

INSPECTION [J1]REPORT

Elmhurst Junior School
Street

LEA area: Somerset

Unique Reference Number: 123663

Inspection Number: 187642

Headteacher: Mr J R Swain

Reporting inspector: Mr Stephen Bugg[J2]
15306

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707748

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown Copyright 1999

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the appropriate authority must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. Every registered parent of a registered pupil at the school should receive a free copy of the summary of the report within ten working days of receipt of the summary by the appropriate authority. A charge not exceeding the cost of supply may be made by the appropriate authority for any other copies of the report and/or its summary provided to any person who asks for one.

The appropriate authority should make a copy of the report and the summary available for inspection by members of the public at such times and at such a place as may be reasonable.

Any enquiries about this legislation should be addressed to the OFSTED Compliance Helpline
Tel. 0171 421 6567

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Elmhurst Junior School Elmhurst Lane Street Somerset BA16 0HH
Telephone number:	01458 442979
Fax number:	01458 448496
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E Calliari
Date of previous inspection:	18 March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Stephen Bugg, RgI	Design and technology Art Music	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Mike Rawlinson, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Jane McNeil	Special educational needs Mathematics Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development The efficiency of the school
Natalie Moss	Equal opportunities English Information and communication technology	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Christine Perrett	Science Physical education	The curriculum and assessment
Teresa Bain	History Geography	

The inspection contractor was:

Dorset School Inspection Services
Education, Libraries & Arts
Dorset County Council
County Hall
Dorchester
Dorset, DT1 1XJ

Telephone number: 01305 224529

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well
Where the school has weaknesses
How the school has improved since the last inspection
Standards in subjects
Quality of teaching
Other aspects of the school
The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school 1 - 3
Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress 4 - 15
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 16 - 21
Attendance 22

Quality of education provided

Teaching 23 - 26
The curriculum and assessment 27 - 32
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 33 - 37
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 38 - 43
Partnership with parents and the community 44 - 47

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management 48 - 55
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 56 - 59
The efficiency of the school 60 - 65

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science 66 - 84

Other subjects or courses 85 - 126

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 127

Data and indicators

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- High standards are achieved by pupils in physical education.
- The provision for the moral and social development of its pupils is very good.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- There is a good range of resources, including books, which are very effectively managed.
- High-quality information is provided for parents.

Where the school has weaknesses[J3]

- I. Standards in writing are below average.
- II. The school's procedures for monitoring teaching are unsatisfactory.
- III. The school's analysis of assessment data in order to identify areas for improvement is unsatisfactory.

The weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Overall, the school has made sound progress since the last inspection. Standards are broadly similar to those at the time the school was last inspected. The percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 or above in tests at the end of Key Stage 2 has increased broadly in line with improvements nationally, although there was a dip in 1999. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection. There is now appropriate management of the curriculum by the school's senior management team. The new information and communication technology suite has made a very significant improvement to the provision for this subject, and pupils are now making good progress. The arrangements for assessment have been improved, particularly for day-to-day assessment, although the school is not effectively analysing the information in order to identify weaknesses.

The school does have the capacity to improve further. There is a commitment on behalf of governors, headteacher and staff to raise standards further. However, improvement is dependent on effective leadership, in particular in identifying where progress is required, effectively monitoring the quality of teaching and analysing assessment information.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds in Year 6[J4], based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
English	D	E	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E

Mathematics	C	D
Science	D	D

--

Results in the standardised tests show that standards achieved by pupils improved year-on-year between 1996 and 1998. In 1999 the number of pupils reaching the expected level for their age was broadly in line with the national level in English and mathematics and slightly above average in science.

However, the number of pupils gaining a higher level was significantly below the national average. Consequently, when the results of all Year 6 pupils are taken into account the results in 1999 were lower than in 1998. The school is on course to raise standards again in 2000 in mathematics and science but not in English. In particular, far more pupils are on course to attain higher levels.

Inspection evidence confirms that standards in English are below average. This is because of the difference in standards in reading, where pupils achieve average standards, and in writing, where standards are below average. In particular, the pupils are not using their research and creative skills to produce high-quality writing. Standards in mathematics are average in all aspects, and are higher in pupils' ability to calculate mentally than at the time of the last inspection. Standards in science are higher than test results indicate and are average. In information and communication technology, the new suite of computers and improved teaching mean that pupils are now making good progress. Younger pupils are now achieving appropriate standards, although standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are still low. Standards in history and music, whilst sound, are now slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection, and in art they are significantly lower. In physical education standards remain high. In all other subjects, including religious education, standards are in line with national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English			Satisfactory
Mathematics			Satisfactory
Science			Satisfactory
Information and communication technology			Satisfactory
Religious education			Satisfactory
Other subjects			Satisfactory

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In 93% of lessons it is satisfactory or better, and it is good or better in approximately 40%. It is very good in nearly 10% but unsatisfactory in 7%. The teaching is satisfactory in all subjects except physical education, where it is good, and in all year groups, except in Year 4, where it is almost always good. The best teaching is in a small number of lessons in mathematics and English. In these lessons teachers are very well prepared, they have high expectations of the pupils and through very effective questioning constantly challenge the pupils. They quickly praise the pupils when they try hard and are similarly quick to admonish if effort flags. In these lessons teachers demonstrate their expertise in the subject they are teaching. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs where teachers fail to establish appropriate classroom control. In these few lessons pupils are noisy and not sufficiently focused on their work.

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

Other aspects of the school[J5]

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and relationships throughout the school are very good.
Attendance	Good.
Ethos*	Good. Pupils are keen to learn and all staff are committed to helping pupils achieve high standards.
Leadership and management	Sound. The headteacher provides very good pastoral leadership. Other aspects: strategies for monitoring teaching and evaluating the results of assessment information are unsatisfactory.
Curriculum	Sound. Sufficiently broad and balanced. There have been improvements in assessment, but they are still not effectively used to inform planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Overall pupils make sound progress; it is better where pupils are withdrawn for specialised support.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is very good provision for moral and social development, good provision for cultural development and sound provision for spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good, particularly the range and use made of resources and the effective way in which the support staff help teachers and pupils.
Value for money	Sound.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' view of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>IV. Parents find it easy to approach the school with problems.</p> <p>V. The wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.</p> <p>VI. The high standards the pupils achieve.</p> <p>VII. Children enjoy going to school.</p>	<p>VIII. The large numbers in some classes.</p>

The inspectors agree with almost all the parents' comments. The staff are very approachable and children clearly enjoy their time at school. The range of extra-curricular activities, especially for sport and music, is very impressive. However[J6], the inspectors judge that [P7]standards can be improved further, in particular in English. Class sizes, in particular in Years 3 and 4, are large. The school has recently acknowledged this and appointed more learning support assistants.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The governors and staff should address the following matters in writing in their action plan, in order to raise standards and improve the provision the school makes still further.

Improve the quality of the pupils' writing by:

- IX. ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities, across the curriculum, to undertake extended and sustained writing activities;
- X. undertaking specific tasks aimed at developing the pupils' abilities in research and creative writing;
- XI. providing staff with appropriate training focused on developing strategies to raise the quality of pupils' writing.

(See paragraphs 4, 6, 14, 66, 69, and 70)

Improve the monitoring of teaching by:

- XII. ensuring that senior staff receive appropriate training and support;
- XIII. introducing a programme for regular monitoring of teaching and providing constructive feedback to teachers.

(See paragraphs 50 and 53)

Make effective use of assessment data on pupils by:

- XIV. analysing assessment data, in particular from national standardised tests, and using the analysis to identify areas for improvement;
- XV. ensuring that teachers use information gathered to plan appropriate work;
- XVI. raising teachers' understanding of standards by examining the pupils' work against national standards;
- XVII. ensuring that governors are kept fully informed about standards.

(See paragraphs 32, 50, 51, 73, 79 and 84)

In [J8]addition to the key issues above, there are some less important weaknesses, which should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are:

XVIII. the low standards in art;
(See paragraphs 11 and 85)

XIX. the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching;
(See paragraphs 23, 72, 78 and 92)

XX. the poor behaviour of a very few pupils in lessons.
(See paragraphs 18, 71, 77 and 91)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Elmhurst is an above-average-sized junior school with 319 pupils on roll. This is an increase of 40 pupils compared to the time of the school's last inspection in 1996. Numbers are larger in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. All pupils are taught in single-age classes. There are two classes in each of Years 3 and 4, with approximately 34 in each class, whilst there are three classes of approximately 30 pupils in each of Years 5 and 6, although some classes are larger. The numbers of boys and girls are broadly balanced. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities. Most of the pupils come from homes in which there is an adult working, so that only approximately 10 per cent are eligible for a free school meal. This is below the national average. A postal analysis indicates that most pupils are drawn from an area of the town where over half of the householders are identified as "blue collar house owners". The attainment of the pupils who enter the school covers a range of levels, but overall the attainment on entry is average. The vast majority of the pupils enter from the school's feeder infant school, although there is a significant movement of pupils in and out of the school, and approximately one quarter of the pupils in Year 6 have joined the school during the key stage. Seventy-one pupils (22%) in the school have special educational needs. This is above the national average. The vast majority of these pupils have been identified as having specific or moderate learning difficulties, including speech and communication difficulties. Very few pupils have identified behavioural problems. No pupils have statements of educational needs.

2. The school's aims emphasise the need to provide:

- an atmosphere in which the pupils can develop as individuals, grow in self-confidence and discover their talents and interests;
- a structured school policy where pupils learn to live in harmony with others;
- an intellectual stimulus where pupils achieve to the best of their abilities;
- a broad and balanced curriculum.

1. The School Development Plan is currently being reviewed and re-written to take effect from January 2000. To support this process a whole-school evaluation has been undertaken so that the views of pupils, parents, governors and staff can be canvassed and findings included in the new plan. The present development plan is focused on introducing the National Numeracy Strategy, updating schemes of work for all subjects, monitoring the curriculum and developing the use of assessment to inform the teachers' planning.

3. Key Indicators[0]

Checked!

Attainment at Key Stage 2¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	39	43	82

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	23	23	32
	Girls	33	33	36
	Total	56	56	68
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	68 (73)	68 (68)	83 (79)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	20	25	26
	Girls	30	33	29
	Total	50	58	55
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	61 (79)	71 (79)	67 (88)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.5
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	9
Satisfactory or better	93
Less than satisfactory	7

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

3. Attainment and Progress

2. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests taken by pupils in Year 6, the number of pupils reaching the expected level for their age was broadly in line with the national level in English and mathematics and slightly above average in science. The number achieving a higher level was below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Taking the whole year group into account and working out the typical level for the whole of Year 6, results were below the national average in English and science and broadly in line in mathematics. This represents a decline in standards on 1998, where results were close to the national average in English, above average in science and well above in mathematics[J10]. In the three years from 1996 to 1998 results in National Curriculum tests indicate that, overall, standards attained by pupils within the school improved more than in all schools nationally. The 1999 results reversed this trend. The school's assessment information and targets set for these pupils indicate this cohort to have been less able than previous years. The school has set targets for the current pupils in Year 6 to achieve in these tests in 2000 in English and mathematics. These are higher in mathematics, and significantly higher in English, than results achieved in 1999. They are sufficiently high to ensure that, if achieved, the school's results will continue the upward trend in line with improvement made between 1996 and 1998. Inspection evidence indicates the pupils are on course to achieve the target in mathematics, but weaknesses in pupils' writing mean that they are not on course to meet the target in English.

3. There are also data about the performance of schools in a similar context to Elmhurst – i.e. schools with between 8 and 20 per cent of pupils eligible for a free school meal and which do not have a significant number of pupils for whom English is a second language. Compared to that of pupils in these schools the Elmhurst pupils' performance in 1999 is well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science[J11].

4. In English, an analysis of results in 1999 indicates a significant variance between the standards achieved by the pupils in reading, where they were average, and writing, where they were much lower. Inspection evidence confirms this picture. Standards in English are average in most aspects, including reading, handwriting, spelling, speaking and listening. However, the pupils' abilities in extended writing, including the writing of fiction and longer non-narrative accounts, are below average. This is because the school has yet to identify sufficient opportunities for the pupils to undertake longer pieces of writing, either within the literacy hour or at other times. Consequently the pupils are not gaining sufficient practice in the skills needed to write at length.

5. The school has made sound progress in introducing the National Literacy Strategy and this is helping to raise standards in reading, particularly for less-able pupils, whose phonic skills are being developed by the good-quality additional literacy lessons. A wide range of writing activities are included within lessons, although pupils too often write in pairs or groups and have insufficient opportunities to write independently at length.

6. Standards in mathematics are higher than indicated by the 1999 national test results and are average. They are close to those achieved in the 1998 tests. Significantly more pupils are on course to achieve above the national expectation in the tests in 2000 than in 1999. A significant factor for this improvement is the high quality teaching of the top ability group in the current Year 6. The school has made good progress in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy and, in particular, is helping to improve the pupils' ability to calculate mentally[J12].

7. In science, standards are higher than indicated by the 1999 national test results and are average. As in mathematics, more pupils are on course to achieve higher levels in the national tests in 2000 than in 1999. Standards in mathematics and science are similar to those at the time of the last inspection and, because of lower standards in writing, are now lower in English.

8. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are improving rapidly, although the standard currently achieved by pupils in Year 6 is below average. This is because the school has opened an ICT suite in the past year and all pupils are now being taught in timetabled sessions. Pupils are now making good progress and those in Year 4 are attaining average standards and covering all aspects of the subject. Standards are now higher than at the time of the last inspection. Standards in religious education are in line with expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

9. Standards in physical education were above national expectations at the time of the last inspection and remain high. In all other subjects standards are in line with national expectations and similar to those at the time of the last inspection, although in history and music standards, whilst sound, are now slightly lower and in art they are significantly lower. This is because the scheme of work for art does not give teachers sufficient guidance on developing pupils' skills and too often the pupils' work is based on adult templates.

10. Although girls significantly outperformed boys in English and mathematics in standardised tests in 1999, inspection evidence and analysis of test results over time indicate that there is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls. Standards achieved by lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are in line with their abilities, as are those for pupils of broadly average abilities. Analysis of standardised tests indicates some variation over time in the achievement of more able pupils. This is most marked in mathematics and science. However, the current higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are achieving appropriate standards in both mathematics and science. Whilst recent staffing changes make comparisons difficult, inspection evidence indicates that the school's present policy of rotating teachers in Years 5 and 6, so that pupils in these years are taught by the same teacher in both years, is a factor in the fluctuating achievement of the more able pupils. Where teachers with expertise in mathematics and science are included in the Year 6 team, pupils clearly benefit.

11. Overall, the pupils make sound progress in lessons and over time. They enter the school with a wide range of abilities, although overall the pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. They are on course to leave with broadly average standards. This is broadly comparable to their progress at the time of the last inspection, although there are some changes in the strengths and weaknesses of various subjects.

12. In English the pupils make sound progress in all aspects except writing, where progress is unsatisfactory. This is because there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to write longer, extended stories and factual accounts. Pupils now make better progress in developing their handwriting skills and progress in spelling remains sound. In mathematics pupils make sound progress, including in developing their ability to calculate mentally, an identified weakness in the last inspection. Progress in ICT is now good whereas it was previously unsatisfactory. This is a result of the good planning which promotes the sequential development of ICT skills in English and mathematics as well as in some other subjects. Progress is sound in all aspects of science, including in the pupils' ability to undertake investigations, a weakness in the last inspection. In contrast, progress in art is now unsatisfactory, with the pupils given too few opportunities to develop new skills in drawing and painting in a systematic way, and insufficient opportunities to work three-dimensionally. Progress in all aspects of physical education remains good. This is as a result of good teaching, particularly of the younger pupils. In all other subjects the pupils make sound progress [J13].

13. At the time of the last inspection pupils with special educational needs were making good progress. They now make sound progress overall. Support staff make a very valuable contribution to pupils' progress within the group sessions of the literacy and numeracy hours. For example, where support staff withdraw pupils for the phonic work programme, pupils make good progress. Whilst an analysis of previous standardised tests undertaken by pupils in Year 6 indicates that more-able pupils achieve lower levels of attainment in some years, the current pupils are making appropriate progress. There is no variation in the progress made by boys and girls.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

14. The pupils' attitude to learning is good. In all but a few lessons the pupils' response was at least sound and in over half the lessons it was good. They respond well to teaching, particularly when effectively challenged. The majority of pupils are alert and attentive, and by their cheerful demeanour they show enjoyment in their schooling. Many pupils are self-motivated, they are keen to be involved, answer questions enthusiastically and work on the task set them with diligence and interest. For example, almost all the pupils in a Year 5 class showed enthusiastic response in the mental mathematics phase of a numeracy lesson. Using answer cards they clamoured to show the correct answers in response to the rapid flow of the teacher's questions. Pupils were equally keen to speak up and explain how they arrived at their answers when asked.

15. Overall the behaviour of pupils is good. It is very good outside of lessons, at lunch and break times, and outside of the school. For example, they are very well behaved when leaving the school to attend swimming lessons. Their self-discipline is also, in almost all cases, very good. Pupils respond well to the school's light touch on discipline. They are aware of the school and classroom rules and follow them with a natural willing acceptance. The pupils do at the same time show a healthy spirit of youthful exuberance, and they enjoy their free time during the break periods, the majority involving themselves in positive play and active group games, returning to their classrooms in an orderly manner.

16. In lessons behaviour is good except in a few cases where, as identified by parents, the petty misbehaviour of a small minority of pupils detracts from the overall high standard. On occasions this results from the lack of sufficient resources; for example, when three pupils are required to work at one computer in the ICT suite. On other occasions unsatisfactory behaviour occurs when teachers fail to manage the class effectively or do not set sufficiently challenging tasks. However, overall the incidence of bad behaviour is low. The response to a recent school survey of parents, staff and pupils indicates that bullying is rare, and there was no evidence of any bullying during the inspection. There were no exclusions from the school in the reporting year before the inspection.

17. The quality of relationships between pupils and staff is very good. Pupils are supportive of each other; for example, a pupil was observed accompanying another pupil into the school to find the supervisor on first-aid duty, following a minor playground accident. Pupils show respect and confidence when helping visitors around the school. Many display growing maturity in the presence of adults, replying courteously to questions and engaging in conversation. During an assembly, in response to questions on the theme of showing love and consideration for pupils less fortunate than themselves, their replies reflected their growing awareness of and sensitivity towards such issues as: faith, courage, determination, trust and hope.

18. The personal development of pupils is good. They respond willingly to opportunities during the school day to take on responsibilities. For example, pupils are keen to be school council representatives. More generally pupils readily tidy up their classrooms, replace equipment

correctly at the end of lessons and, if chosen, take on their responsibilities seriously. They respect school property; there is little or no evidence of litter or vandalism in or around the school. Many pupils have taken the initiative in becoming involved in school clubs and extra-curricular activities. Evidence from pupils' enthusiastic accounts of residential and educational visits indicates that they gain positively from these experiences.

19. The good standards of behaviour and discipline noted during the last inspection have been maintained. The positive attitudes, the sensible behaviour and the responsible approach by the vast majority of pupils to their school life continue to contribute significantly to their own progress and personal development.

Attendance

20. Attendance is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The school takes a very positive approach to achieving good attendance. At 94.5 per cent the attendance rate of pupils was above the national average for 1997/98. The rate of authorised absence was below the national average and that for unauthorised absence was well below the national average for the same year. Appropriate and effective action is taken in cases of unauthorised absence. The school has clear guidelines on the need for good punctuality. A record is kept of pupils arriving late. The punctuality of the vast majority of pupils is good. The school day and classes start on time. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

22. Teaching

21. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound. In 93% of lessons it is sound or better, and good or better in approximately 40%. In most years the overall quality of the teaching is similar, although in Year 4 the teaching is consistently good and at times very good. The teaching is sound in all subjects except physical education, where the teaching is good. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs is good where they are withdrawn for additional support, and sound within lessons. Whilst overall this represents a lower standard than at the time of the last inspection, the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching remains low, and in almost 10% of lessons the teaching is very good. Significantly there is very good teaching in both mathematics and English. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory it is because the teacher fails to ensure effective classroom control and organisation. As a result the pupils are too noisy and fail to work with sufficient care and diligence.

22. The majority of the teaching is sound. Teachers demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and use appropriate strategies within lessons. For example, satisfactory progress is being made in establishing the National Literacy Strategy and teachers are appropriately changing their teaching strategies following the training they have received. Consequently sound teaching is ensuring that the pupils make appropriate progress in developing their reading, handwriting and spelling skills. However, as in other subjects where the teaching is sound, teachers do not quickly and consistently identify where progress could be better. In English this is exemplified in writing, where few teachers have identified the strategies required in order to help pupils make better progress.

23. Sound teaching is reflected in the teachers' planning, organisation of lessons, expectations of the pupils, including pupils of varying abilities, and use of time and resources, all of which are satisfactory. Lessons proceed at an appropriate pace and teachers are increasingly adept at splitting lessons into sections so that pupils experience more than one task within the time available. Teachers know their pupils well, and use information they glean from lessons to prepare their future learning. There are inconsistencies in marking, although generally it is

effectively completed, both giving praise and identifying areas for improvement. The amount and type of homework set are appropriate, although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write. Most lessons where the teaching is sound are generally conducted at a satisfactory pace, although without the urgency and rigour that, consistently applied, lead to pupils making faster progress.

24. Pupils make best progress in the minority of lessons where the teaching is good and in the small number of lessons where it is very good. The ability to praise pupils, make them feel special and, at the same time, constantly remind them that they are expected to produce only their very best work are features regularly observed in the very best teaching. For example, in an English lesson in Year 4 the pupils were looking at how to write a set of instructions easily followed by the reader. The teacher's excellent planning, well-prepared resources, clarity of instructions and high expectations of pupils of all abilities led to them enjoying the lesson and making very good progress. Throughout the lesson the teacher constantly praised individuals and the whole class, using such phrases as "Well you amaze me that you knew that!" and "Excellent! I'm delighted at how well you are working today". In addition teacher expertise is also a key feature of much of the very good teaching. For example, in mathematics in Year 6, the teacher's knowledge of strategies and her own confidence with figures allowed her to use very effective questioning and to rapidly adjust the lesson as soon as problems were identified. The work prepared had high expectations of what the pupils could achieve. Similarly, in a music lesson, comprehensive teacher knowledge ensured that the lesson was punctuated by the use of correct vocabulary, progression in skills was built in and at all times the teacher was confident about where and how to progress.

26. **The curriculum and assessment**

25. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils now receive their full entitlement to information and communication technology and design technology, which is an improvement since the last report. The school has a scheme of work for health education, which is successfully taught, along with drugs and sex education, through science and religious knowledge. Issues concerning personal and social education are covered in 'circle time' discussions, although there is no consistent approach to the planning for these sessions. Time allocations for each subject are sound, including the teaching of information and communication technology, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Generous amounts of time are given to physical education, reflected in the good standards achieved throughout the school. Sufficient time is allocated each day to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. These strategies are working well, and are having a positive impact on standards, particularly in mathematics. However, insufficient attention is paid to the development of extended writing in English. Overall, the school's curriculum satisfactorily promotes the intellectual, social, creative and physical development of the pupils, and prepares them well for secondary school education.

26. The quality of curriculum planning is satisfactory overall. Teachers effectively plan together across year groups, identifying clear learning targets to ensure that pupils make progress. Since the last inspection schemes of work have been developed for all subjects, except art. The limited progress in the development of a scheme of work for art is having an adverse effect on the systematic development of skills in the subject. This issue was highlighted in the last report and has not been satisfactorily addressed. Teachers are appropriately incorporating the recently acquired 'QCA' scheme for geography into their planning, although but this has not yet been fully adapted into the school's scheme. In all other subjects the schemes provide a satisfactory framework to help teachers with their planning, to ensure that all areas of each subject are covered and that the skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject are systematically developed year by year.

27. The curriculum provides equality of access for all pupils. At the time of the last inspection provision for pupils with special educational needs was a strength of the school. Planning and provision is now sound. The requirements of the Code of Practice are met, with appropriate Individual Education Plans in place. These are reviewed on a termly basis and detail areas where support is needed. However, they do not specify achievable targets which are matched to the needs of pupils.

28. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, and a strength of the school. As at the last inspection, there are a considerable range and number of activities, including sport, music, art and drama. Over half the pupils support these activities, and a number of staff, including support staff, give considerable amounts of time to enhance the curriculum. The school engages in a number of competitive events against other schools in the area, with a considerable amount of success. The extensive, beautiful school grounds are used for environmental study, and to host events such as the local schools' country dancing. The oldest pupils enjoy an annual residential visit, and many visits to local places of interest enrich pupils' learning, particularly in history, geography and science.

29. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, and are now satisfactory overall in English, mathematics and science. An assessment manager has been appointed who has worked hard and with some success to establish systems of formal and informal assessments. Pupils are thoroughly tested in English and mathematics when they enter the school, and the results help teachers to sort the pupils into ability groups for mathematics and spelling. Any specific special educational needs are also highlighted at this stage. As they progress through the school, pupils are given regular reading, spelling and number tests, together with assessments of what they have learnt at the end of particular units of work in science. This provides a clear picture of each pupil's progress in these subjects.

30. The results of assessments are not sufficiently well analysed to highlight weaknesses. In particular the school has not undertaken a sufficiently rigorous analysis of information from the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 to analyse where changes in planning may need to be made. Assessment data are not used effectively to raise standards. This remains a weakness. Teachers have not yet collated the recommended samples of pupils' work exemplifying attainment at each National Curriculum level in all aspects of English, mathematics and science, and this makes it difficult to ensure that judgements of standards are consistent, particularly at the higher levels. There is very little formal assessment in any other subject.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

31. Overall the school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The high standards seen during the last inspection have been maintained. Provision for moral and social development is a particular strength. The ethos created in the school is happy, orderly and calm, and the pupils' self-esteem is actively encouraged.

32. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development was good at the last inspection; it is now sound. It is mainly fostered through assemblies and religious education. There are insufficient planned opportunities to encourage the pupils' spiritual development through other areas of the curriculum. However, the work undertaken in religious education lessons positively supports pupils' spiritual development by providing knowledge and insight into Christianity and at least three other world faiths. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to reflect upon their feelings; for example, when asked to imagine the sacrifices made by monks in dedicating their lives to God. The quality of the daily act of collective worship is generally good when pupils meet as upper or lower school, and is sound within individual classes. The themes covered are

of a broadly Christian character, although they mostly focus on moral or social issues. Pupils are not always offered the statutory opportunity to reflect or pray each day.

33.The provision for moral development is very good. Values are fostered through the supportive relationships that exist in classrooms between teachers and pupils, and by the good example set by all staff working in the school. Behaviour in the playground and general movement around the school is very good. Moral development is underpinned by the school's aims, and the pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong. They are frequently reminded of shared values and principles in the day-to-day life of the school and teachers discuss moral issues during 'circle time' and assemblies. Parents are appreciative of the school's role in promoting good behaviour.

34.Social development is very successfully promoted. The school ethos enables pupils to assume responsibility, to care for others and to respect property. They assume a variety of responsibilities. The School Council provides pupils with the opportunity to participate in decisions about how to improve school life. They also have opportunities to undertake routine duties, such as acting as register and resource monitors. Numerous opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss work together. Very good opportunities for social development are further provided through school trips and visits, extra-curricular activities and fund-raising events.

35.The provision for cultural development is good. The school enriches the pupils' knowledge of their own culture in a number of ways. There are good opportunities for music and sport, particularly through clubs and involvement in local competitions and festivals. The 'children's landscape' project involving schools in Portugal and Sweden is providing a very good cultural exchange, with strong links to information and communication technology through regular E-mailing. Different faiths are explored in religious education. Materials purchased to support the literacy hour reflect different cultures. Strong community links are maintained through the regular use of the school premises.

37. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

36.The support, guidance and attention to pupils' well being provided by the school are good and are the same as at the time of the school's last inspection. The school has a strong ethos of care and consideration. This is led positively by the senior management of the school and is well recognised by parents and the wider community. The staff demonstrate care and concern for the pupils and provide good pastoral support. The school's daily routines are well established, providing an orderly and secure environment in which pupils are able to make appropriate progress. This provision makes an important contribution to pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the enjoyment of their school life.

37.The provision for monitoring the pupils' academic progress is sound. Teachers know their pupils well, and from the time of their entry into the school they encourage them to be fully involved in classroom and extra-curricular activities, fostering the development of their self-assurance and sense of self-discipline and responsibility. Good records are kept on pupils as they progress through the school, but little analysis of their progress is made in order to inform future learning. The school's overall monitoring and support for pupils with special educational needs are sound.

38.The provision for promoting [J15]pupils' personal development is good. On a daily basis pupils are encouraged to work well together, which fosters the spirit of co-operation and shared achievement. In circle time pupils consider aspects of friendship, relationships and responsibility and, through subject teaching, receive guidance on health and sex education and drugs awareness. The participation of pupils from all classes in the School Council provides them with early experience of taking on responsibilities and acting on agreed decisions. This

was observed in a council discussion on how the school should handle inappropriate behaviour or bullying. In discussion pupils displayed considerable insight and maturity and a positive understanding of the rights and wrongs of such a situation.

39. The monitoring of behaviour is good. The trust in pupils to act sensibly and responsibly is in general well founded. The school's behaviour policy is brief. However, staff and pupils are well aware of the school's rules and code of conduct and generally these are effectively administered by all staff and supported by appropriate rewards and sanctions. In the majority of classes teachers manage the pupils' behaviour effectively and there is misbehaviour in only a very small number of lessons. Around the school and at playtimes pupils' behaviour is very good.

40. The school's measures for promoting attendance are good. In guidance sent to parents the school links the progress of their children to good attendance. The attendance and punctuality records of all pupils are closely monitored and incidents of unexpected absence are followed up promptly on the day for reasons of safety and to meet the attendance requirements.

41. The arrangements to monitor pupils' health, safety and general well being are very good. The nominated staff member for child protection has working links with outside authorities, and staff now have appropriate guidance in case of need. The local education authority has carried out a recent health and safety audit and, following recommendations made, the school is carrying out an appropriate review of its policy. This includes clarification of responsibilities and accountability. All staff members receive training in first aid; one staff member is on duty during play periods and pupils know the location of the first-aid point in the school. Personal hygiene is appropriately covered within the curriculum.

43. Partnership with parents and the community

42. The school's partnership with parents and the community is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Parents are very supportive of the school and its aims and values. The vast majority find the school welcoming and approachable. Some parents are able to respond to the school's invitation to help in the classroom and, as observed, they are well integrated into lessons by teachers. The dedication of teachers is well appreciated by parents, particularly in relation to the number of pupils in some classes.

43. The school keeps parents well informed and from the outset engenders their involvement in their children's learning. The comprehensive prospectus includes an appropriate section on the value of the Home - School link. The school provides a helpful 'Elmhurst Here We Come' booklet for new pupils and parents. Parents were appropriately consulted on the introduction of a homework policy and on the recently introduced home-school agreement. Parents were also widely consulted by questionnaire on their views on all aspects of school life as part of the school's procedures for preparing its next development plan. Their responses were very positive. The weekly newsletter fulfils a central role in keeping parents fully informed about issues within school. It provides very useful information about: forthcoming events, Elmhurst School Association (ESA) and social events, as well giving parents routine reminders (e.g. punctuality) and celebrating pupil and school achievements. It reflects the very close relationship between school and home.

44. The annual written reports to parents on their children's progress are well structured, informative and, where appropriate, they include targets for pupils and an indication of where parents might be able to help. Parents value the termly meetings to discuss their children's progress with teachers, although there is some uncertainty over the recently introduced general open evening which has replaced one of the parents' meetings. Parents of children with special educational needs are appropriately involved in their educational development plans and

encouraged to help them in their learning. The school governors' annual report to parents is also informative. A summary of the governors' sub-committees' proceedings is provided and reference to future finance plans presented. The school is aware of the statutory requirements which need to be included in the new prospectus and the next annual report.

45. The links with the two partner schools are good. The induction and transfer arrangements of pupils are well established, and parents appropriately informed and involved. The assessment data for pupils on entry to the school have improved since the last inspection. The good liaison with the secondary school now includes pre-transfer assignments for pupils in Year 6 to enhance their academic transition. The links with the wider community are in part made through the very active Elmhurst School Association. The fund raising achieved has contributed to learning through the purchase of computers and library books, and helping towards the cost of a minibus. Other links have supported the provision of sports equipment. Parents commented on the valued support of the community police constable. He is involved in classroom teaching on road safety, and parents also recognised his help in the wider context of behaviour, expressed by one parent as a 'nipping in the bud'. Overall, the school's partnership with its parents and the community is positively affecting the pupils' learning and development.

47. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

46. The overall quality of the leadership and management of the school is sound. This is the same judgement as in the school's last inspection. In response to weaknesses identified in the school's last inspection report the school made appropriate changes in the way the school is managed. There is now effective management of the curriculum. The heads of lower and upper school work closely together to ensure that there is appropriate coverage of the curriculum. Curriculum monitoring has been introduced and the English co-ordinator has undertaken a thorough review of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. A review of mathematics has begun and there are plans to monitor science. The school's last development plan and its action plan following the last inspection have been appropriately monitored by the school's senior management team and the governing body. Other aspects requiring development have also been appropriately tackled. The new ICT suite is enabling more effective teaching of all aspects, and standards are rising, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Most schemes of work have been completed and these are helping teachers to plan effectively. Art and geography schemes remain underdeveloped. The arrangements for assessment have been improved, particularly for day-to-day assessment, although weaknesses remain.

47. The governing body is appropriately undertaking its duties. In particular it is effectively monitoring the school's budget and present development plan. It is working closely with the headteacher in the preparation of the next plan, which is due to take effect from the beginning of 2000. The main committee of the governing body meets regularly, and amongst other duties reviews the comprehensive subject audits completed by all subject leaders. This is good practice, and is enabling the governors to receive appropriate information on the curriculum. They are actively considering how best to monitor other aspects of school life, including the results of spending decisions and standards attained by pupils. Minutes of the main committee are full and informative. However, the lack of sub-committee minutes makes it difficult to evaluate their impact on school matters and their relationship with the main committee.

48. The headteacher provides very good pastoral leadership. He liaises very effectively with parents, who in turn speak highly of him. He has put in place effective management systems and works closely with both the governing body and the school's senior management team. He delegates considerable responsibilities to his deputy headteacher and to the head of lower school, who in turn provide effective, high quality support. In most areas they work well as a

team, successfully overseeing staff induction and training, changes to the curriculum and the monitoring of the pupils' progress. However, the headteacher is not sufficiently involved in ensuring that standards are being effectively analysed and evaluated, in identifying how standards might be improved or in evaluating how the quality of teaching affects pupils' standards.

49. A whole-school review has recently been undertaken and is providing good information on pupils', parents', governors' and staff perceptions of the school. This information is helping to shape the new plan. The plan, whilst not complete, is effectively identifying key tasks to be undertaken. However, it is not identifying how standards are to be improved. For example, there is no mention of how standards in writing are to be improved, or the achievement of the more able pupils consistently raised, year on year.

50. The quality of the subject leadership provided by the teachers is good in almost all subjects. They have been instrumental in reviewing schemes of work and completing a yearly audit of all aspects of their subject. Only English and mathematics co-ordinators have had the opportunity to effectively monitor teaching and review standards in their subjects. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound with good features. The co-ordinator makes good use of limited time. She has limited teaching time, but her experience is used well to provide clear direction and guidance for support assistants and teachers. The named governor for special educational needs meets regularly with the co-ordinator, but monitoring of practice is ineffective. Appropriate links with external agencies are maintained.

51. There are appropriate arrangements for monitoring the curriculum. Staff have sufficient non-contact time to enable them to review and monitor progress in their subjects and there has been a very effective evaluation of the school's progress in introducing the National Literacy Strategy. However, the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching are unsatisfactory. The school has relied too heavily on reviews of teaching by the local education authority and has not put in place its own effective procedures for systematically reviewing the quality of teaching and for providing constructive feedback to teachers. Consequently the school has been unable to conduct an informed debate on how best to deploy teachers, for example in Years 5 and 6.

52. The school is successfully meeting its aims and this is reflected in the school's ethos, which is very positive. All staff are committed to raising standards; for example, both literacy and numeracy strategies are being rapidly embraced and there has been considerable staff training to support them. Relationships throughout the school are very good, and all staff are committed to ensuring that pupils of all abilities are fully integrated into the life of the school and given opportunities to develop their self-confidence and personal talents. For example, the school's very extensive range of extra-curricular activities gives all pupils the opportunities to explore musical and sporting talents. The school very successfully promotes the equality of opportunity of all its pupils.

53. The school does have the capacity to improve further. There is a commitment on the part of governors and staff to raise standards. The school is now fully aware of the weaknesses in writing and has the expertise within the staff to ensure that improvements are forthcoming. However, further improvement is dependent on the headteacher providing the necessary leadership in raising standards as well as in providing high-quality pastoral leadership, particularly following the promotion of the deputy headteacher[J16].

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

54. Overall, the staffing, accommodation and learning resources of the school are good. There is an appropriate range of expertise and experience among the teaching staff. They are adequate in number for the size of the school and to meet the demands of teaching the National

Curriculum. All staff are allocated some non-contact time to enable them to fulfil their managerial roles and responsibilities. The school recently increased the number of learning support assistants. They are well briefed for the tasks they are required to undertake and carry out their roles effectively and conscientiously. They have a positive effect on the attainment of pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The last inspection report commented on the lack of thorough job descriptions, but these are now firmly in evidence.

55. New teachers are assigned a colleague mentor and peers give additional support to newly-qualified teachers. Appraisal processes have begun and are usefully supplemented by an audit of professional development needs. The planning of professional development is good and staff have attended many courses which meet the priorities in the School Development Plan. Overall, arrangements for professional development are a judicious balance of identified school and teacher needs to make the best use of scarce resources, as well as being linked to the School Development Plan. This was not the case at the time of the last inspection.

56. The accommodation is very good, with large playing fields and a delightful outside environment of gardens and mature trees. Classrooms are spacious, allowing for the use of practical work, and there are many smaller rooms, which are appropriately used for withdrawal classes, group work and the storage of resources. The school has a very good new computer suite, a large hall and a pleasant, spacious library. The building is old, but is very well kept, clean, litter-free and with no sign of vandalism or graffiti.

57. Learning resources are good, and have improved since the time of the last inspection. The library is particularly well stocked, having E-mail as well as listening centres and CD-ROMs. New computers have been bought. The new computer suite is well stocked with computers and the school has a good supply of new software, ranging across many subjects. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are also good. The resources room is a great asset and a strength in the school. It is very effectively managed by the library and resources clerical assistant. Almost all resources are centrally stored, impeccably arranged and prepared, and kept in excellent order.

The efficiency of the school

58. The school's financial planning is good overall. The recommendation of the last inspection to link anticipated costs to the priorities for development has been acted upon. The budget allocation is set through a thorough process of consultation and based upon the priorities of the School Development Plan. It is closely monitored, and comprehensive information is provided regularly to the governing body. There is a particularly effective system for costing the curriculum and generous funding is allocated to individual subjects each year. This is frequently supplemented by additional funding from the PTA. The headteacher is currently completing a new development plan to start next term; this will establish clear criteria by which success can be evaluated.

59. The [J17] school now spends all the money generated each year by the number of pupils on roll. However, in past years the school has accumulated a considerable sum of money, which the governors have made the decision to retain in order to protect current staffing levels in the event of a smaller than forecast budget. This means that class sizes remain high. With the exception of Year 4, all classes exceed 30 and some rise to 35. While teachers mostly manage their classes well, parents' concerns about large class sizes are justified.

60. The deployment of staff and accommodation is generally appropriate. However, year groups are not always sited close to each other and this does not make working as a year team very easy. More learning support assistants have been employed, but these are not consistently well deployed. The teaching staff are appropriately deployed, although the school has not evaluated the effectiveness of the current deployment in Years 5 and 6, where staff teach the same pupils

in both years. There is some evidence to indicate that standards are lower in alternate years as a consequence. Resources are very well used and make a very valuable contribution to pupils' education. Funding for pupils with special educational needs has been used generously to sustain staffing levels and resources.

61. The allocation of staff subject responsibilities covers all curriculum areas, and co-ordinators have responsibility for spending for their subjects. Time has been allocated for the co-ordinators to monitor the delivery of their subject but, except in English, this is in its infancy. Teaching sessions start promptly and pupils are punctual. Daily teaching time is broadly in line with national averages and time is generally used efficiently. The school benefits considerably from fund-raising by the parents. Most recently they have purchased several computers for the new information and communication technology suite.

62. Day-to-day financial control by the finance officer is very good. Administrative procedures are appropriately followed for ordering goods and paying invoices. The most recent audit confirms very good financial control. The draft report identifies many sound practices, with minor recommendations highlighted for improvement.

63. Although class sizes are high and the school has considerable surplus funds, the school provides a sound education. Considering the satisfactory standards achieved and sound progress made over time, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

64. By the time the pupils leave the school they are achieving standards that are average in all aspects of English except writing, where they are below average. In the standardised tests in 1999 the number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above was broadly in line with the national average, but few pupils achieved higher levels. This is because their achievements were significantly lower in writing than in reading. In both areas the girls performed significantly better than boys. The 1999 results reversed the trend of improvement, which in the previous three years showed standards rising in line with the improvement nationally. Compared to those in similar schools, standards achieved in tests in 1999 were well below average. Whilst more pupils are on course to achieve Level 4 in the tests in 2000, weaknesses in their writing ability mean the school is not on course to meet its set target. The last inspection report judged that there was under-achievement in the upper years of the key stage in speaking, listening and handwriting. These areas are now satisfactory.

65. Standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils speak willingly and relevantly, though not all have the ability to structure their speech well. Some can illustrate their ideas effectively, as seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were examining the way in which to give instructions to make a recipe for a party. They listen well and respond to teachers and to each other readily, though they do not always converse in a sustained manner. Pupils are able to use these skills more readily as they progress through the school.

66. Standards in reading are average. Pupils read with interest and sometimes with motivation. Pupils in Year 3 do not possess good phonic skills which enable them to correct their own mistakes and to approach unfamiliar words with ease. However, because of the recent national initiative to reinforce the acquisition of phonics through additional literacy lessons for many pupils in Years 3 and 4 and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, pupils are acquiring phonic skills at a more rapid rate. As a result, reading is showing maturity and is sometimes good; as heard when a Year 6 pupil read aloud 'The Silver Sword', with ease and good understanding of the language used. Reading aloud is not always with full expression, though many pupils read with full understanding and are able to reason sensibly from evidence. Library and study skills are well developed and systematically taught.

67. Standards in writing are below average. There are a number of factors. Whilst the pupils are interested in writing and enjoy their comprehension work, their writing has some technical weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. There is not enough extended or sustained writing. In literacy lessons pupils almost always work in pairs or groups rather than writing independently. Whilst many pupils communicate coherently in writing, as seen in a Year 6 class where pupils were writing their own versions of events based on the poem 'MaCavity, the Mystery Cat', generally they are given too little opportunity to develop as independent writers. They are given some opportunities for redrafting work and they learn to write in an engaging variety of genres, as seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were using information from the story 'Toothie and Cat' to write their own endings to the story. However, overall opportunities to write at length are missed, and the pupils seldom finish their writing for homework. This means that the more able pupils are not fully stretched to use their research and creative skills to the optimum, and average attainers are not always pressed to write in depth and at some speed and urgency.

68. Progress is sound in speaking, listening and in reading. Reading progresses satisfactorily in fluency, though few pupils read beyond what is expected from them at school. Reading is now

more focused through the use of the National Literacy Strategy. Progress in writing is unsatisfactory. The pace and quantity of sustained writing are inadequate throughout the key stage. This means that pupils are not sufficiently prepared for the written component of the standard Key Stage 2 tests, as they have acquired neither pace nor the ability to write at length, expressing their ideas in full. Progress is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs.

69. Pupils are co-operative in their attitudes to their work, their teachers and each other. They generally behave well and respond readily, with interest, enthusiasm and energy. Much sustained concentration is evident, as well as self-motivation, though there are lapses in concentration and some silly behaviour in those classes where pupils are not fully stimulated or firmly managed. A desire to extend themselves by using initiative in their written and spoken work is sometimes evident but not widespread, and in some classes pupils rely too much on direction by their teachers. Pupils are attentive, show courtesy and respect for others' feelings and generally work well and responsibly in groups and in pairs, even when not directly supervised.

70. Nearly all teaching is satisfactory or better, as at the time of the last inspection. In over a third of lessons observed it was good and in two lessons it was very good. At its best, it is characterised by good understanding of the subject, an enthusiastic approach and sound lesson planning. A strength of much of the teaching is the consistent, skilful and challenging use of questions and answers. However, few really stimulating lessons were seen, such as the Year 4 lesson on writing the beginnings and ends of playscripts, in which all pupils were challenged to reach their full potential. Other lessons, while employing the structure and techniques of the Literacy Strategy, lack imagination and the spark to fire pupils' imaginations. There is now a high degree of emphasis on the technical structures of language through the use of the National Literacy Strategy. This is being well used by teachers to aid work on reading, the use of grammar and punctuation and the study of the structure of a story. Classroom management and teaching strategies are not consistent throughout the school and where they are unsatisfactory the pupils make limited progress, some becoming inattentive and restless. Good support and attention are given to pupils with special educational needs by staff. They are able to participate fully in lessons and are, at times, appropriately withdrawn for special literacy work. Learning support assistants effectively support these pupils both in lessons and when they are withdrawn for additional support.

71. Leadership of the department by the subject co-ordinator is good. She has made strenuous and successful efforts to implement the new schemes of work and to integrate them positively into the National Literacy Strategy. This is helping to raise standards in all areas except writing. However, there is little useful analysis of data gathered from standardised and other tests to help in planning in order to cover areas of concern and to set realistic targets. Homework is set in a consistent manner, with adherence to regular reading at home and the learning of spellings, but does not allow for extended written work in the upper school. Resources are good within the classrooms, which are liberally supplied with fiction. The library has a good supply of both fiction and reference books and is well stocked (as is the resource room) to meet the needs of the curriculum and to encourage pupils to research for themselves. Pupils are systematically taught study skills in visits to the library, which is used to very good advantage. Information and communication technology is now being well integrated into the teaching of the subject and its use is rapidly being developed. [J18].

73. **Mathematics**

72. By the time pupils leave the school they are achieving levels that are average. In the 1999 standardised tests the number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above was broadly in line with the national average, but few attained higher standards. When pupils' results are compared with

those in similar schools, they attained standards that were below average. There was a significant difference in the results of boys and girls, with girls outperforming boys, although this is not a feature of results in previous years or of inspection evidence. Analysis of the pupils' test results in the previous three years indicates that the 1999 results were significantly lower, and against the underlying trend. In the previous three years the rate of progress in standards has been at a greater pace than standards nationally. However, standards vary significantly from year to year. For example, there was a significant difference in the numbers achieving higher levels in 1998, when they were well above average, compared to 1999, when they were well below. Whilst evidence is inconclusive, a significant factor appears to be the quality of teaching, in particular of the higher-attaining pupils. High-quality teaching of these pupils is a factor in the number of pupils in Year 6 on course to achieve beyond Level 4 in the 2000 tests. Inspection findings confirm that the school is on course to meet the targets set for 2000. Standards were similarly judged to be average at the time of the last inspection. Attainment of pupils with special educational needs is in line with their abilities.

73. Progress is satisfactory overall and good in more than a third of lessons. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' numeracy and mental arithmetic skills. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have a sound knowledge of numbers and a satisfactory recall of multiplication facts. The majority of older pupils can work confidently using numbers greater than a thousand and can apply all four rules of number. Good progress was seen in most mental sessions, where appropriate emphasis is placed on sharpening number bonds and the speed of calculations. The use of pupils' individual digit cards plays an important part in encouraging pupil progress. Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress, and work is planned with an appropriate awareness of their needs.

74. Work on shape, space and measures is given good emphasis and standards are satisfactory across the key stage. Pupils know the names of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Younger pupils sort shapes into similar sets, using appropriate vocabulary. Older pupils in Year 5 investigate the properties of equilateral, isosceles and scalene triangles. By Year 6, more able pupils are working out the area and perimeter of compound shapes.

75. Pupils respond well to mathematics and their attitudes are good overall. They concentrate well and work with enthusiasm. Most pupils enjoy mathematics, particularly the recently-introduced mental calculation sessions. They support each other well when working in pairs and can explain their methods of working. Care is shown when recording work, and written work is generally well presented. Behaviour is mostly very good. In a minority of lessons pupils' attitudes to learning are unsatisfactory. In these instances pupils lack concentration and perseverance with the task, and a minority display inappropriate behaviour.

76. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good or very good in over a third of lessons. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. In one lesson observed the teaching was seen to be unsatisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and have due regard to the structure of the numeracy hour. In the best lessons teachers have clear objectives for what the pupils should learn. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 lesson for the higher-attaining pupils. Here, during a mental calculation session, skilful questioning, a brisk pace and a good variety of challenging activities had a positive impact on pupil progress. The teacher's very good knowledge was evident in the vocabulary used and in her ability to use pupils' mistakes to make effective and supportive teaching points. There were some sessions where pupils were given insufficient time to work in groups. In one such lesson this was limited to seven minutes. Where unsatisfactory teaching occurs it is due to a slow pace, low expectations and poor management of the pupils. Effective use is made of support staff to raise standards with the lowest achieving pupils. However, not all teachers have this support and it is difficult for those without it to deliver to the same standard, particularly for the lower/middle achieving groups.

77. The school has made a good start in implementing the numeracy hour. Teachers have worked hard to implement the structure and organisation required and this is helping to improve standards, most noticeably in mental calculations. Assessment systems are in place, but are not used to inform planning and do not help to raise standards. Mathematics is not confined to the numeracy hour; good opportunities are seen in science and information and communication technology. For example, in computer work pupils were using a mathematics program. They were competent in opening and closing files and showed good control of the mouse to drag frames. There is a good range of resources to support mathematics, and a generous level of funding is apportioned to mathematics. The co-ordinator provides strong leadership. She has begun to monitor the introduction of the national numeracy strategy and to report back to staff. Although there has been insufficient analysis of end-of-key-stage results, the expertise of the co-ordinator is beginning to have a positive impact on standards.

79. **Science**

78. By the time the pupils leave the school they are achieving standards that are average. In the 1999 standardised tests the number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above was slightly above the national average, but the number achieving higher levels was well below the national average. When compared with that in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, performance overall was below the average. Results in the 1999 tests were lower than in previous years. Analysis of results shows the number of pupils gaining Level 4 to be increasing slowly over time, although the number of those gaining higher levels fluctuates, with numbers higher in 1996 and 1998 than in 1997 or 1999. It is not possible to confirm why this is so. Inspection evidence confirms that similar numbers of pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve Level 4 in tests in 2000, but more are on course to achieve higher levels. The current emphasis on experimental and investigative work is resulting in pupils having a clearer understanding of the scientific principles behind their investigative work, helping them to achieve the higher level. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

79. Progress across the school is satisfactory. The skills of investigation and recording are systematically taught throughout the school. Pupils are happy to hypothesise, predict their results, and confidently carry out 'fair tests'. Pupils in Year 3 explore circuits, and know that there has to be a circuit for electricity to flow. They discover that some materials conduct electricity and others do not, and they begin to make scientific explanations for their results. For example, electricity flows through the foil because it has some metal in it. Pupils in Year 4 carry out a cycle of experiments on sound and, as a result of their findings, conclude that there is a link between vibrations and sound. In Year 5, pupils explore the rate of fall of differing sizes of parachutes. They identify the variables, and are very aware of the need to change only one. They explain their results in the light of their previous scientific knowledge and understanding, and come to well-reasoned sensible conclusions. The oldest pupils continue working with forces, and understand that the forces acting on floating objects are balanced. They can explain the connection between gravity and upthrust. Pupils throughout the school accurately record their results, and adjust their hypotheses in the light of experience. Pupils with special educational needs often receive extra help from learning support assistants in lessons, and this effective support ensures that they make satisfactory progress.

80. Pupils enjoy science lessons. Their attitudes to learning are good. They are well behaved, show enthusiasm and interest, and discuss their findings in a mature way. They contribute effectively to class discussions and work collaboratively in group activities. For example, pupils in Year 4 doing a circuit of experiments moved sensibly from one to another with very little supervision. Pupils show respect for materials and equipment, and clear away efficiently after practical sessions.

81. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory, with examples of some good and occasionally very good teaching. Lessons are generally well planned, with clear indications of what the pupils will learn. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and use time and resources effectively. All lessons have an appropriate emphasis on practical work, and teachers insist on the use of correct scientific language. Good opportunities are given for pupils to carry out investigations, but there are still limited opportunities for pupils to plan their own activities in some classes. Work of extra challenge is rarely set for the most able pupils. In the best lessons, the teachers have high expectations of pupils' ability and behaviour, and use every opportunity to promote scientific understanding. Instructions are very clear, and the use of good open-ended questioning ensures that pupils' reasoning is based on a clear understanding of scientific principles. All these attributes were well displayed in a Year 5 lesson in which the pupils were learning about air resistance and the forces of gravity. In addition, the teacher's ability to appropriately praise and admonish the pupils in order to motivate them to achieve to their full potential was a significant factor in the very good progress they made.

82. The subject is still taught on a two-year topic cycle, and this emphasis on the topic restricts the continuous development of scientific skills. The subject manager is aware of this deficiency and has begun looking at an alternative planning. There is appropriate testing, but this is not systematically used to inform planning. There is no rigorous analysis of pupils' test papers at the end of Key Stage 2 to discover areas of weakness. Assessment data are not used effectively to set targets, or to track the progress of different groups of pupils. There is a useful portfolio of moderated work for the investigative strand of the subject to help teachers agree on standards, but there are no agreed exemplars for the rest of the curriculum. Teachers are generally uncertain of what is required for pupils to achieve the higher level. Resources are good, well ordered and easily accessible. They are very effectively managed. The oldest pupils enjoy a residential visit each year, where they are given opportunities to study different habitats. This has a positive impact on the curriculum for those pupils.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES[J19]

84. Art

83. The quality of the pupils' art work by the time they leave is below that expected of pupils of this age. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection, when standards were above average. There are examples of satisfactory work; in particular, some pupils in Year 5 have produced colourful portraits in the style of Beryl Cook, and other pupils in Year 3 have produced interesting colour patterns. Pupils in Year 4 were observed producing some very carefully-completed drawings of leaves and shells, some of which were of a high quality. However, overall many of the displays of the pupils' work around the school demonstrate a lack of conviction in the use of line and colour. Much of the drawing displayed appears to have been drawn initially by adults or has been mechanically enlarged by the pupils from adult drawings. Consequently the work lacks flair and imagination. In contrast, the pupils' own drawings undertaken in their sketchbooks often lack confidence and in some instances sufficient care. Too often their drawings are isolated sketches in which previous learning is not appropriately developed. For example, mark-making exercises are not sufficiently developed in subsequent work or followed by consideration of other appropriate activities, such as tonal studies or the use of varying qualities of line. There is very little evidence of the pupils undertaking three-dimensional activities, apart from some colourful decorated boxes by pupils in Year 4. Overall, pupils make insufficient progress through the key stage.

84. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are good. They are willing to learn and enthusiastic when working on projects. Some lack confidence, particularly when required to work from adult drawing reference sheets, whilst a few undertake further work either at home or outside of the

lesson. When given the opportunity they respond readily to questions about the work of other artists and display a keen eye for detail. In lessons they are well behaved and work unaided, concentrating carefully on the set task.

85. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection. In these, the quality of the teaching was sound and at times good. Teachers plan together, making effective use of the expertise of colleagues. Lessons are well managed. They often include an introduction, where the pupils are required to observe and discuss either the work of an artist or the objects to be drawn, and a period of reflection at the end of lessons, where they have the opportunity to share their achievements. Teachers give appropriate advice and support, although seldom make reference to specific art skills, for example the need to vary the quality of line and tone when drawing. In some lessons the objective is too focused on copying adult templates.

86. Staff training has had some positive impact on the quality of teaching, although many teachers are not secure in their understanding of how to develop the activities demonstrated to them. The art scheme of work is an amalgam of staff planning for each topic and does not give sufficient consideration to the consistent teaching of skills. This is adversely affecting the progress the pupils make. Often art activities are linked to topics and at times this results in low-level work; for example, in Years 5 and 6 some pupils have made unimaginative Tudor roses using crumpled tissue paper.

88. Design and Technology

87. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based, therefore, on a scrutiny of the pupils' work, including the school's portfolio of previous projects, and discussions with teachers and pupils.

88. By the time the pupils leave they are achieving standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. This represents the same standard as at the time of the last inspection. In particular, their ability to practise new skills and then to use these in the development of their own ideas is good. For example, pupils practise making a wide range of hinges using string and fluted plastic before making boxes. Similarly, sewing skills leads to the making of bags, and experimenting with various switches leads to making electrical games. In contrast, pupils' ability to sketch out drawings and ideas of the various design possibilities before making is less well developed. Pupils have the opportunity to work in a good range of resistant materials, achieving some high-quality work; for example, making small-scale models for an adventure playground. There are far fewer opportunities for working with food, and pupils do not have the opportunity to do cooking. They undertake appropriate evaluations of their work.

89. In the lessons observed the pupils displayed great enthusiasm. They observe with patience, but when given the opportunity to experiment with new skills are over-exuberant and insufficiently systematic and careful. Whilst they work well with partners, some older pupils, when required to work in larger groups, fail to share out the responsibilities in an appropriate manner. Younger pupils show greater care and pride in their work both when drawing designs and in the quality they achieve in their finished work.

90. The quality of teaching in the two lessons observed was unsatisfactory. In one lesson poor classroom management failed to ensure that the pupils were focused on their work, and the noise level allowed was inappropriately high. In the other there was insufficient challenge for the pupils and the practical activity was insufficiently demanding. Evidence from observing the pupils' finished products indicates that teaching is generally sound and that the two lessons did not represent a fair cross-section of the overall teaching.

91. The co-ordinator has undertaken an accredited course in order to develop her own

understanding and knowledge of the subject. Her good leadership in writing and implementing an effective scheme of work ensures that the pupils are making sound progress. She has been instrumental in ensuring that the pupils develop a range of appropriate skills. There is a good and well-managed range of resources which allow all pupils to have the opportunity to experiment with a wide variety of materials.

93. **Geography**

92. Only a small number of geography lessons were observed during the inspection week. However, evidence from teachers' planning, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that, by the time they leave, the pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. This is similar to standards at the time of the last inspection.

93. For example, pupils in Year 3 can select information from the local newspaper to indicate an awareness of the changes that are taking place in Street. Pupils in Year 4 show an awareness of many places beyond their own locality; for example, they can find places like California and China in their atlases and plot them successfully on a blank map of the world. Pupils understand and can talk about the different weather symbols. They know that rivers produce different landscape features. They recognise the importance of the River Nile to the Egyptians. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know and understand a range of geographical language; for example, "agriculture", "industry" and "transport". They can use a range of geographical skills; they use and interpret maps and plans using a variety of scales. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make at least sound progress throughout the school.

94. The pupils have a positive attitude towards geography. They are keen to share their work and what they have learnt. For example, the pupils in Year 4 talk enthusiastically about their work on weather forecasting and the video which they made. Similarly, the pupils in Year 3 are enthusiastic about their study of Street and are keen to talk about what they have learnt.

95. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory in the small number of lessons observed. Teachers' planning is clear and lesson plans are appropriately focused on the skills and knowledge to be taught. Pupils' contributions are valued and teachers are effective at questioning the pupils to probe their thinking and knowledge.

96. In the last inspection, there was no scheme of work to support the teaching of geography. The school is currently trialling the QCA Scheme of Work. Whilst there is still further work required appropriate arrangements have been made to incorporate this into the school's own scheme. The newly-appointed co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject. A thorough audit of teachers' needs has recently been completed and this is currently being analysed to inform the further development of the subject.

98. **History**

97. During the inspection week very little teaching of history was observed. However, evidence from teachers' planning, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicates that, by the time the pupils leave the school, they achieve standards in line with national expectations [J20]. This is slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection. They can successfully use time lines to talk about a range of events and periods through history. They are able to remember the most significant features of each period they study. For example, they know the key facts about Henry VIII and can give reasons why he did particular things. They can categorise and extract information effectively from a range of books, videos and other resources. Evidence of where this is very effective is in the work on the Tudors. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 can pose a range of historical questions, research and respond well to them; for

example, “Why did Henry VIII like going to war?” In Year 6, pupils can draw conclusions successfully from photographs of Elizabeth I. These are all appropriate skills for pupils of their age. The pupils make sound [J21]progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported, sometimes by support staff.

98.The pupils have positive attitudes. They enjoy the topics and the visits which support their learning; for example, talking readily about their visit to Glastonbury Abbey. They are developing research skills and effectively work on their own and in small groups.

99.Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have appropriate knowledge and a clear understanding of the historical skills to be taught. Lesson planning is good and this ensures that the pupils are clear about what is to be learnt. Good use is made of a range of resources, including video material and visits, to make history meaningful and enjoyable. Although work is marked and teachers assess history in an informal way, there are still insufficient systems for monitoring pupil progress and standards, particularly between the upper and lower school.

100.History provides a very useful focus for pupils to develop their literacy skills. There are some good examples of pupils writing in history, including poems about the Battle of Boswell and letters from a visit to Montacute House. The school has used visits to Montacute House and other places to introduce pupils to the need to make enquiries for themselves before writing up information on their visits.

102. **Information and communication technology**

101.Standards in information and communication technology are much improved since the previous inspection. Currently, although pupils’ standards are near the level expected for their age in Years 3 and 4, they are still below what is expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 4, most pupils are able to manipulate a mouse with accuracy and can use word processing with simple editing techniques for communication. They can investigate shape and pattern using a mathematical package, and can give instructions to simulated control-technology devices on their computers. In Years 5 and 6 many pupils have developed basic skills. They can cut and paste, and change fonts, colour and size of print. They are able to retrieve information. Most can enter data in spreadsheets, select relevant graphs for display and have linked their work with numeracy, music and history. They are learning to use E-mail.

102.Progress in lessons in all years is generally good. It is best where the teachers demonstrate that their own expertise is high. Pupils of all abilities are making similar progress. For example, the provision of challenging extension tasks enables the more able pupils to elaborate their thinking, while the generally effective support given to slower pupils and those with special educational needs enables them to gain speed and keep in touch with class progress.

103.Pupils’ response is good. Those working together in pairs or small groups interact effectively, take turns equitably and engage in purposeful discussion, except in the few instances when pupils become frustrated when working three to one computer. There is equality of opportunity and interest for boys and girls. Pupils are enthusiastic; they listen and concentrate well, enjoy lessons and take account of teachers’ instructions. Many have the capacity for persistence to carry a difficult task through to its conclusion.

104.The teaching is at least sound and in some lessons it is good. Much of the teaching observed was confident, though not all of the teachers are secure in the subject, as when pupils in a Year 6 lesson were observed left to their own devices for long periods of time with little guidance when they experienced problems. Planning is the strength within teaching. Some teachers, particularly the co-ordinator, communicate clear learning objectives to pupils by precise explanation and demonstration, as observed in a Year 4 lesson where they used a

mathematical package of a number square with graphics to extend counting-on and counting-back skills. The effective lesson structure includes ample time for pupils to practise the skills taught, although teachers have yet to effectively solve how best to organise the teaching to ensure that all pupils are working on appropriate tasks, given the limited number of computers available.

105. In the last two years the school has made rapid progress in tackling the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Through its action plan and its enthusiastic co-ordinator, it has established a programme based on quality planning which promotes the sequential development of information and communication technology skills in the core subjects, as well as in some other subjects. The breadth and balance of the information and communication technology curriculum are now strong. The in-house training given by the co-ordinator and the courses attended by some of the teachers have had a significant positive impact. The significant upgrading of resources to include a very good computer suite, earlier this year, promotes a good consistency of skills, and is having a positive impact on raising standards[J22].

107. **Music**

106. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection and no music was observed in assemblies. Judgements are based therefore on discussions with teachers and pupils as well as lesson observations.

107. By [J23] the time they leave, the pupils are achieving in line with national expectations. This is slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection, when pupils were achieving above average. In lessons the pupils perform to an appropriate standard when working with percussion instruments. In one lesson in Year 3 the pupils demonstrated good skills when required to clap a range of quite complex rhythms. Very little singing was observed, although in the few instances when required to do so they sang tunefully. Some pupils in Year 5 were able to accurately hum a note played to them. Compositional skills are less well developed. No composing was observed and there is little opportunity within the scheme of work for the pupils to undertake compositional work. Their ability to listen to music and to discuss and appraise what they have heard is sound. Some younger pupils have a good developing knowledge of key musical vocabulary; for example, they use the term “ostinato” appropriately. Approximately 40 pupils have instrumental music lessons in school time, learning to play a wide range of instruments. A further 60 pupils are learning the recorder.

108. Pupils’ attitudes in lessons are good. They take part with enthusiasm, and pupils with quite limited musical abilities are equally prepared to perform and to answer questions as other, more musically able, pupils. They listen attentively and, when practising, work well in pairs or larger groups. They are very supportive of one another. In one Year 4 lesson in which the pupils had to wait for lengthy periods for their turn to experiment in a percussion exercise they did so in good humour and with considerable patience.

109. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed ranged from sound to very good. It is demonstrably better in lessons where the teacher has a flair for the subject and a good understanding of the skills to be taught. In these lessons the teacher has high expectations of the pupils and is quick to push the pupils on to more challenging work. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the teacher pushed the pupils to perform increasingly complex rhythms, introduced them to an appropriate musical vocabulary and involved the pupils in a range of work, which involved performing, listening and appraising. The whole lesson was very well managed and conducted at a very lively pace. By the end of the lesson the pupils had made very good progress. In other lessons where the teachers have limited musical abilities the pace of the lesson is much slower and at times they fail to grasp opportunities to build on the pupils’

knowledge and skills. However, in all lessons teachers demonstrate good classroom management, have good relationships with the class and at times are quite prepared to show that they are learning alongside the pupils.

110. There is a very good scheme of work, which ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning through the development of appropriate skills. The co-ordinator gives very effective advice and carefully monitors teachers' planning. There is a very comprehensive range of resources, well managed and regularly used in lessons. This is a significant factor in improving the quality of teaching and the progress made by the pupils.

112. **Physical Education**

111. Throughout the school, standards of attainment are the same as at the time of the last inspection, and remain high. In swimming and some games' activities, some pupils attain very good standards. The school provides the pupils with a broad curriculum, including swimming, which ensures that they fully cover all aspects as required by the National Curriculum. The provision for many pupils is enhanced by attendance at one or more of the numerous extra-curricular activities offered.

112. Games skills are well developed, and pupils play a variety of games, including football, rugby, hockey and basketball. As they move through the school, pupils develop a high degree of skill. They are well co-ordinated, and have well-developed ball skills. They are able to play small games effectively with due regard to rules, handling hockey sticks and rugby balls correctly. They are able to send, retrieve and travel with a ball; for example, when playing basketball and hockey. Gymnastic skills are performed confidently, and pupils in Year 6 use their bodies effectively to make symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes on large apparatus. Pupils in Year 6 use dance skills imaginatively to perform a dance with a partner, showing different moods. Throughout the school, pupils generally make good progress in all aspects of physical activity. Pupils with special educational needs do the same activities as their peers, and make similar progress.

113. Pupils generally respond positively to their lessons and enjoy physical activity. They are well motivated and concentrate hard on the task, endeavouring to improve their performance. They work co-operatively in pairs and small groups, and treat equipment with respect. They are able to get out apparatus efficiently, and put it away again safely. However, there are a few pupils who do not listen carefully to instructions, and hence interrupt the flow of the lesson. Many pupils enjoy taking part in sports clubs and show commitment through their regular attendance.

114. The teaching is good, particularly in Years 3 and 4. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, and plan their lessons well, giving pupils a progression of activities to ensure that skills are progressively developed. In the best lessons, teachers set high expectations of ability and behaviour, give clear instructions, and effectively use themselves and pupils to demonstrate teaching points. Performance is continuously assessed in these lessons, and appropriate help is given to pupils to enable them to improve. In the less successful lessons, ineffective behaviour management interrupts the flow, and some time is wasted.

115. Resources and accommodation for the subject are very good and have a positive impact on standards. The curriculum benefits from a generous amount of time allocated to it. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject, and actively promotes competitive sport and extra-curricular sporting activities. The curriculum is enriched by the many opportunities for competitive sport, including five-a-side football, netball, rounders, cricket, and swimming galas. When pupils are training for competitive events, skills are further enhanced for those

pupils who are involved.

117. **Swimming**

116.The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming.

117.All pupils go swimming for part of the year, with pupils from the lower school sharing sessions with older pupils, to ensure that the best use is made of the water space available. The school uses the local pool, which offers excellent facilities, with plenty of water space for all abilities. The pool is within easy walking distance and minimum time is taken for travelling. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is high. Ninety per cent of the oldest pupils exceed the national standard, and can swim at least 25 metres. When pupils leave the school they can all swim at least 15 metres. About half of the pupils in Year 6 can swim proficiently on their front and back, using front crawl, breaststroke, and back crawl, with a good effective style. They are able to swim long distances in a given time, and work towards bronze, silver, gold and "honours challenge" awards.

118.Progress throughout the school in swimming is good. The youngest non-swimming pupils quickly become confident in the water, and submerge their heads and blow bubbles. They retrieve objects from the pool bottom, and learn to glide on their front. They can propel themselves through the water using appropriate swimming aids. They work towards the "water confidence grade", and by Year 4 the majority can swim 15 metres unaided, often on their front and back. In Year 5, strokes continue to be perfected, pupils can tread water effectively, and the vast majority of pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres. They learn to do a mushroom float, and easily enter and leave the water without using the steps. The more able pupils can swim 800 metres and dive into the water. They carry out surface dives to retrieve objects from a depth of two metres, and learn to swim through submerged hoops. Progress in swimming is helped by many pupils being members of the local swimming club and swimming regularly. Pupils with special educational needs are given the same opportunities as their peers, and make good progress.

119.The teaching of swimming is good overall. Good use is made of the small learner pool for the less confident pupils, while the most able swimmers are given appropriate challenges in the deep water. The staff have been well trained, and a number of teachers have obtained the life-saving qualification. They have high expectations of the pupils' abilities, and set appropriately challenging activities to enable pupils to progress. Lessons are well planned so that skills are progressively developed, and effective use is made of the water space available. Due attention is paid to safety at all times. There is a progressive system of awards that the pupils work towards. This effective assessment ensures that the teacher knows exactly what each pupil can do, and what skills are needed for the pupils to progress.

120.Swimming is an important part of the physical education curriculum, and the school ensures that all pupils have every opportunity to attain the necessary standard by the time they leave the school. There is no specific scheme of work or policy statement for swimming, but the award structure gives a clear focus to lessons. The school takes part with a great deal of success in competitions against other schools, and arranges its own competitive gala. The high profile that swimming enjoys has a very positive impact on the standards achieved.

122. **Religious Education**

121. Since the last inspection the school has maintained sound standards in religious education. Attainment is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 2. As they move through the school, pupils accumulate considerable knowledge and understanding of Christianity and three other major world faiths. The younger pupils understand the importance of religious books and can recognise the similarities and differences between the Bible and the Torah. They listen to and discuss stories from the Bible, and can give descriptive accounts of the Creation. Many can relate biblical events to a modern context. For example, younger pupils can reflect on the dilemma of Adam and Eve and rationalise their own feelings about temptation. Older pupils understand the variety of ways in which people worship and explore preferences for personal or collective worship. In connection with their work on the Tudors, older pupils show sound knowledge of monasteries and monks. They reflect on the difficult decisions faced by those wishing to become monks. All pupils make satisfactory progress.

122. Pupils' response to religious education is good overall. Generally they are attentive, interested, and respectful of the views of others. When working together they co-operate well and contribute sensible answers to discussions. All pupils show respect for resources and artefacts and handle them with care.

123. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and, in some lessons, teaching is good. This is similar to the findings from the last report. Teachers have clear lesson objectives and pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Previous lessons are consolidated and teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. The most effective teaching occurs where teachers use questions to challenge pupils' thinking; for example, in a Year 4 lesson where the teacher skilfully questioned the pupils in order to check and recap on their knowledge and understanding of the differences between the Torah and the Bible.

124. Provision is enhanced through assemblies, visits to places of interest and occasional visitors to the school. For example, effective use is made of the local church for younger pupils and of Glastonbury Abbey for the older pupils. There is an appropriate policy for religious education, although this does not include the statutory right of withdrawal from lessons. There is a good range of resources, including artefacts, books and videos, which are regularly used to good effect and help to raise standards in lessons.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

125. A team of six inspectors, who spent a total of 20 inspector days in the school, carried out the inspection. Lessons were observed for a total of 46 hours and other direct evidence was gathered (including observation of registration, assemblies and extra-curricular activities, and a study of past work) for a further 16 hours. Meetings were held with pupils, members of staff, the vice-chair of governors and other representatives of the governing body, and there were other informal discussions. Support staff and volunteer helpers were also observed. Samples of pupils' work in all year groups were scrutinised. Pupils were heard reading and also discussed their number work with inspectors. The team inspected school documentation before and during the inspection week. Members of the team met twelve parents at a special meeting held prior to the inspection to hear their views. The 93 responses to questionnaires distributed to all parents were also taken into account.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y3 – Y6	319	0	71	31

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y3 – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	11.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	26.8

Education support staff (Y3 – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:	10
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	134

Average class size:	32
---------------------	----

Financial data

Financial year:

1999

	£
Total Income	501,099
Total Expenditure	499,887
Expenditure per pupil	1,581.92
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,679
Balance carried forward to next year	45,891

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

319

Number of questionnaires returned:

94

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	---------	----------	-------------------

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	38	56	5	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	62	35	1	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	33	55	9	3	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	23	64	12	1	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	32	57	9	2	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	34	63	3	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	44	51	5	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	18	64	11	6	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	34	57	6	2	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	29	60	12	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	48	48	3	1	0

Other issues raised by parents

The only concern raised by a number of parents referred to the large class sizes throughout the school, but in particular in Years 3 and 4. The inspection team raised the issue with the governing body, which remains of the view that the school must retain a surplus as a contingency against unexpected expenditure demands. The team did note the larger class sizes in Years 3 and 4, but could find no evidence that the progress they are making is adversely effected by the size of the classes.