to 20 and write number symbols clearly. Higher-attaining children add and subtract single-digits numbers correctly, use comparatives such as 'shorter', 'longer', 'lighter', and 'heavier' appropriately and apply their mathematical skills in practical situations. For example, they calculate the number of children absent, how many more children have packed lunches than school lunches and how long it will be before home-time. The teaching of mathematics is good. Staff use every opportunity to develop pupils' mathematical skills and to exploit their mathematical understanding; for example, the collection of dinner money and birthday charts. Staff develop effectively children's understanding of the ordering, addition and subtraction of numbers.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 68 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world has improved since the last inspection. In the nursery, children talk clearly about their families and their homes, they know where they live and describe their journeys to school. They know that living things need food and water to help them to grow. They compare past and present photographs of themselves in topics such as 'Growing up' and demonstrate a good sense of the passage of time. Through visits from a postman, firemen and police they develop a good understanding of the wider community and how these people help us. They know a number of features of the local environment. They describe their visit to the local post office and record their experiences colourfully. In the reception classes, the children know the difference between the seasons and, as they dress 'Fred' for his holiday in the sun, demonstrate their understanding that different clothing is suitable for different climates. They sort and group materials correctly according to their qualities and identify those which repel or absorb water. They develop their work on the seasons by tracking the flight paths of migrating birds in winter, using simple atlases and globes. They use sound tapes and computers with increasing confidence and enjoy the various programmes, which support their work. The quality of teaching is good. Work is well planned so that as children move from the nursery into the reception classes the activities increase in difficulty and are appropriate for the full range of children's abilities. Staff develop the children's knowledge and understanding of different cultures and distant places through well selected stories and performances from theatre groups. For example, 'The Legend of the Golden Dragon' was linked successfully to their celebrations of the Chinese New Year.

Creative development

- 69 The children explore sound, colour, texture, form and space through a variety of activities. In the nursery they express their creative ideas as they draw, paint and

crayon with a variety of media. They print with their hands and sponges and use collage materials with support to make an attractive, life-like picture of Postman Pat. In the reception classes, they use a wider variety of media, they know the names of most colours and develop basic skills in colour mixing to produce a good range of work from direct observation and imagination. Nursery children sing enthusiastically, clap in time and perform suitable actions at appropriate times. They develop a good sense of rhythm and rhyme as they listen to the tune of 'Polly Put the Kettle On' and compose their own words. In the reception classes most children recognise familiar tunes and sing a growing repertoire of rhymes and songs re-calling the words accurately, and generally they sing in tune. All the children enjoy enacting stories when playing in the role-play areas and many are developing an imaginative vocabulary. The quality of teaching is good. Staff encourage children to express their feelings and link creative activities effectively to other areas of the curriculum. They support the children well and extend their learning experiences and help them improve the quality of their responses. They value the children's work which is attractively displayed alongside that of established artists. Music corners in the nursery and the reception classes contain a range of untuned instruments and give valuable opportunities for children to explore sounds.

Physical Development

- 70 In both the nursery and the reception classes, children demonstrate increasing control through which they move, use space and handle a range of small and large apparatus. They use small equipment such as beanbags, satisfactorily, to practise catching and throwing to one another. They develop these skills well in the reception classes, where they throw and catch over longer distances with greater accuracy. The children enjoy their indoor gymnastics lessons, in which they stretch, curl and jump, travel over, under and through large apparatus, displaying sound control and co-ordination. They work independently when appropriate, but co-operate well with one another when required. In the nursery, the children acquire sound co-ordination skills as they cut, join and paste materials and use their manipulative skills appropriately to build with construction kits, pick up small building blocks and join jigsaws. They refine these skills in the reception classes as they use a wider range of materials requiring increasingly complicated manipulative skills and use tools and equipment with greater control and precision. They hold pencils and crayons correctly and use them confidently showing increasing dexterity. A minority of children do not handle scissors well and some children in the reception classes still experience difficulty when cutting out materials. All the children have access to computers. Many manipulate the mouse confidently, enter their names on screen and use painting and counting programs satisfactorily. The quality of teaching is sound. The staff plan an interesting range of activities which the children clearly enjoy. They give appropriate feedback to children to help them to improve their work and be more inventive. As a result, the children are keen to practise their skills to improve their performance. They give good attention to safety and emphasise the importance of using equipment sensibly and carefully.

ENGLISH

- 71 Standards in English are better than those reported at the last inspection. Teaching has improved, it is consistently very good in Year 6 and this enables pupils to attain high standards. By the time they reach the age of eleven almost all pupils are on course to meet the standard expected of eleven-year-olds (level 4). A significant minority are on course to reach the next higher level (level 5). This matches the results of the national tests in 1999. There is good evidence of a few pupils working at the next higher level (level 6). In 1999, compared with all schools, the percentage of pupils who attained the national standard for their age was above the national average but average in comparison with pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the next higher level was well above the national average, and average when compared with the performance of pupils of similar schools. Over the four years, from 1996 to 1999, good standards of attainment have been consistently maintained. Girls outperform boys in English, matching the national pattern.
- 72 By the age of seven, in reading and writing, most of the current pupils in Year 2 attain the national standard (level 2), with a significant minority attaining at the higher level (level 3). This broadly matches the standards attained by the school's seven-year-olds in the 1999 national tests. In 1999, compared with all schools, the percentage of pupils who attained the national standard in reading was average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was well above the average. In comparison with pupils in similar schools the percentage of pupils reaching the national standard was below average, and average at the higher levels. In 1999, compared with all schools, the percentage of pupils who attained or exceeded the national standard for their age in writing was above average. In comparison with pupils in similar schools the percentage of pupils reaching or exceeding the national standard was average.
- 73 The school has successfully implemented the national literacy strategy and this has helped to ensure a consistent approach to planning and teaching. Teachers are confident and effective teaching literacy, and provide very good opportunities for pupils to apply and improve their skills in other subjects. This makes a very good contribution to raising achievement in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils respond well to the staff's requirements that they express themselves clearly in speech and writing, and develop their reading and writing skills in other subjects. The school's agreed priorities and procedures for raising standards in English include setting challenging, measurable targets for improvement. The school is on course to meet them.
- 74 Very good attention is given to developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils listen carefully and speak clearly. The older pupils listen with increased attention and concentration. They sustain more prolonged conversations, make mature contributions to class discussions and learn to adapt their increasing vocabulary in response to different situations. The teachers expect pupils to use appropriate, specialist vocabulary and this positive influence shows in pupils' ability to express themselves accurately. They use language effectively to explain, enquire and compare. Pupils share ideas, offer advice to one another and present their work clearly at the end of lessons. They state their opinions articulately and justify their views confidently. Pupils' oral skills are reinforced and enhanced through opportunities to perform to a wider audience. For example, pupils in Year 4 demonstrated the high quality of their speaking skills during a class assembly. They read their own writing confidently, audibly and with good expression. Pupils also perform publicly in school productions.

- 75 Standards in reading are good. Younger pupils read accurately from published reading schemes of progressively more difficult texts and consolidate their skills well by reading books at similar levels of difficulty. By the age of seven higher attaining pupils read accurately, fluently and with good expression. They learn to segment words into syllables, identify little words within big words and use the structure of the sentence to determine the type of word needed to make sense. As they become more confident, they self-correct, read-on and re-read to clarify meaning. Average and lower-attaining pupils recognise a good number of words by sight but use a narrower range of strategies positively for tackling new words. They use their knowledge of sounds and the illustrations to help them, and their reading is mostly accurate.
- 76 By the time pupils leave the school, standards of attainment in reading are good. Most pupils read accurately, fluently and with good expression. They use a range of strategies effectively to help them read unfamiliar words. Higher-attaining pupils orchestrate all the reading strategies to make sense of what they read. They pay greater attention to punctuation and read with more expression. They use good phrasing when reading aloud, and use their comprehension skills well to deduce information and ideas from the text. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they read and the stories that are read to them. They recall the storyline well, talk about the characters and explain clearly what they like or dislike about them. They are familiar with a good range of authors. Younger pupils talk enthusiastically about books by Mick Inkpen and David McKee. Older pupils enjoy the 'Harry Potter' books, by J K Rowlings and poems and stories by Roald Dahl. Many pupils select Jackie Wilson, Enid Blyton, and Dick King-Smith as their favourite writers and they express their preferences clearly. The 'Author Focus' has a positive impact on pupils' reading because it increases pupils' knowledge of authors and widens their reading experiences. The pupils' appreciation and understanding of literature and poetry are enhanced in whole-class and group reading sessions. By the time they are eleven, the pupils have studied a good range of challenging texts including 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' by William Shakespeare and 'Moondial' by Helen Cresswell. Higher-attaining pupils are familiar with some significant contemporary and well-established authors. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are motivated to read widely, from a variety of different texts. Many parents give valuable support by reading regularly with their children and this has a positive impact upon standards.
- 77 Pupils' skills of research and information are less well developed. Pupils do not have access to a classified library; consequently, the development of independent research skills is restricted. Younger pupils are familiar with technical terminology such as author, illustrator and title. By the age of seven, higher and average-attaining pupils know the difference between fact and fiction. Older pupils know that fiction is classified alphabetically, they understand the features of non-fiction texts and explain the purpose of the index and contents accurately. Only the higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 are aware of the Dewey decimal system but they cannot explain how it is used.
- 78 By the time they reach the age of seven, standards in writing are good. Pupils write in a variety of forms for a range of purposes. They label diagrams clearly, complete charts accurately and write short, factual reports. There are some very good examples of higher-attaining pupils responding imaginatively to stories. These pupils sustain their ideas well and use an adventurous vocabulary to create a desired effect. They use grammatically complex sentences, their spelling is usually accurate and their work is well presented in a joined, fluent style. Average and lower-attaining pupils organise their writing appropriately and extend their ideas logically. Their ideas are developed in sentences, but they are not consistently demarcated by capital letters and full stops. They spell common words accurately and handwriting is well formed. They develop their writing skills well in other subjects, such as geography as they compile facts about penguins and compare the features of hot and cold countries.

- 79 By the time the pupils reach the age of eleven, standards of attainment in writing are good. Pupils build upon their early skills and make good progress. In Year 3, pupils describe the qualities of their 'heroes' and 'villains' by making good use of their clear understanding of adjectives. They improve their spelling by finding the rules for plurals. Pupils' writing is varied and interesting. They write letters, stories, reports, biographies, instructions and poetry. They listen and look at the language and lay-out of established texts and plan, draft and edit their work carefully. Pupils recognise the main features of different types of fiction and non-fiction texts and use them effectively as models for their own writing. Pupils' writing is well-organised into paragraphs and spelling and punctuation are generally accurate. Higher-attaining pupils are effective in engaging the readers' interest; their parodies of the story of Cinderella are inventive and amusing and their work is very well presented in a good, fluent handwriting style. Very good examples of pupils' writing were observed in design and technology, where pupils planned, reported and evaluated 'The Crash Vehicle Project'. They plan experiments in science, describing the methods, results and conclusions clearly. They make useful notes in history and use bullet points and numbering effectively.
- 80 Progress in English is good. During Key Stage 2, pupils systematically develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills acquired in Key Stage 1. This enables them to make good progress in almost all aspects of English; the exception is in the development of their library skills, in particular, selecting texts for independent study.
- 81 The quality of teaching is good. In Year 6, it is consistently very good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Teachers take due account of the national literacy framework in their planning and apply the principles well. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of the objectives, and they make clear what pupils are expected to learn and what they are required to do to make their work better. Consequently, pupils participate effectively in evaluating and improving their own work. Big books and enlarged texts are used appropriately and group work is matched to pupils' differing levels of ability. Spelling conventions are clearly taught and pupils are encouraged to articulate the rules. The review time at the end of lessons is used effectively in helping pupils to consolidate and extend their learning and to relate it to their previous work. In the most successful lessons teachers have a very good command of English, they challenge and inspire their pupils. Teachers have very high expectations and use skilled questioning to assess pupils' knowledge, to confirm and extend their understanding, and help pupils make connections between points arising from discussion and their previous knowledge. These consistent features of high-quality teaching are significant factors in enabling pupils to extend their learning well. There are some good examples of teachers' marking giving written feedback to the pupils on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work, but this is not a consistent feature in all classes. All pupils take reading books home and learn spellings. Many teachers set regular homework which is used effectively to reinforce and extend what is learned in school, but it is not a routine in all classes. Where homework is set regularly, parents are generally supportive; they report that it helps them become involved in their children's work.

- 82 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is well planned and relates appropriately to the literacy targets in their individual education plans. Work is properly matched to pupils' needs; as a result, the pupils make good progress. For example, they develop their writing skills from recording single words to label pictures to completing their own short stories in simple sentences. Learning support assistants are well briefed but their time at the beginning of lessons is not always used effectively to support pupils' learning.

MATHEMATICS

- 83 The attainments of pupils aged eleven in the 1999 national tests were above the national average (level 4), but below that of pupils from similar backgrounds. The rising trend over the last four years matches that seen nationally. In the 1999 national tests, the overall performance of pupils aged seven years was well above the national average (level 2) and above that of schools with similar backgrounds. Over the four years since the last inspection there has been a rising trend in results for this key stage. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment (Level 3, by the age of seven; and Level 5, by the age of eleven) exceed the national average.
- 84 The scrutiny of work indicates that the attainment of pupils in the current Year 2 is above the national average. Most pupils understand the structure of the number system to 100. They add and subtract numbers accurately using equipment such as number lines to assist their calculations. They know their multiplication facts and use them to answer division problems correctly. They understand fractions such as halves and quarters and simplify them when appropriate. In a number of lessons, pupils are not confident using the four number operations in their heads. They are diffident in answering and this leads to slower progress than should be made. In the current Year 2, some of the boys tend to be careless in their approach to work and their standards suffer as a result. Overall achievement in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory.
- 85 By the time they are eleven, pupils' attainment is above the national average. During Key Stage 2, most pupils progress well and understand more complicated number structures such as decimals to two or three places. They know about rounding up and down, and work out mental additions of money correctly; for example, in calculating the cost of meals in restaurants. Most pupils work out the cost of the tax on the meal by working out percentages. In shape work, most pupils use a protractor correctly to measure and draw angles accurately. They know the terms horizontal and vertical and explain the results of their calculations in a clear and articulate fashion. A minority of pupils have difficulty in using number operations such as the decomposition of numbers in subtraction. Pupils have insufficient regular practice in basic written work in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In their current work, the attainments of boys are not significantly below those of the girls. Achievement in Key Stage 2 is good.
- 86 In both key stages, an appropriate emphasis is placed on the good setting out of mathematical work, although the completion of worksheets on occasions leads to an untidy collection of undated and unstructured examples of work. Adequate attention is given to the needs of pupils with special educational needs, and to the smaller numbers of gifted and talented pupils. They make good overall progress. In Key Stage 2, this is facilitated by arrangements from Year 4 onwards where pupils work in groups according to their previous attainments. Withdrawal group work in Year 3 is less effective, because groups have to work in areas where they find paying full attention difficult.

- 87 Pupils' skills in numeracy are employed satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum. In Key Stage 1, pupils use their knowledge of solid shapes confidently to create attractive three-dimensional art work. Mathematical language, such as 'longest' and 'shortest' is used appropriately in English and science. In Key Stage 2, pupils use their knowledge of coordinates in geographical mapwork. In information technology, data collection skills are well employed in graph work, and artistic designs are created from the good use of mathematical awareness in the LOGO program. Measuring and weighing skills are used accurately in design and technology.
- 88 In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall. In one sixth of the lesson seen teaching was very good, in another sixth good, in half satisfactory and in the remaining sixth unsatisfactory. Features of good and very good teaching include the creation of a well-ordered learning atmosphere with good skills in directing questions towards the particular learning needs of individual pupils. Much of the teachers' marking is of modest quality with the frequent use of 'ticks' and an occasional word of praise. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, pupils were managed unsatisfactorily and learned little. In some other lessons the development of skills in mental arithmetic is restricted by a lack of pace, and worksheets which are sometimes used uncritically. For example, in one lesson, the pupils' learning was restricted by a worksheet on time that effectively practised the pupils' ability to add on in fives, rather than learn about half and quarter past, and the movement of the hour and minutes' hands. In other lessons, however, pupils progress very well in their learning about solid shapes, being able to name a variety of shapes and describe accurately the numbers of their faces, edges and corners. In this key stage support staff are not always used effectively during whole class sessions.
- 89 In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good overall. Of the lessons seen, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In two out of eleven lessons, teaching is very good and in a further five lessons, it is good. Very good teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge allied to speedy pace and a good selection and use of apparatus. For example, a teacher used the overhead projector well to demonstrate the use of a protractor to draw and measure angles accurately. In this key stage, teachers ensure that the work of classroom assistants is well directed towards specific learning targets for small group work. In both key stages, teachers ensure that the pupils have opportunity to explore mathematics through investigations, often related to real-life situations, such as a Year 6 lesson in working out discounts on meals. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, along with a general raising of the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2.
- 90 The national numeracy framework has been successfully integrated into the mathematics curriculum offered by the school. Most lessons contain a suitable blend of developing mental skills which are then allied to a main focus where pupils work in groups adjusted to their level of attainment. This is followed by a plenary session where the learning objectives of the lesson are brought together. In Key Stage 1, the group work is, at times, insufficiently varied to take account of the range of previous attainment within the class, and in Key Stage 2, insufficient regular practice is given in basic computational skills. Homework is given across the school; increasing in quantity at Key Stage 2. Often it consists mainly of finishing off work started in school and its impact on overall standards is satisfactory.
- 91 The co-ordinator for the subject has worked hard to create a commitment to work in the subject across the school. She has carried out a subject audit and has made a significant contribution to raising its profile in the school. The implementation of the numeracy strategy has been a main focus of activity during the current year and this has been well managed. All staff have received the necessary in-school training, and a number of demonstration lessons has been organised.

SCIENCE

- 92 In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected and higher levels (level 4 and level 5) was well above the national average. Teachers' assessments in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher levels (level 2 and level 3) was well above the national average. The results at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen each year since 1996, and higher-than-average standards have consistently been achieved for the past four years. When the school's results are compared with similar schools they are well above average. Inspection findings agree with test results: pupils achieve well and their attainment at the end of both key stages is well above the national average. Results in 1999 show a significant improvement at the end of both key stages since the last inspection. Girls do better than boys in tests at the end of Key Stage 2, but there was no evidence to support this in the work seen or in the lessons observed. Pupils develop their scientific vocabulary and achieve well in using their knowledge and understanding to extend their skills in carrying out investigations effectively. The pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in comparison with past attainment.
- 93 In Year 2, pupils study different habitats; for example, deserts and polar regions and investigate how animals are adapted to live in such places. They successfully use their observation skills to investigate the properties of a range of materials. Using this knowledge they successfully decide which materials will burn and which will not. All pupils effectively explore a range of everyday materials and compare their findings. They observe differences and similarities well. The higher-attaining pupils use the differences they observe appropriately to classify a range of materials according to given criteria. Pupils use simple equipment well when carrying out investigations. They use their knowledge of magnetism successfully to find out which materials are magnetic. By the end of the key stage they competently record their results, and the higher-attaining pupils use their knowledge and understanding thoughtfully to explain their findings. Pupils make simple, but valid, predictions and handle materials with care.
- 94 The youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 learn effectively about the differences between plants and animals. In their studies they extend their previous knowledge and decide from a pre-selected list which is an animal and which is a plant. They justify their decisions by referring to the characteristics of each they have identified. They build effectively on their previous knowledge of burning to successfully observe and investigate what conditions are needed to sustain it. They work carefully and safely when carrying out simple investigations; for example, using water to successfully separate the components in a sample of soil. They make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have a well-developed scientific vocabulary. They also have good investigative skills: they plan well and indicate how to obtain and consider evidence; for example, they understand the need to use a 'fair' test. They observe accurately, describing carefully what they see and communicate their findings and the conclusions they draw clearly in a variety of ways. When writing down their findings the standard of presentation of all pupils is satisfactory and often good. They use CD-ROMs effectively to help them in their search for information. Older pupils have a good knowledge of themselves and other animals. They have a good understanding of health risks such as the danger of smoking. They know about the importance of food chains and recognise clearly the effects of feeding relationships in different habitats. All pupils have a good understanding of forces and how gravity affects motion. Pupils have a good knowledge of materials and their properties. For example, in a 'science challenge' pupils successfully separated a mixture of six substances using sieving, magnetism, filtration, and evaporation. Pupils achieve well and build effectively on knowledge that they have gained in earlier years.
- 95 The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. All teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and they plan and organise effective activities. These developments have improved the quality of

teaching since the last inspection, and, in turn, that has raised pupils' attainment. In a very good Year 6 lesson the teacher's clear exposition, high expectations and careful deployment of resources helped pupils to apply previously learned knowledge in a practical investigation. This allowed them to use their initiative and be responsible for their own learning. Teachers encouragement and provision for independent learning helps pupils, especially the higher-attaining ones, to extend their scientific understanding, knowledge and skills. In most lessons teachers skilfully draw on what pupils have done earlier or on what they already know, and then revise, consolidate or extend this knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on magnetism the teacher asks searching questions, both to assess pupils' understanding and to assist the learning process. Classroom assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs. They give these pupils challenging work that they understand and which is broken down into discrete activities. This gives them the confidence to respond effectively. Links with numeracy and literacy are sound because pupils are given appropriate opportunities to read, write, measure and count in a range of contexts. Teachers expect pupils to explain their ideas and describe their activities in their own words and use graphs and tables to record their findings. This helps pupils to refine their understanding and develop their skills in predicting appropriately, reporting accurately and justifying their conclusions. Teachers extend and reinforce the use of correct scientific vocabulary and this develops pupils' understanding of these terms and how to use them appropriately. For example, in one lesson seen at Key Stage 2 in which pupils were separating a mixture, they confidently used words such as 'sieving', 'filter' and 'evaporation' in the right contexts. They explained correctly how these processes would be used in their investigation and why they had decided their order of use. Teachers communicate high expectations to their pupils and receive a good response. Lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers emphasise the importance of safety in handling different materials and of the need for care in setting up and concluding investigations.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 96 By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils attain standards which are above national expectations. They make good progress throughout the school and achieve good standards by building effectively upon their established knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve standards which are consistent with their previous learning. The school has established a computer suite and made a significant investment in computers and specialist teaching, through the release of the curriculum co-ordinator for each afternoon. It is through the latter that much of the teaching takes place and together with the general provision has secured this good development in pupils' learning. However, the co-ordinator does not evaluate teaching across the school.
- 97 At both key stages, pupils make regular, purposeful use of information technology to develop and consolidate their work in most subjects. This includes the use of computers, audio-tapes, video-tapes, cameras and, for older pupils, calculators. At both key stages, pupils undertake appropriate tasks to develop their computer capability; they use a keyboard carefully, handle a mouse effectively and successfully store, retrieve and print their own work, the younger pupils with help from their teachers. They use an appropriate variety of programs well to generate and communicate their ideas in text and pictures. They input stories directly to the monitor using word-processing packages confidently and alter their work conscientiously as it is composed on screen.
- 98 At Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 1 use a simple art program creatively to compose a variety of designs by selecting a range of colours and controlling their application. Pupils in Year 2 access a simple data program confidently to set up tables to collate information from which they produce simple bar charts; for example, for their survey of car colours. Using an appropriate program they produce careful observational

drawings of insects they study. They use simple word processing packages to list the characteristics of different regions of the world and demonstrate their good keyboard skills. They combine successfully pictures and text to produce illustrated stories. They increase their knowledge of animals by using a simulation program imaginatively to explore the creatures' lives at different times of the year. At Key Stage 2, pupils build effectively on their learning and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. They improve their use of programs in data handling, word processing, simulations and control technology by using them in appropriate context to improve their learning. Year 3 pupils design a simple fire safety poster combining pictures and text using different fonts and colours for effect. Year 4 pupils use a publishing package appropriately to produce a brochure for a defined location. They create procedures to draw accurately two-dimensional shapes on screen and compose repeating patterns. Using appropriate programs Year 5 pupils incorporate text and pictures to produce a flyer to advertise the sale of the Tudor house they have planned and built. Year 6 pupils create, edit and run procedures accurately to produce patterns to given specifications; for example, a floral decoration rotated through a full circle to produce a flower head. They set up their own databases and interrogate them carefully to develop their studies about animals of the rain forest. Using a simulation program imaginatively they develop their understanding of conservation issues by testing out their ideas through the program options they take. They draw creatively on their word processing skills to design and write an illustrated story for younger pupils.

- 99 This range and depth of work represents an improvement in standards since the last inspection. Appropriate use is made of pupils' established skills which both values their contributions and offers further support to other pupils. However, there is still little written guidance to support teachers, and the regular, classroom use of information technology remains dependent on staff confidence. This is recognised by the school and addressing the needs of the minority of staff concerned is a priority in its development plan. The co-ordinator's completed and thorough audit of staff skills and requirements, and the established, well-structured training programme for classroom assistants are examples of the school's implementation of its planned response to these needs.
- 100 The co-ordinator's specialist knowledge and command of the subject ensures that pupils make good use of their time with the computers and develop their understanding effectively. His clear introductions and demonstrations ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and that they make a prompt start to their work. The teacher's careful interventions and response to pupils' questions draws usefully on their established knowledge and challenges them appropriately to think through and resolve their own difficulties. For example, with older pupils the teacher led them to a resolution of the layout problem they had highlighted by asking them to take him through the procedures they had followed and define in more detail what they wished to do. This insistence on pupils developing their knowledge and understanding is having a positive impact on the pupils' progress. They display increasing confidence as they move through the school, making their own decisions and experimenting with text and design. The teacher's provision of a range of work linked to their classroom studies helps the pupils in their understanding of the use and limitations of information technology. For example, one pupil spoke of its effectiveness in replicating a given pattern in mathematics and another of its restrictions in creating in art, 'it's not the same as using a pencil or paints.'
- 101 Pupils' recordings in English, science, religious education, history and geography develop their skills in word processing. Pupils' work on databases, graphs and symmetry develops their mathematics skills and refines their abilities to control, create defined procedures and select relevant information. Through their use of CD-ROMs in science they learn to locate specific information quickly and increase their understanding of the range of sources available to them. In this work, more confident teachers or those advised by the co-ordinator provide pupils with realistic

opportunities which require them to draw on their increasing skills in saving, retrieving and printing to support their learning in other subjects.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 102 Pupils' attainment exceeds the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the age of seven and eleven years. This represents a considerable improvement on the standards noted in the last report when attainment in Key Stage 2 was below agreed standards. The school has worked hard and successfully through in-service training, and the implementation of a clear and detailed scheme of work to improve the quality of learning.
- 103 By the age of seven, a significant majority of pupils recognise symbols such as the Cross and the dove, and their associations with Christianity. They are aware of celebrations and festivals in Christianity and other faiths, and of the particular significance of baptisms to Christians. In Year 1, almost all pupils know that the Bible is a special book to Christians and relate stories such as Jesus choosing His disciples to their own experience of friendship. They consider the particular qualities of their own special friend. By the age of eleven, a significant majority of pupils have good knowledge of the major world faiths including Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism. They identify principal beliefs and explain clearly how these affect personal and social behaviour; for instance, the ways in which the Jewish beliefs influence their everyday lives through its dietary laws. They show respect for the beliefs of others, and listen with great interest to visitors speaking about their faith and lifestyle. Pupils reflect carefully on moral issues and they understand the need to make moral choices. When considering elements of the Millennium Prayer, they are perceptive in discussing aspects like peace, and analysing categories of violence and its effect at a domestic, national and international level.
- 104 The quality of teaching is much improved since the last inspection. Teaching was very good in three out of seven lessons observed, good in another three, and satisfactory in one lesson. Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively to make relevant links between religious belief and teaching of moral principles. Teachers plan their lessons well and prepare so that time is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Teachers are skilful in asking questions that extend pupils' thinking and develop their knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths. Very good relations are fostered between pupils and between staff and pupils. Teachers take care to value pupils' responses and they are sensitive in handling to the personal or religious issues raised. This builds up self-esteem, and enables pupils to take part confidently in class and group debate, and to ask questions of their own. This helps them in speaking about their own faith, responding appropriately to the beliefs of others and in identifying their own concerns and uncertainties; for example, the discussion with pupils in Year 6 about violence and maintaining peace in the world. At the end of most lessons, staff draw teaching points together carefully and learning is consolidated successfully. Teachers enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress through particularly sensitive organisation of pairings in group work, providing extra adult support, and tasks which match their individual attainment. There has been an improvement since the last inspection, in the provision of independent work. However, the library facilities do not provide sufficient challenge or support, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils, and limit the scope for development of study skills.

ART

- 105 During the period of the inspection it was only possible to observe one art lesson in Key Stage 1. As a result, there is insufficient evidence on which to judge pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning in this key stage. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils' make good progress in their two-dimensional work. There was

insufficient evidence upon which to make a judgement about their achievement in three-dimensional work. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the work of famous artists, such as Van Gogh and Picasso and this knowledge is well developed in the use of their styles in the pupils' own work. The school has improved the quality of provision identified in the previous inspection.

- 106 At Key Stage 1, many of the displays of pupils' art work were linked to other subjects and there was little opportunity to see individual work. However, effective use is made of pupils' skills; for example, in a display of 'What if?' and 'How we use water.'
- 107 At Key Stage 2, younger pupils use materials well when planning and designing patterns to create 'active' and 'passive' moods. They demonstrate good levels of independence when organising resources and are developing good appraisal skills when talking about their own work and the work of others. Older pupils working in the style of O'Keefe, use paint successfully to produce a sense of light and texture. They mix their own colours and understand how the properties of the medium can be used to create atmosphere. After studying the work of William Morris pupils show good skills in experimenting with the visual elements of pattern, colour, line, shape and form in his style. Work of high quality is seen across the key stage following pupils' observations of Poinsettia. Each year group paints successfully in the style of a different artist; for example, Matisse in Year 3, Van Gogh in Year 5 and O'Keefe in Year 6.
- 108 At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers offer their pupils useful guidance as they encourage them to make choices in the tools and materials they use. They plan their lessons carefully and teach appropriate skills. They use adult support well to provide opportunities for pupils to work in small groups. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used her own good subject knowledge effectively to improve pupils' skills in sketching and shading. Teachers offer pupils a wide range of activities which make good use of a variety of materials. This helps the pupils extend their understanding of techniques and develop good artistic skills. In the lessons observed, art was also effectively linked to other subjects; for example, volcanoes in Year 3 and in illustrating 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in Year 6. Teachers collect samples of completed work and keep their own records of pupils' attainment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 109 Timetabling arrangements meant that it was not possible to see a range of lessons at each of the key stages. There was insufficient evidence on which to make overall judgements about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Observations of two lessons, scrutiny of some samples of pupils' work, including products, planning and evaluations, examination of teachers' planning and school documentation, and discussions with pupils and teachers confirm that statutory requirements are met.
- 110 Across the school pupils design and make a suitable range of products for a variety of purposes and systematically evaluate the results of their activities. Their work is often related to their studies in other subjects or projects they pursue. At Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 1 use a range of papers to make a variety of Christmas cards illustrated with their own colourful designs. Using a broad selection of materials they construct imaginatively table decorations of snowmen which reflect their written plans and initial ideas. Pupils in Year 2 make a moving vehicle which includes the careful fixing of axles and wheels to a simple chassis. They work to their own designs and review their work appropriately. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 5 bake biscuits and design and make well-constructed, decorative packages for them. Pupils in Year 6 construct a vehicle powered by an electric motor and evaluate carefully their original design, and the vehicles themselves and their performance. As part of their road safety studies they undertake a 'Crash Vehicle Project'. They study the effects of crashing a vehicle and make informed evaluations to identify how it can be reinforced to provide greater

safety for passengers. They review their decisions effectively in the light of further testing.

- 111 There have been important improvements since the last inspection. Satisfactory assessment arrangements are now in place and records are compiled of pupils' attainment and progress with specific individual needs highlighted. Documentation offers teachers sound support for their planning; it identifies skills to develop, stresses the need for quality in the making of products and emphasises safe practices. The scheme of curriculum-linked activities presents a developing programme which builds on pupils' previous learning. The curriculum co-ordinator supports staff, and monitors their planning and the pupils' work; however, teaching is not evaluated by the curriculum co-ordinator.
- 112 The quality of teaching in the two lessons seen was very good. The teacher's high expectations and probing enquiries maintain pupils' interest, sustain their efforts and help them evaluate what they do. The teachers' emphasis on responding to a given brief and making for an identified purpose is reflected in the pupils' clear understanding of the task and their confidence and enthusiasm in meeting its challenges. The pupils' care in handling equipment and using tools confirms the good practices and routines the teachers have established. Teachers make very good use of their discussions with pupils to help them review their work effectively, and evaluate their proposals and design sensible responses to them.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 113 The school has maintained the satisfactory standards noted in the last report. The attainment of pupils at the age of seven and eleven years matches national expectations. Teachers provide appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs through class organisation, small group work, and increased adult help, and this enables these pupils to achieve satisfactorily. Higher-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, and respond well to open-ended tasks.
- 114 At Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 1 use their own first-hand experience to extend their knowledge and develop their skills. They observe, and use symbols well to record the weather on a daily basis, and build up carefully a picture of local weather over a month. They recognise seasonal change. On a walk around school, they give simple directions with some accuracy. In Year 2, almost all of the pupils are aware of the effect of the climate on people's lives. They compare conditions in very hot desert areas and in polar regions. They know that arctic conditions are too cold to grow fruit and vegetables and that, for the few people who live there, these commodities have to be imported by sea and air. When studying a topic, pupils are supported well by their teacher. As a result a significant majority of pupils select appropriate information from a range of books provided by the teacher. Higher-attaining pupils use globes and maps to identify some of the characteristics of different areas. They show good awareness of places beyond their own locality. In Year 3, the pupils describe accurately the way the earth was formed and the processes involved in the eruption of a volcano. They recognise the effect of rock formation on the landscape. In Year 5, the pupils display sound map-reading skills. Almost all locate a place on a map accurately using four-figure grid references, and know how to use a key. Just over half of the pupils recognise a number of map symbols such as those for motorways and junctions. Pupils in Year 6 are familiar with the world map. They locate the tropics and areas of rainforest across continents. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the climate and ecology of the rainforest, and make informed comparisons between the lifestyles of the Baka people in Cameroon and the Kayapo in Brazil. They describe in some detail the ways in which people damage or improve their environment.
- 115 Pupils in Year 2, gain a historical perspective and a sense of change over time when comparing the life of the Inuit people today with earlier times when they obtained

everything they needed from the animals they hunted. They are aware of famous people from the past. For instance, they retell the story of Scott and Amundsen's race to the pole. In Year 3, pupils show an awareness of the difficulties faced by stone-age man and make relevant comparisons with their own life style. Pupils in Year 6 describe characteristics of past periods and societies such as, the Ancient Greeks, Ancient Egyptians and the Tudors. Almost all pupils use a family tree to trace the history of the royal family from Queen Victoria to the present day.

- 116 The quality of teaching in geography and history is satisfactory overall. Teachers know the subjects well and have good communication skills. They make teaching points clearly and precisely. This enables the pupils to be certain about what they are learning, and contributes significantly to their sound progress. Skilled questioning techniques are used effectively to extend pupils' thinking; for example, basic needs of those living in the rain forests. Teachers establish strong caring relationships, which give pupils confidence to think for themselves and ask questions of their own; for example, when comparing their own lives with children of the past. Teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to carry out historical and geographical research using photocopied sheets or a limited collection of books in class. Too few opportunities, however, are provided for pupils to develop their skills of research at a higher level. The development of the pupils' independent learning skills is restricted by the unsatisfactory nature of the library facilities.
- 117 When history and geography are taught as part of a theme with other subjects, teaching does not always place enough emphasis on the historical or geographical skills to be taught. In one geography lesson, linked to cold climates, the pupils were making models of sledges. The actual teaching concerned the design and technology elements of the task and did not sufficiently extend geographical skills. The organisation of the curriculum into blocks of geography, or history, does not provide for systematic consolidation of skills, for instance, in map-reading, over time.
- 118 The curriculum is greatly enhanced by visits and visitors. Imaginative learning experiences of high quality are provided regularly by visiting drama groups. These groups are successful in enthusing the pupils and bringing periods of history to life; for example, Ancient Egypt. Visits to Ford Green Hall to learn about Tudor times promote the pupils' learning very well by helping them to empathise with people of the time. The Year 6 residential visits provide good opportunities for geographical studies and promote learning successfully; for example, the study of a village location. Close links with a village school in Normandy provide interesting insights and useful comparisons.

MUSIC

- 119 Timetabling arrangements meant it was not possible to observe a range of lessons at each of the key stages. Consequently, there was insufficient evidence on which to base overall judgements about pupils' achievements, and the quality of teaching and learning. Discussions were held with the curriculum co-ordinators, and the school's scheme of work and teachers' planning were examined to confirm that statutory requirements were met; assemblies and dance lessons were observed.
- 120 In assemblies, pupils sing a variety of hymns in tune and maintain a good rhythm. They are accompanied proficiently by the school recorder group. Pupils listen carefully in assemblies, where a range of appropriate music from different cultures is played. Teachers provide pupils with very good opportunities to respond and interpret music in dance. Pupils perform very well in dance in response to a range of well-selected music. They listen carefully and discuss the music sensitively before determining their responses and explaining their movements.
- 121 From Year 2 onwards, teachers give pupils the opportunity to play the recorder in weekly, extra-curricular lessons. Forty-five Key Stage 2 pupils benefit from a wide range of additional tuition given by five visiting instrumental teachers who teach brass, strings and woodwind instruments. Their individual assessment sheets indicate that the majority of pupils make good progress.
- 122 There are effective links with other areas of the curriculum such as art and history. For example, in art, pupils are encouraged to create evocative pictures in response to 'The Four Seasons' by Vivaldi. In history, pupils' understanding of historical developments is enriched by their studies of musical instruments from Tudor times, such as the viol and harpsichord. They relate them successfully to instruments of other times and the present day. Teachers make good use of pre-recorded music programmes to extend the range of pupils' experiences. Pupils have the opportunity to listen and appreciate quality music, performed by the peripatetic, local authority's staff ensemble.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 123 Timetabling arrangements meant that it was not possible to judge pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching. Two gymnastics lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, and observations in Key Stage 2 were limited to Year 4 where lessons were observed in gymnastics, games and dance.
- 124 At Key Stage 1, pupils show the agility and co-ordination to be expected of their age. They hop, skip and run with care and control and avoid bumping into each other as they demonstrate an increasing awareness of the space around them and the direction of their movements. In Key Stage 2, Year 4 pupils demonstrate the ability to build up an effective sequence containing balances and movements using different parts of their bodies. In games, they compete willingly and display confidence in trying a range of techniques to kick a ball with some force to a partner; however, some pupils have difficulty in controlling the ball's direction. In dance, the pupils reach a very high standard, their movements showing fluidity, closely matched to the beat and mood of the music, and awareness of the need to use the full extension of the body. The pupils work very well both in groups and as a whole class to create an expressive exploration of the parable about a rich man's greed. In swimming, all pupils who left Year 6 last year were able to swim the basic standard of 25 metres.

- 125 In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory. In Year 4, the teachers seen have very good subject knowledge and the teaching of dance is excellent. Since the last inspection, the subject has maintained the excellent provision for dance and has improved considerably in other areas of its leadership and curriculum.
- 126 The activities offered to the pupils cover the full range of the physical education curriculum. Swimming tuition is given to all pupils in Key Stage 2 with an appropriate priority for beginners. In summer, there are athletics for all pupils and they engage in the adventurous pursuit of orienteering, using a course laid out within the school grounds. Visits to Coven and Chasewater provide opportunities for climbing and further activities in orienteering. Pupils also benefit from the school's links with local soccer clubs and their provision of coaching. The school has had considerable sporting success, most notably of late in swimming and cross-country. A number of pupils have gone on to play for local representative teams. Opportunities for dance are very good. Pupils from the school have taken part in many prestigious events, including appearances at the Royal Festival Hall and The Albert Hall.