

INSPECTION REPORT

LONGWICK C of E COMBINED SCHOOL

Longwick, Princes Risborough

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110432

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Lazarou

Reporting inspector: Mr Peter Barton
15297

Dates of inspection: 19 June - 23 June 2000

Inspection number: 187733

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Longwick C of E Combined School Walnut Tree Lane Longwick Princes Risborough Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP27 9SJ
Telephone number:	01844 344769
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Simon Appleby
Date of previous inspection:	7 - 9 May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Barton, Rgl	Geography History Religious education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupil's achievements Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Geraldine Osment, Lay Inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Peter Farrington, Team member	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language	
Christine Perrett, Team member	Mathematics Science Art Music Under fives	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Longwick Church of England Combined School provides education for pupils aged 4 to 11. Situated close to the centre of the village of Longwick, near the small town of Princes Risborough, the school draws its pupils from a wide geographical area. Less than half the pupils come from Longwick itself. Several pupils aged seven or older from beyond the village join the school each year after Key Stage 1. The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, with a significant minority with parents in professional occupations. The school is voluntary controlled and has a close relationship with St Mary's Church in Princes Risborough.

The school has 195 pupils, which is of average size for a primary school. There are four pupils of ethnic minority background and four other pupils speak English as an additional language. Three children come from Traveller communities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 0.5 per cent, which is well below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is 19.5 per cent, which is average. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is above average. Since the last inspection, the school has ceased to provide education for pupils in Year 7, as part of local authority reorganisation in the area.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which enables the vast majority of its pupils to achieve well according to their prior attainment. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. In almost all other subjects standards are higher than what is expected nationally. The success of the school is due to the large proportion of good and often very good teaching and the very positive attitudes to learning of the pupils. In almost all respects, it is also the result of good leadership and teamwork at all levels, including the work of the headteacher, deputy head, governors and the teachers who provide subject leadership. The main weakness lies in Year 1, where most pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. This is largely due to weaknesses in teaching.

The school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. Given the well above average standards, the good achievement of the pupils, the good teaching and the close to average costs, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science, history and physical education.
- The pupils' behaviour is excellent and they have very good attitudes to learning.
- The teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6 and most of the remaining teaching is at least good.
- The strong teamwork, excellent relationships and strong commitment to school improvement.
- The very good monitoring of the pupils' academic performance and personal development.
- The very good provision for the pupils' personal development; in particular their social and moral development.
- The effective links with parents and the contribution of parents to the pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The rate of achievement of pupils in Year 1 is unsatisfactory due to weaknesses in teaching.
- The school development plan is insufficiently focused on a small number of priorities for raising standards.
- The impact of spending decisions on pupils' standards is not adequately evaluated.
- The teachers' marking does not consistently tell pupils how they can improve their work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1996. Standards were found to be above average in English and mathematics but only average in science. The pupils were judged to make satisfactory progress. Since then there has been good improvement. This is largely due to the increasing strength of the leadership provided by the headteacher, some changes in teaching staff, better teaching and better planning of the curriculum. Results in national tests have risen in line with the national trend. However, this inspection found that standards in core subjects have risen from above average to well above average. The teaching has improved significantly, with far more teaching that is very good or even better and far less unsatisfactory teaching. This has improved the pupils' achievement. The school has successfully addressed the key issues for action from the last inspection. The weaknesses in the teachers' subject expertise in information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography, art and music have been successfully tackled. There are appropriate schemes of work to support the planning of each subject. The standards in spelling have improved significantly. The school's arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its performance, which were in an early stage of development in 1996, are now good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			*similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	A	B
mathematics	B	A	B	C
science	B	A	C	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards are good. By the age of five, standards are above average overall and well above average in language and literacy. Standards are well above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The inspection found that the oldest pupils reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above average. This means that standards in English are broadly similar to those achieved in the 1999 Key Stage 2 national tests. In mathematics, standards are now higher than in 1999 and in science they are much better. The comparison with similar schools in the table is based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Standards of the oldest pupils are well above average

in history and physical education, above average in ICT, art, music and religious education, and average in design and technology and geography. These standards represent good overall achievement by the pupils due to the good teaching. However, Year 1 pupils make unsatisfactory progress, particularly in English and science. The school is successful in meeting the targets that it sets for the attainment of the oldest pupils, which it revised upwards to a more appropriately challenging level.

** An alternative method of comparing school performance, based on the pupils' progress against their prior attainment at age seven, puts the school's results for 1999 in a better light. Given the high proportion of good teaching, the inspection team is of the view that this method gives a more accurate picture of the school's performance. By this method, English results are well above the average of similar schools, mathematics results are above average and science results average.*

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupil's enthusiasm for learning contributes much to their good achievement and well above average standards.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. The pupils cope with the limited space in several teaching areas with a high level of co-operation and responsibility.
Personal development and relationships	Very good overall. Relationships are excellent. Pupils are very supportive of each other and their teachers.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are average.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are of a consistently high quality throughout the school, with occasional minor exceptions in Year 1. The pupils demonstrate considerable maturity in their work. They can work independently when asked, maintaining high levels of concentration on the task.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons. It is good or even better in 69 per cent of lessons, and it is very good or even better in 28 per cent of lessons. There is a small (four per cent) amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when, although teaching was judged to be good, it was found to be unsatisfactory in 21 per cent of lessons.

The teaching is good in the reception class and in Year 2, with several strong features in both classes. While there are several sound features to the teaching in Year 1, it is unsatisfactory overall due to the low challenge and lack of subject focus in a small number

of lessons in this class. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall and it is very good in Years 5 and 6. The teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy teaching, is good overall and often even better. What often makes the teaching good or even better are the teachers' subject expertise, the challenging questioning and the teachers' enthusiasm. However, the teachers' marking does not consistently give pupils feedback on how they can improve their standards.

This good teaching builds on the pupils' very good attitudes to learning. In most lessons, this means that the level of the pupils' concentration and focus on the work is high. There is a serious commitment to learning in most lessons, contributing to the pupils' good achievement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. A good balance has been struck between the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the wider curriculum. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils make good progress. They are well supported by the teachers and the non-teacher assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic and personal development and their attendance are very good.

All pupils have access to the school's broad and balanced curriculum. Curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection, contributing to the improved teaching and better pupil achievement. The teachers' detailed and accurate knowledge of the academic and personal development of each child is a strength of the school. The school has very effective links with parents and parents have a generally good regard for the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher, deputy head and subject leaders have made a significant contribution to the good improvement since the last inspection. The school development plan does not give adequate strategic focus for further improvement.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are well informed about how well the school is doing and provide very good support to the staff and pupils. They are well organised in their work for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Test results and other information on the pupils' performance are thoroughly evaluated; teaching is regularly monitored although this has not identified the needs of a new and inexperienced teacher.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. Staff are well deployed. Good use is made of the accommodation despite the shortage of one classroom. Finances are carefully managed but the actions for improvement in the school development plan are not fully costed, nor is there enough evaluation of the impact of spending decisions on the pupils' standards.

The headteacher, teachers and governing body work as an effective team. They are successful in identifying the strengths of the school and where it needs to improve. The staff are generally well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum. Good use is made of the range of expertise that they bring, including the significant number of part-time teachers. Staffing changes and recruitment difficulties have contributed to the weaknesses in teaching in Year 1. The school's accommodation is satisfactory and soon to be improved by the addition of a new classroom. Learning resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • They value the good teaching. • They think the pupils behave well. • They find the school approachable. • They find the school to be well led and managed. • The children are expected to work hard. • The school helps the children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • The range of extra curricular activities. • The information on how their child is getting on. • Closer partnership with parents. • The progress their children make in school. • The opportunities for the more able to develop their intellectual reasoning skills.

One hundred and eight questionnaires (55 per cent) were returned and 23 parents attended the meeting with representatives of the inspection team.

The inspection team agrees with all the things that please parents most about the school. Inspectors found the quality and quantity of homework to be appropriate. They would disagree with those parents who have concerns about their child's progress, judging progress to be good overall. Inspectors found the range of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory overall and good in relation to sports. They found the information given to parents about pupils' progress to be good and the school's links with parents to be very effective. A small number of parents questioned whether the school does enough to develop the intellectual reasoning skills of the higher attaining pupils. The inspection team found that teaching provides effectively for this aspect of learning, particularly through mathematics, science and the high quality work that characterises some of the teaching of history.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The overall standards achieved by the oldest pupils are well above average. This reflects the good achievement made by the pupils through the school and is the result of the good and often very good teaching, combined with the pupils' very good attitudes to learning. These standards are good, given that pupils enter the school with above average attainment and leave aged 11 with well above average standards. These standards also represent good improvement since the last inspection in 1996.

2. Since the last inspection, the school's results in national tests have risen in line with the national trend. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests taken by all pupils in Year 6, the school's results were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and close to average in science compared to schools nationally. The numbers of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum level were well above average in English and mathematics but below average in science. Using the method of comparing schools based on numbers eligible for free school meals, these results were well above the average of similar schools in English, in line with the average in mathematics and well below average in science. However, a second method of comparing school performance with similar schools is currently under experiment. This involves comparing how the school's pupils performed in their Key Stage 2 tests with the performance of children nationally whose attainment was similar to that of the school's children when they were tested aged seven. This second method puts the school's results in a better light: they are well above those of similar schools in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Given the good quality of teaching seen, the inspection team is of the view that this second method of comparing similar schools is likely to be more reliable.

3. The inspection found standards in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 to be higher than those reflected in the 1999 national tests. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Inspectors found very little difference in the standards in the three subjects. This represents good improvement in science since 1999, including the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in this subject by the time they leave the school. It also represents improvement in the proportion reaching the nationally expected standard in mathematics.

4. At the end of Key Stage 1, the standards of children aged seven are well above average. This represents improvement since the previous inspection. This is reflected in the results of National Curriculum tests for seven year olds. Over the course of Key Stage 1, this represents good achievement by the pupils. However, this achievement is uneven. The children aged five in the reception class and the Year 2 class make good progress, but the children make unsatisfactory progress in Year 1. This is largely due to weaknesses in teaching. By the end of Year 2, the good and, at times, very good teaching in this class has restored the picture of good achievement by the end of the key stage.

5. Over the course of Key Stage 2, the pupils' achievements are good, despite a picture of similarly well above average standards at the end of each key stage which would imply that achievement is no better than satisfactory. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, there are several pupils who regularly join the school after Key Stage 1, whose standards are often below average for the school and who, nevertheless, achieve well by

the time they leave. Secondly, there is a trend of more rapid rates of progress throughout Key Stage 2 due to the good and improving teaching. The school meets its revised targets for the attainment of the oldest pupils, indicating that teachers' expectations are appropriate. However, the original targets set for the end of Key Stage 2 have been too low and have been well exceeded by actual results, reflecting an unnecessarily cautious approach to target-setting.

6. The pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs make good progress. This is the result of good teaching, which is well matched to the pupils' needs, and the good individual education plans for each of these children. These plans have improved well since the last inspection. Boys and girls, pupils of different abilities, pupils of ethnic minority background and pupils with English is an additional language all make similar rates of progress. The only group making less progress than the remainder of the school are the children in Year 1, who are capable of making better progress.

7. The pupils enter the school in the reception class with above average attainment. Their speaking and listening skills are well above average, a feature of their learning which is maintained through the school and which contributes much to their good rate of achievement across the curriculum subjects. Their achievements in the reception class are good in language and literacy and personal and social development, and satisfactory in all other areas. In addition to the very good speaking and listening of the children, this is due to the often skilful and imaginative teaching in this class. By the time they are five, almost all children have achieved the desirable learning outcomes for five year olds and the vast majority have started to work towards the learning objectives of the National Curriculum, with a significant minority already achieving National Curriculum Level one.

8. Standards in English are well above average in speaking and listening and in reading. They are well above average in writing at Key Stage 1 and above average by the end of Key Stage 2. This does not reflect a decline in standards. It is due to the relatively low prior attainment of some of the several children who join the school during Key Stage 2. The very good standards in speaking and listening, which the children bring to the school, contribute much to their good achievement in reading. With good support from their homes, the vast majority of pupils develop a strong enjoyment of books and reading. This is also the result of the effective teaching of reading. The pupils engage with a good range of fiction and non-fiction books and are able to use information books effectively to pursue lines of enquiry. Standards in handwriting, punctuation and use of grammar are above average. The major weakness in spelling identified by the previous inspection has been successfully tackled. Most pupils express themselves in writing with increasing confidence, range of language and organisation as they move through the school, making satisfactory progress. The most able among the oldest pupils do not achieve the standard of writing of which they are capable because of insufficient opportunity not only in English but also in history, geography, religious education and science, to develop their ideas at length in writing.

9. The pupils' standards in both literacy and numeracy are well above average. In both cases, these standards reflect the good impact of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The teachers have put in a large amount of work to establish these initiatives within the curriculum, to very good effect. The recent decision to increase the amount of time devoted to developing the children's writing is improving standards. The numeracy strategy is a major reason for the very good standards in using and applying mathematics. The vast majority of the pupils develop very good mental calculation skills for their age, responding to the often energetic teaching with high levels of enthusiasm. The pupils achieve consistent standards across all aspects of the mathematics curriculum.

10. Standards in science have improved significantly since the last inspection. Across all aspects of the subject, including scientific investigation, the standards achieved are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average by the end of Key Stage 2.

11. The standards achieved by the oldest pupils are well above the national expectation in history and physical education and above the national expectation in art, ICT, music and religious education. Standards in design and technology and geography are in line with the national expectation, although the pupils' knowledge and understanding of geographical themes are higher. Although the last inspection did not find standards in any subject to be below what is expected nationally, this picture across the remaining subjects of the curriculum represents an overall improvement since 1996. The main reasons for this are the better teaching, especially the teachers' improved knowledge of their subjects, the improved management of each subject by subject leaders, and the improved curriculum planning. Achievement in these subjects is never less than satisfactory through both key stages. Overall, the pupils make more rapid, often good progress in these subjects at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. This is largely due to the slower rate of progress made during Year 1 and the particularly strong teaching in Years 5 and 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The pupils have very good attitudes to learning, as was found by the last inspection. The vast majority are highly motivated. This makes a major contribution to their good achievement. Pupils at all levels of attainment approach their lessons eager to learn and keen to participate. They enjoy being challenged. They demonstrate impressive maturity for their age when listening carefully to each other and their teachers, and on the occasions when they are asked to work independently. There are minor exceptions to these high standards of concentration and listening in Year 1. In this class, a small number of pupils are, at times, restless and lacking in concentration. Pupils at Key Stage 1 show very good levels of independence and responsibility, taking turns to work during breaks and lunchtimes on a computer programme to develop their mathematics calculation skills. Many pupils demonstrate considerable confidence in their willingness to 'have a go' in responding to their teacher's questions. They show good initiative in lessons when asked to tackle questions and problems in pairs or small groups, as when Year 4 pupils collaborated to compose a piece of 'mood' music. Uptake of extra curricular activities is good, particularly for opportunities to participate in sports and athletics.

13. The pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Classroom accommodation provides limited space. Despite this, the children move quickly and efficiently when required to and settle briskly to new tasks. Behaviour is particularly impressive in Year 2 where the classroom area is a wide corridor with several points of entry and exit. This high standard of behaviour is maintained in the hall during lunchtimes and during breaks. The pupils show a high degree of respect for property. There have been no recent exclusions. A minor exception to this very positive picture is the occasional example of friction between a small number of Year 1 pupils in lessons. This restricts their learning in the lesson.

14. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent. The pupils are very polite. They are very supportive of each other and their teachers. They respect each other's views and feelings. Inspectors met no evidence of any form of bullying, sexism or racism. Parents endorse this positive view of the pupils.

15. The pupils' rates of attendance are average. They are no better than this largely due to the small number of children whose parents take them on holiday during term time, which the school does its best to discourage. Punctuality is very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching is good. More than anything else, this explains the good achievements made by the pupils. The teaching is good or even better in almost seven out of 10 lessons, and in almost three out of 10 lessons it is very good or even better. It is unsatisfactory in a small number (four per cent) of lessons. This picture represents significant improvement since the last inspection when, although teaching was judged to be good, it was found to be unsatisfactory in 21 per cent of lessons. Teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 but teaching quality varies according to age group. The teaching is good in reception and Year 2, with several strong features in both classes. While there are several sound features to the teaching in Year 1, it is unsatisfactory overall due to the low challenge and lack of subject focus in a small number of lessons. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall and it is very good in Years 5 and 6. The small number of classroom support staff contribute well to the pupils' achievement.

17. The pupils at all levels of attainment respond well to the good teaching, making good progress in most lessons. Almost all teaching builds successfully on the very good attitudes to learning that the children bring to school. In the best lessons, the high expectations and challenge set by the teachers and the pupils' enthusiastic response together generate a very collaborative atmosphere in which everyone encourages everyone else to learn and there is mutual enjoyment of each other's success. This was the case in a Year 6 science lesson on the subject of forces involving questioning about how a parachute works.

18. The teaching of English, including literacy, is good overall and even better in over a quarter of lessons. The teachers have successfully implemented the approach to teaching embodied in the National Literacy Strategy. This has had an obvious impact on raising standards, particularly spelling. The subject leader for literacy has provided good guidance and support. This has contributed significantly to the good subject expertise of almost all teachers.

19. The teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is good overall and even better in half the lessons. The very successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is making a good impact on standards. This is particularly so in the very effective teaching of the use and application of mathematics and in the development of the pupils' mental calculation skills. As with literacy, the subject leader for mathematics has made a major contribution to developing teachers' expertise with a clear, positive impact on standards achieved. In the best mathematics lessons, the teaching stimulates a high level of intellectual engagement from the pupils through lively, challenging questions, as in a lesson with the oldest pupils on how to calculate equations. The pupils respond eagerly with a high level of enthusiasm for mathematics. This high quality teaching involves all the pupils actively in the lesson, often through effective routine mathematical game strategies.

20. The teaching is good in science, ICT, history, music, religious education, physical education and personal and social education. It is satisfactory in geography and design and technology. There was insufficient opportunity to reach a secure judgement of teaching in art. There are many strengths in the teaching of these subjects. This is largely due to the very secure subject knowledge of the teachers. This has been a major area of

improvement since the last inspection, when this was one of the main areas where the school needed to improve. The use of subject specialists to teach mathematics and music to several classes at Key Stage 2 has a good impact on standards in these subjects. The very good subject expertise of the teacher was a major factor contributing to the excellent progress made by pupils in a Year 5 history lesson on the background to the Second World War. In this lesson, highly skilful and challenging questioning by the teacher enabled the higher attaining pupils to demonstrate knowledge and understanding that is exceptional for their age, making connections in their historical understanding between the problems faced by Germany at the end of World War 1, the rise of Nazism and the Nazi attempts to suppress Abstract Expressionist painting (being studied in art lessons by the Year 5 pupils).

21. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling these pupils to make good progress. As a result, most of these children achieve the standard expected for their age by the time they leave the school. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when the individual plans for these children were found to lack sharp focus for improving standards.

22. A small number of parents questioned whether the school does enough to develop the intellectual reasoning skills of the higher attaining pupils. The inspection team found that teaching provides effectively for this aspect of learning, particularly through mathematics, science and the high quality work that characterises some of the teaching of history.

23. The teachers have very secure knowledge of the standards and achievement of the pupils. However, although satisfactory overall, the teachers do not make full use of assessment to plan the next stage of their teaching and to give pupils feedback on how they can improve their standards. The marking of the pupils' work is of variable quality and there is no consistent implementation of the school's good marking policy. Improving use is made of agreeing targets for improvement with pupils. While there are whole class targets for improvement, this practice is not yet fully in place at the level of the individual child.

24. Good use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in a number of subjects as well as to develop the pupils' ICT skills. The pupils' very good relationships and support for each other mean that sharing a computer between two pupils in the school's ICT suite is a productive and efficient use of time. Year 4 pupils used the internet successfully to visit the British Museum web site to increase their knowledge of life in ancient Egypt. Year 2 pupils collaborated very well to use computers to word process a story and to import graphics into their overall publication.

25. A minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction over the school's provision of homework. The inspection team found that the quantity and quality of homework is never less than satisfactory and is often good. In particular, older pupils are supported through homework in developing the organisational and independent study skills which they will need on transfer to secondary school.

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

26. The school provides its pupils with an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum, covering the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education. A good balance has been struck between the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the wider curriculum. The governing body has given appropriate importance to the achievement and maintenance of this broad and balanced curriculum.

The timings of assemblies and morning break have been recently adjusted very successfully to make more efficient and effective use of time.

27. The under-fives experience a balanced curriculum which enables almost all to achieve and many to exceed the government's desirable learning outcomes for five year olds. Their curriculum is planned with considerable flair and imagination. This contributes to the enthusiasm with which the children in this class approach their learning. An outstanding example was the teaching of the children's language and literacy skills within a scenario consisting of a magic ticket for a ride on a magic carpet. The children were enthralled by this highly effective teaching and curriculum planning which engaged very successfully with the imagination of the five year old. The breadth of the curriculum for the under-fives is good overall but is limited by the absence of adequate large play and construction equipment, linked to the lack of covered outdoor space.

28. The school has taken appropriate account of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy in its curriculum. This has had a good impact on standards. Following an analysis of the results of the 1999 national tests for English, the amount of time devoted to the teaching of writing has been extended. This has led to a good increase in the rate of progress in pupils' writing and has raised standards. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils are grouped by attainment for mathematics lessons. This has also made a good impact on standards by enabling the teachers to focus on a relatively narrow range of attainment in each group. Inspectors frequently found very good teaching under this arrangement.

29. The overall planning of the curriculum is satisfactory. This represents improvement since the last inspection when the lack of appropriate curriculum planning was a key issue for action. The teachers make sound use of the planning guidance in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and good use of the planning guidance for other subjects provided by the government's Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

30. All pupils have equal access to the school's curriculum. The curriculum provision for the pupils with special educational needs - all of whom are at Key Stage 2 - is good. This contributes to their good progress. The weaknesses in the individual education plans for these children identified by the last inspection have been successfully tackled.

31. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. All year groups experience a well co-ordinated and planned programme which includes education on the dangers of misuse of drugs, and sex education for the oldest pupils.

32. The curriculum is enriched by a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities, including musical and sporting activities and gardening. The provision for sports activities is good, with good uptake by the pupils. The contribution of links with the community to the children's learning and the school's links with other educational institutions are satisfactory. The vicar is a regular visitor to the school, providing very good support for religious education and the pupils' spiritual development. There are good links with the local pre-school playgroup and the local secondary school. Year 6 pupils have a successful residential experience on the Isle of Wight, and there are visits to local historic buildings.

33. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. The school nurtures very positive, supportive relationships among the pupils, who respond well. Pupils are encouraged to distinguish right from wrong and are provided with very good opportunities to tackle moral issues, such as racism and anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany and environmental pollution. Moral themes and questions such as making the most of your talents form the focus of school and class

assemblies. Religious education lessons enable children to understand the spiritual and cultural perspectives of a range of major faith communities represented in Britain. Lessons in art, music, history, geography, design and technology and English successfully introduce the children to aspects of their own and others' cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. As reported at the time of the last inspection the school takes very good steps to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school successfully establishes an ethos of care and concern for all pupils. All staff, teachers, support assistants, midday supervisors and administrative staff make a significant contribution to caring for the pupils. The school provides pupils with a safe and secure environment that supports their education. The teachers know the pupils very well and are able to monitor personal development both informally and formally through the records of achievement system. Academic assessment procedures are very good. Very detailed records are kept on the academic and personal development of each child. The headteacher and teaching staff have put in place very effective systems for tracking the pupils' attainment and progress. These arrangements are used very well to identify and analyse how different groups of children are performing, e.g. boys and girls. The information is also used very effectively to identify whether any changes to the curriculum are necessary. This has led to the increase in curriculum time for writing, which has successfully pushed up standards.

35. The school successfully identifies those pupils who would benefit from additional support in literacy and numeracy. The school has invested in additional teaching staff for this purpose. As a result, the standards of these children have been raised. Class targets are set for pupils and each child is asked annually to reflect on their work and set personal targets. As the school is aware, it is yet to extend the target-setting process so that each pupil has shorter term goals, which can be regularly reviewed and renegotiated. The special educational needs co-ordinator has established effective arrangements for assessing and planning for pupils with special educational needs with the help of learning support teachers from the local authority. Reviews of progress are held every term and this ensures that the planned programmes are well matched to the pupils needs. This means that they are being effectively challenged and achieving success. However, the targets set by the local authority for the pupil with a statement of special educational need are neither specific nor measurable. This is a weakness and does not comply with the school's effective procedures for pupils with special educational needs.

36. There is a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes guidance on drugs and sex education and is delivered through "circle time" and PSHE and science lessons. The subject co-ordinator provides strong leadership and support for staff so that PSHE is taught confidently in all year groups. The pupils enjoy and value their PSHE lessons. Wycombe Rangers worked with Year 5 pupils to clear the stream when they studied healthy lifestyles, contributing well to the pupils' social and environmental education.

37. The school has adopted the local authority health and safety policy and from it produced its own policy statement. Fire practices take place appropriately and are recorded, and the school's health and safety representative makes regular risk assessments of the site. Staff are vigilant regarding health and safety matters, with suitable arrangements in place for first aid. There are staff with the required first aid qualifications. The school has very good arrangements in place for child protection issues. The Year 2 teacher is the named responsible person and has been specifically trained for this role. Other teachers have received training in child protection issues from the education

welfare service.

38. The secretary monitors the attendance registers every day and any instances of unexplained absence are promptly followed up. Registers are taken briskly at the start of morning and afternoon sessions and this ensures a prompt start to lessons. The school receives support from the educational welfare officer and has very good procedures in place to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and punctually.

39. There are very good procedures for encouraging good behaviour. The school has a very good discipline policy, which includes a system of rewards and sanctions, and it is implemented consistently by teachers to ensure that pupils behave well. Good behaviour and effort are rewarded through praise, photographs on the Star display board and the Celebration assemblies. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all parents feel their children like school and that the school is helping them become mature and responsible.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The school has a good partnership with parents. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire many parents and carers indicate that they have positive views of the school. Ninety three per cent feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The school uses a number of ways to inform parents about the progress their children are making. Each half term parents are invited to view their child's work in school and there are three formal parent/teacher consultations during the year. Teachers keep logs of pupils' progress and targets that have been discussed at the spring consultations. The headteacher and teachers are also willing to meet parents at other times. Parents are fully involved in the termly reviews of progress for pupils with special educational needs.

41. The quality of the annual reports to parents has improved since the last inspection. They provide information about pupils' progress with grades for effort and achievement and give some indication on how pupils could improve their performance, particularly in English. An opportunity is provided for parents to discuss the reports with the teachers. Overall, the inspection team disagrees with the view of a number of parents who feel they are not kept well informed about how their children are getting on.

42. According to the response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a significant number of parents are not satisfied with the work their children are expected to do at home. However, the inspection team judges that appropriate homework is set regularly to support the curriculum effectively and develop pupils' independent learning skills. Guidance is provided for parents on how they can support their children's learning at home. Homework and reading diaries are used by some parents as a useful means of communicating with teachers. The good help that many parents give to their children with reading is a valuable asset to the school.

43. Newsletters are sent out every month and keep parents up to date with the day-to-day life of the school and a significant amount of additional information is produced on the termly curriculum. Information evenings have been held on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and Key Stage 1 and 2 assessment tests. Parents are also invited to sports days, book fairs and assemblies. Through the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), parents are very supportive of the school. A variety of social and fund-raising events are held, including the Christmas bazaar and an art show, and funds have been used to buy ICT equipment, a music system and new bark for the adventure playground. The PTA is

valued by the school and invited to attend the initial planning of the school development plan. Overall, the impact of parents' involvement with the work of the school and their children's learning is good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The overall leadership and management of the school are good. There are clear links between management decisions and actions and the improvements in standards and provision since the last inspection. The headteacher, deputy head, subject leaders and governors work together effectively as a team to monitor and evaluate the school's performance and plan for improvement. There is a strong commitment to improvement and very good capacity to succeed. The good improvement in the school since the last inspection, particularly the improved teaching, owes much to the good leadership and management. Despite being found to be 'good' by the last inspection, leadership and management have clearly improved since that time.

45. The school has a broad set of aims relating to the pupils' academic, social and personal development. These aims are well reflected in all aspects of the life of the school. Good management decisions to increase curriculum time for writing and to enhance teachers' abilities to implement the National Numeracy Strategy have enabled the school to meet its revised targets for the attainment of Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics.

46. The headteacher ensures that there is clear strategic direction for the school. Working in a relationship of strong teamwork with the staff, there is a secure collective understanding of what is working well in the school and what needs to be improved. This is achieved through the very good professional dialogue that takes place amongst all the staff, both formally and informally, and through the very thorough and accurate tracking of the pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher and teachers know what actions are necessary to improve the school.

47. This understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement is not, however, translated into an effective school improvement plan. The current document contains too many priority areas to be an effective tool for raising standards. It does not provide a sharp focus on a small number of the most important changes that will make the most difference to the quality of provision and the pupils' achievements. In addition, the plan does not provide a basis for measuring the success of actions taken in terms of their impact on pupils' standards and in relation to the principles of best value.

48. The school has successfully established the role of the subject leader for each National Curriculum subject, religious education and personal and social education as one of giving strategic direction to raise standards. This role is operating well. It has been particularly successful in raising standards when the subject leader has had the opportunity to model good practice in teaching for colleagues to observe and follow. This has happened in English, mathematics, physical education and music. There is an effective long-term plan which provides time for subject leaders to observe teaching, sample pupils' work and pull together a picture of the pupils' standards and achievement in each subject.

49. The work of the governing body is good. The governors form an integral part of the school team. They are well informed about the work of the school and its performance. They provide very good support to the staff and children. There is an appropriate committee structure and cycle of meetings. The governors have agreed good arrangements with the headteacher and staff to be appropriately involved in monitoring how well the pupils are learning and the quality of education provided. Given the

weaknesses in the school development plan, the governors do not have completely satisfactory arrangements for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of key spending decisions and their impact on the pupils' standards. Financial planning is insufficiently related to focused educational priorities. The school development plan is not fully costed. Nevertheless, the governors hold appropriate discussions with the headteacher and other key staff about the best use of funds to support school improvement, and they ask questions about the impact of spending decisions. They have secure knowledge of the state of the school's finances and exercise prudent caution in spending decisions. Given the well above average standards, the good achievement of the pupils, the good teaching and the close to average costs, the school gives good value for money.

50. The school's arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its performance are good. This represents significant improvement from the time of the last inspection when these arrangements were only recently in place. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is good. Teaching is observed regularly by the headteacher and subject leaders. There is a very good system of regularly monitoring the work of six pupils in each year group, representing the range of attainment. This involves using the very good assessment book system in which the work of each child across the curriculum is recorded at regular intervals. This enables teachers to keep close track of pupils' progress. Standardised tests are also used throughout the school to support the tracking of progress and attainment. This data is also used very well to evaluate the school's success in enabling the pupils to build on their prior attainment as they move through the school, i.e. the school's added value.

51. The school provides all its pupils with equal opportunity to learn and to achieve, with the current exception of pupils in Year 1, who achieve at a slower rate than other year groups. This is due to weaknesses in teaching.

52. The school has an appropriate number of teaching staff to meet curriculum requirements. With the exception of Year 1, the teaching staff are appropriately qualified to meet the teaching and management demands of the curriculum. The school has taken satisfactory steps to establish the government's new arrangements for the performance management of teachers. The significant proportion of part-time teaching staff benefits the school by providing a wide range of subject expertise.

53. The school's accommodation is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The reception class accommodation has improved, although it still lacks covered outdoor space, and the school has recently set up a computer suite, which is also used for design and technology. This accommodation and its computer facilities were seen being put to good use during the inspection with a positive impact on the pupils' learning in ICT, English and history. The accommodation for Year 2 is a wide corridor space with several points of entry and exit. While it has been turned into an attractive area for teaching and learning, it is not possible to avoid occasional intrusions into the area as staff and children need to reach other parts of the school. Fortunately, the Department for Education and Employment has agreed to provide the school with a new classroom in the near future. External facilities are very good and are very well used.

54. The overall quality of the school's learning resources is good. This represents improvement since the last inspection when resources were found to be unsatisfactory in history, geography, music, physical education and personal and social education. These weaknesses have been tackled successfully.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) **Improve the rate of achievement of pupils in Year 1 by :**

- improving the quality of teaching.

(See paragraphs 4, 11, 16, 51, 52, 70, and 76).

(2) Improve the school development plan as a tool for raising standards and as a basis for measuring the cost-effectiveness of spending decisions by:

- focusing attention on a small, manageable number of key priorities for raising standards;
- costing each key action and the overall plan more fully;
- more focused evaluation of the impact of key spending decisions on pupils' standards.

(See paragraphs 47 and 49)

(3) Improve the marking of pupils' work by ensuring:

- all teachers implement the school's good marking policy;
- marking gives pupils pointers as to how they can improve their standards.

(See paragraphs 23, 77, 90, 104, 109 and 129).

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- the opportunities given to the oldest pupils for challenging, extended writing tasks across the curriculum; (see paragraphs 8, 68, 101, 107 and 127)
- the standards of the oldest pupils in aspects of geography; (see paragraph 101)
- improving the use of assessment by teachers to plan the next stage of teaching, including how work will be matched to the needs of pupils of differing attainment; (see paragraphs 23 and 77)
- implementing plans to agree shorter-term targets for improvement with each pupil. (see paragraphs 23 and 35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	19	40	27	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		195
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	27	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (92)	97 (92)	100 (89)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	28	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (92)	100 (89)	100 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	19	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	6	8
	Girls	16	14	16
	Total	23	20	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (78)	71 (70)	86 (82)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	24	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (74)	86 (70)	86 (74)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	191
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	41.25

Exclusions in the last school year

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

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	287742
Total expenditure	291816
Expenditure per pupil	1452
Balance brought forward from previous year	11424
Balance carried forward to next year	7350

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	195
Number of questionnaires returned	108

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	47	12	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	52	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	44	18	3	2
The teaching is good.	45	44	3	3	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	54	15	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	35	3	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	42	6	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	27	56	13	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	45	44	3	5	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	44	2	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	50	18	5	11

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE

CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. The provision for the under fives at the last inspection was reported to be good and it remains so.

56. Children enter the reception class in the September before they are five. The oldest children, that is, those who will be five by the end of December, attend full-time, while the others attend mornings only. Children start attending full-time at the start of the term in which they become five. Virtually all of the children have pre-school experience. They enter school with a range of abilities which overall are above those expected for this age. At the time of the inspection there were only four children under five. During their reception year children achieve well, and by the age of five, they easily achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes, with the majority of children working within the early stages of the National Curriculum.

Personal and Social development

57. Children make good progress in their personal and social development and, by the age of five, attainment in this area of learning is well above what is expected nationally for this age. The children know the routines of the class well, and are clear about what is right and wrong. They are happy to come to school, and settle to activities quickly with the minimum of fuss. All children behave well, are polite, saying 'excuse me' and 'thank you', and respond positively to the teacher's high expectations, and to the caring ethos of the class. They develop very good relationships with one another and with the adults in the class. They persevere well on the task, become confident, and develop a good degree of independence. They set out their own equipment, and tidy up efficiently after themselves. They learn to share and take turns, for example when playing a number game. They learn to play co-operatively together. For example, during activity time they help each other set out the café, and amicably share the roles of customer and waiter. During snack time they pour their own drinks, and readily act as class monitors. They confidently change their clothes for physical education lessons, and place their clothes neatly on their chairs. They develop good levels of concentration, and are interested in their learning. They move between activities sensibly, and treat equipment with respect, for example returning equipment to the correct boxes when they have finished with it. The children learn good work habits, and can work well independently or with other adults. They are keen, interested and eager to please, and achievement is good in relation to their attainment on entry.

58. Although there are no specific plans for this area of learning, many opportunities are provided for the children to develop their personal and social skills. Teaching in this area of learning is good, and takes place continually through the daily routines. The adults are good role models, and have consistently high expectations of behaviour. They know their children well, and respond to their individual needs. Good opportunities are provided to develop the children's independence throughout the day, when the children are expected to make their own guided choices, find their own equipment and show an awareness of the needs of others.

Language and Literacy

59. During the reception year, children achieve well in relation to their attainment when they enter school, and by the age of five attain standards that are well above average. The vast majority of the children easily attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes, and are introduced to the early stages of the National Curriculum when they are ready. Their speaking and listening skills are well developed, and the majority are able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly, with a good grasp of vocabulary. They learn to sit for long periods on the carpet during whole class sessions, listening well to contributions of others. They become totally absorbed when talking about the 'Magic Carpet', and use their imagination well when describing what they see during the magic carpet ride. They enjoy books, and even the youngest children can identify simple, repeated key words in their reading books. The higher-attaining children are reading simple texts accurately and fluently with clear understanding of the story. By the age of five, the children can all write their names and know the letter names and their sounds. The higher-attaining children are beginning to write independently, and have a clear understanding of writing for a purpose. They can successfully sequence pictures and sentences to tell a story. For example they write the correct sequence of what the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar' eats.

60. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. The teacher introduces the literacy strategy appropriately during the final reception term so that the children are well prepared for transfer to Year 1. The teacher uses every opportunity to enhance and develop the children's vocabulary. The children are set interesting activities to stimulate and encourage them to write and talk. For example a message received with the return of the 'Magic Carpet' required the children to record in a magic book their experiences while going for a ride on the carpet. The whole fantasy of the 'Magic Carpet' ride so motivated the children that they were all extremely involved, and keen to record their experiences. This had a very positive impact on the learning of the children, and also provided an excellent opportunity to develop the children's spiritual awareness. The teaching of reading is continuously developed, and the children are expected to take their reading books home every night to share with their parents. This early emphasis on the acquisition of reading skills, and the daily practice given, ensure that the children make good gains in their learning.

Mathematics

61. On entry into the reception, attainment is above the national expectation. The children make sound progress in the development of their number work, and by the time they are five their attainment is above the national expectation, and they are working well within the early stages of the National Curriculum. The children can count and order numbers correctly to at least 20, and recognise simple two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Many children know their numbers to 100. They recognise coins, and can add coins to 10 pence. They can quickly calculate one more than and one less than. They know the terms 'shorter' and 'longer' than, 'heavier' than, and 'more or less' than, and can anticipate how many are left when one or two are taken away. The higher-attaining pupils can solve simple addition facts to 10, and write their answers using correct mathematical symbols. They collect data when they carry out a survey of the way their shoes are fastened, and record their findings in bar charts.

62. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. Appropriate activities are set to challenge all abilities and ensure effective gains in learning. The children benefit from the structure of the numeracy hour, where their mental agility is encouraged, and strategies are taught to enable children to do simple addition and subtraction calculations. The good work

habits of the children mean the teacher can focus on a group during the numeracy hour without interruption. This has a very positive impact on the learning for that group of children. Support staff are deployed well to ensure that all children understand and complete the task.

Knowledge and understanding

63. Children enter the reception class with a variety of experiences which, as at the last inspection, are above those expected for the age. During the reception year the children make sound progress developing this knowledge and understanding, and by the age of five attainment is above average. They make sensible predictions as to what items will float or sink, based on their knowledge of 'heavy' and 'light', and recognise that some materials are transparent while others do not let the light through. They effectively test things around the classroom to see if they are attracted to a magnet, and sort them into magnetic and non-magnetic sets. They learn about letters and the work of the postman, and their learning is enhanced by a visit from Postman Pat and a post-lady. The children know the different ways we can travel, and some children can name the countries of the British Isles. The children use the computer to type their names, and type tickets for the 'Magic Carpet ride'. They have well-developed computer mouse skills and can choose their program unaided. Most children have computers at home, but opportunities are given in school for the children to practise their skills. Given their attainment on entry, achievement is satisfactory.

64. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is sound. The teacher uses all situations to widen the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, she used the snowstorm that two children had made well, to make the children think about what was happening. Skilful questioning enabled the children to decide on alternative materials to use to improve the model. A wide variety of activities is offered to the children to enhance their learning in the classroom, and a series of visits to such places as the woods, where the children look for minibeasts, ensures that the children make positive gains in their learning. However, there are missed opportunities for the higher-attaining children to record their findings when carrying out a scientific investigation.

Creative development

65. The children have well-developed skills when they enter school, and their positive attitudes to creative work result in sound gains in their learning, and by the age of five the children have attained standards above those expected for this age. The children use paint well to paint pictures of different vehicles, and underwater scenes. Their painting skills are well developed, and they paint accurately using primary colours. They use scissors and glue competently to make models from recycled materials, and cut and stick a range of materials to make colourful collages. They use pencils and felt pens effectively to draw what they saw on their magic carpet ride. The children use their imagination well to produce these creative drawings, but respond equally positively to a teacher-directed activity such as painting rainbows.

Physical development

66. The majority of children enter school with above average ability and make good progress in the reception class, so that by the age of five they attain standards well above those typical for this age. Physical education lessons are planned weekly, when the children use the school hall and apparatus. During these lessons the children run and jump and roll, using the space well, and have a good awareness of others. They climb ladders and ropes, jump on and off low benches with due attention to the quality of the landing.

They show considerable dexterity when handling a range of small tools such as scissors, spreaders, brushes and pens. They confidently manipulate a variety of small construction pieces to make a variety of models. Given their attainment on entry, achievement is good in this area of learning.

67. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Good opportunities are given in physical education lessons for the children to enhance their physical development by offering them a range of activities that present appropriate challenges. Emphasis is put on the quality of movement, which means that the children really try hard to achieve the standards required by the teacher and this has a very positive impact on learning. The hard surface outside area for the under fives is small, and at the moment limits opportunities to practise skills learned in lessons in a less formal situation. Children have limited opportunities to use ride-on toys to further develop their abilities.

ENGLISH

68. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are well above average. This is an improvement upon the findings of the last inspection. In the national 1999 tests, results show that 82 per cent of pupils reached the national average in English, with 46 per cent achieving above expectations. This is well above the national average and also well above average when compared with schools in similar contexts. This year's teacher assessments indicate that 90 per cent will reach the national average, with 25 per cent achieving above. The inspection evidence supports this assessment. However, inspectors identified that higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 do not fulfil their capabilities in writing due to the lack of appropriate opportunities for extended writing.

69. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, the school achieved test results in writing well above the national average, including the proportion achieving above the national expectation. For reading, the results were well above the national average for the proportion reaching the national expectation and above average for those achieving a higher level. These results are well above average when compared with schools in similar contexts. National test results for 2000 show that all Year 2 pupils have reached the national expectation for reading and writing. Forty-three per cent have achieved above the national expectation in reading and 23 per cent in writing.

70. The inspection evidence largely confirms the picture drawn from the national test results. Overall, these results represent good achievement at both key stages, including achievement by those pupils with special educational needs. However, pupils in Year 1 make unsatisfactory progress, largely due to staffing changes during the year and weaknesses in teaching. In Year 2 the progress of higher-attaining pupils is good, of average pupils very good and for below average pupils excellent after overall unsatisfactory progress during the previous year.

71. Achievement at Key Stage 2 is good rather than just satisfactory, despite similarly well above average standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because there are changes in pupil population at Key Stage 2. Several pupils regularly join the school after Key Stage 1 whose standards are often below average for the school. Some are identified as having special educational needs. They achieve very well, and by the time they leave the school almost all achieve the national expectation. A detailed analysis of results from year to year (using the school's data from optional Year 3, 4 and 5 tests, as well as the pupils' work throughout the year) reveals that there is very good progress in Year 3 and Year 5. In Years 4 and 6, there is good progress for average and below average pupils. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress but they could do better in their writing in

Year 6. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is enhanced by the implementation of the Additional Literacy Strategy in Years 3, 4 and 5. There is no significant difference in the progress or attainment of boys and girls.

72. The impact of the school's teaching of the National Literacy Strategy on standards has been good, especially on improvements in the pupils' spelling. The school is aware of the need to find ways to develop extended writing at the top end of Key Stage 2. Other subjects in the curriculum contribute significantly to the development of literacy, especially ICT, history, geography, religious education, design and technology and to a lesser extent, science, mathematics, art and music. However, not enough is made of the opportunities provided in history, geography and religious education to develop the extended writing skills of the oldest pupils.

73. By the end of Key Stage 1, the speaking and listening skills of pupils are well above average. The pupils listen very attentively to the teacher and to each other in the literacy sessions and in other subjects, for example, when Year 2 share ideas about a poem they are about to write. They express themselves confidently and clearly in front of the class. Pupils in the reception class talk clearly about the special tickets they have chosen to write about and about the fish they are feeding. In Year 1, able pupils can explain clearly how they are finding out facts about polar bears from non-fiction texts.

74. By the end of Key Stage 2, speaking and listening skills continue to be well above average. Year 3 pupils across the attainment range can clearly explain the plot of their group reader, 'The sandman and the turtles', expressing opinions and preferences. In Year 4, pupils of all abilities can talk about their writing on rhyming couplets and explain how a conversation poem is different from other styles such the haiku and cinquain. In Year 5 and 6, many pupils use extremely sophisticated language when discussing poetry and slang or when making their presentations to the class about their greenhouses in a mini-enterprise project. In the best lessons, there are many opportunities for pupils to give well thought out answers to the teacher's questions. The pupils invariably listen very well to each other. Their speaking and listening skills are a strength of the school.

75. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' standards in reading are well above the national average. In Year 2, pupils choose challenging texts and read with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Their attitudes to books are very good, in all cases reading daily at home. All abilities have a range of strategies for reading, although some average pupils do not always self-correct when their reading does not make sense. They are able to discuss books, explain what they have read and talk about new words. Their knowledge about different authors and genres is very good. All Year 2 pupils can explain the difference between non-fiction and fiction, can correctly use a contents page and index to focus their search in books about the human body and some are able to suggest questions which might be answered by reading the book. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading are also well above average. In Year 6, even below average pupils are reading demanding texts with confidence, are able to discuss their reading preferences and show a high level of knowledge about the use of non-fiction texts to find information. They demonstrate good ability to skim and scan for answers and to pick out the salient points in a text. They can also interpret information in the light of other knowledge.

76. In writing, pupils attain well above average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils work individually or in pairs to write poems in a particular style. They have the skills and vocabulary to be able to extend this activity and bring imagination and invention to the task to make their poems interesting, lively and powerful. They enjoy reading them out with expression to the rest of the class. All pupils in Year 2 can write in a

legible, neat, joined script. They can spell most simple and monosyllabic words correctly and make plausible attempts at more demanding vocabulary. They show very good understanding of the features of non-fiction in their information books about animals which they have researched themselves. The writing of all the pupils in Year 2 at least meets national expectations with nearly a quarter exceeding them. Reception class pupils demonstrate the confidence to have a go at writing about different tickets in connection with their magic carpet story. They demonstrate lots of knowledge about sounds and letters. Year 1 pupils have made unsatisfactory progress in writing due to weaknesses in teaching. At Key Stage 2, overall progress in writing is good. Pupils make very good progress in Year 3 and Year 5. In Year 3, pupils write expressive poems about a train journey changing the setting from the poem read by the teacher. In Year 5, they are stimulated by an extract from Shakespeare to write about one of the seven ages of man and write in powerful and moving language. In Year 4 and 6, progress for the more able pupils could be better. Although able pupils demonstrate writing at higher levels of achievement, there are insufficient opportunities for them to do so in lessons and some activities for these pupils are insufficiently demanding. The school has identified this weakness. As a result, more time has been devoted to extended writing and writing standards are regularly monitored.

77. Overall the quality of teaching is good, including the teaching of the basic skills of literacy. Teaching was never less than satisfactory in lessons observed and was very good in over a quarter of lessons. This good teaching has had a positive impact upon the pupils' spelling, which is now very good and much improved since the last inspection. The teachers' subject knowledge is good. Other features of good lessons are brisk pace, challenging questions, expressive and dramatic reading of literature, a sense of humour and good use of the pupils' ideas. These strengths stimulate strong intellectual engagement and enthusiasm from the pupils. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher's brisk pace, sense of urgency and challenging questioning led to very good learning about Shakespeare's Seven Ages of Man. In a Year 3 lesson, the good focused planning with clear objectives and effective pupil grouping arrangements contributed much to the very good learning that took place in work on sound poems. The absence of this quality of planning of learning objectives and of grouping arrangements is a feature of teaching that is no better than satisfactory. The marking of the pupils' work is inconsistent in quality. Much of it does not inform the pupil how standards can be improved.

78. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. In Years 3, 4 and 5 small groups of pupils benefit from the programme of Additional Literacy Support with the help of an effective assistant. Useful records of progress, achievements and points of difficulty are kept. Pupils in these groups have made good progress and the work is well matched to their needs. Other pupils receive individual support outside the class two or three times a week from another assistant who also has a positive impact upon these pupils' learning. The progress of these pupils is good.

79. The leadership of English and literacy is good. Good improvements have been made in resources for the Literacy Hour across the school. The subject leader has ensured that teachers have studied the nationally provided training. The monitoring and evaluation of standards, pupils' achievement and teaching quality are good. The priority given to raising standards in spelling and the extended writing of the oldest pupils is very appropriate. The subject leader has also been aware of the need to move pupils on rapidly through Year 2 because of the underachievement in Year 1. The Literacy Governor also knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well through regular visits and discussions with the subject leader.

MATHEMATICS

80. Attainment at the end of both key stages is well above average for all aspects of mathematics. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be above average. Progress across Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, and achievement is sound in relation to the pupils' prior attainment. The pupils' achievement at Key Stage 2 in relation to their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is good overall, as pupils make very good progress in Years 5 and 6 as a result of the high quality teaching. There is a number of pupils with special educational needs who, in spite of their difficulties, attain in line with their peers. A number of late entries into Key Stage 2, with lower attainment than their peers, achieve very well as a result of the very good teaching. These factors explain why there is good, rather than satisfactory, achievement in Key Stage 2. The implementation of the numeracy hour has had a very positive impact on numeracy skills through the school. All pupils are developing good, quick mental recall of number. Calculation and problem-solving strategies are explained well by the teachers, and this has improved pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject.

81. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, the proportion reaching the national expectation was above average, and the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was well above the national figure. Compared with schools where pupils had similar prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, results were above average. Compared with schools where the proportion eligible for free school meals is similar, attainment was average. There has been a steady improvement in standards during the last three years. At the end of Key Stage 1, results for 1999 were very high. The school's results for 2000 are as high as the previous year and inspection evidence confirms these high standards. Standards have improved over the past three years, with a substantial improvement in 1999.

82. At Key Stage 1, the achievement of almost all pupils is good. However, the rate of achievement varies according to year group, linked to variations in teaching quality. The five year olds in reception make good progress. Progress is satisfactory in Year 1 and very good in Year 2. The vast majority of Year 1 pupils know even numbers to 100, and can make a repeated pattern with shapes. They measure using non-standard units, and recognise the time in hours. Year 2 pupils have a very good grasp of number for their age, and can order numbers accurately to 100. They have a clear understanding of place value, with the higher-attaining pupils working with four digit numbers. They can make the smallest and biggest numbers with three given digits, and they accurately measure lines using centimetres. They recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes, and can divide them in half. They use their good estimating skills and understanding of angles to programme a 'Pixie' to travel from dot to dot around the floor. From Year 2 to Year 4, pupils have regular opportunities to use a mathematics program on computer, which successfully develops their computation skills.

83. The good rate of achievement in relation to prior attainment continues at Key Stage 2. Several pupils join the school beyond Key Stage 1 each year. Their attainment is often below average for the school with some being identified with special educational needs. Many of these pupils make very good progress due to the frequently very good teaching. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in two groups according to their attainment, which ensures that sufficient challenge is given to the higher-attaining pupils, and that those pupils who need more reassurance receive it and become more confident. This arrangement contributes to the very good progress in these two year groups. At the end of the key stage, the vast majority of the oldest pupils can solve linear equations, and are confident using algebra. The higher-attaining pupils use their algebraic knowledge well to solve simultaneous equations, and use formulae effectively to find the diameter and

circumference of a circle. They all have very good mental recall of number, solving complicated problems accurately in their heads using all four rules of number. In Year 3 pupils consolidate and extend their learning from Year 2. They competently find multiples of numbers, and recognise patterns to help them. For example, they know that numbers that are multiples of 10 end in zero, and that multiples of two are always even numbers. In Year 4 this knowledge is effectively extended when pupils find all the prime numbers between one and 100.

84. The teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is good overall and even better in half the lessons. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teaching is variable at Key Stage 1 and includes very good teaching in Year 2. This teaching presents the pupils with challenging activities that successfully build on prior learning, and sets a brisk pace to the lesson. The teacher's infectious enthusiasm for the subject is passed on to the pupils who enjoy the challenge set, and want to succeed. The teaching that is no better than satisfactory has a slower pace, and activities do not sufficiently challenge some of the most able pupils. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is rarely less than good, with some very good, and some excellent teaching. Good use is made of the considerable talents of the subject leader who teaches Years 4 and 6. He has excellent subject knowledge and develops the pupils' mathematical abilities at an impressive rate. Interesting and appropriately challenging activities are set for all pupils, and there is a constant emphasis on improving standards. In other very good lessons, the pupils respond well to the lively challenging style of the teaching. All lessons are well planned according to the national numeracy strategy. Work is always appropriately matched to the pupils' abilities, and all tasks are suitably challenging. Younger pupils demonstrate considerable responsibility, motivation and independence when using computers during non-lesson time to develop their mathematics skills.

85. There is strong leadership for the subject. The subject leader has considerable expertise in mathematics teaching and has been a role model of good practice for colleagues in his own and other schools to observe. The school's numeracy strategy is well implemented, and is having a strong impact on the pupils' understanding of the mental strategies involved in performing calculations. The monitoring and evaluation of the pupils' standards and achievements and the teaching of mathematics are good. Assessment procedures are good, and teachers have a clear picture of what their pupils know and understand. Appropriate targets are set to improve standards. Numeracy skills are widely used in other subjects, such as science, where pupils use graphs to record observations, in geography, history, ICT and in design and technology, where numeracy skills of calculating money are well used. Resources for the subject are now good, which is an improvement since the last report.

SCIENCE

86. By the end of both key stages attainment is well above average for all aspects of science. This represents an improvement in standards since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2. In the national assessment tests for eleven year olds in 1999, attainment was close to the expected average, but the number of pupils attaining at the higher level was below average. Compared with similar schools where pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was similar, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was close to average. Compared with schools with a similar proportion eligible for free school meals, attainment was well below the average. Inspection evidence suggests that performance in the current tests will be much higher than last year. This is a considerable improvement in standards since the last inspection. This is as a direct result of the good focused teaching throughout the key stage, and the very good teacher expertise at the top end of the school.

Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 reported standards to be well above the expected average. Teacher assessment results for 2000 year match those for 1999. The inspection evidence supports this picture.

87. The pupils' achievement at Key Stage 1 is good overall. By the age of five, the vast majority of pupils have above average attainment. Almost all make good progress during Key Stage 1 and standards are well above average by the time the pupils are seven. The rate of progress varies with variable quality of teaching. The pupils' achievement at Key Stage 2 is good. This is due in large part to the good teacher expertise at the top end of the school, and the challenging activities set, which give pupils good opportunities to investigate for themselves. The improving trend in standards at Key Stage 2 represents good achievement throughout the key stage. There has been an overall steady upward trend in attainment, particularly in Key Stage 2, over the past three years.

88. At Key Stage 1, almost all pupils achieve the nationally expected standard across all aspects of science, including scientific investigation. Pupils in Year 1 explore pushing and pulling forces in their toys, while pupils in Year 2 investigate the properties of materials, and classify objects as to whether they are natural or unnatural. They are beginning to relate the properties of materials to their use. For example, plastic is good for a chair as it is hard. Pupils in Year 2 explore habitats and observe the life cycle of the frog at a level of knowledge and understanding that is well above average. They plant seeds and watch them grow. They learn about the dangers of medicines and about healthy eating.

89. At Key Stage 2, almost all pupils continue to build successfully on the knowledge gained in Key Stage 1. Almost all reach the expected standard for their age and a significant minority achieve higher than this. In Year 3, pupils investigate the properties of materials further, and decide whether materials are opaque, transparent or translucent. Pupils in Year 4 develop their understanding of forces when investigating friction, and use a force-meter to measure in newtons. They learn about the skeleton, and use their previous knowledge of processes to successfully separate mixtures by using dissolving, sieving, and the use of a magnet. Pupils in Year 5 learn about the life cycle of a plant, and are beginning to understand the functions of the different parts of the flower. The oldest pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test, and can identify the variables involved. They successfully apply their former learning to current problems, and make sensible predictions based on scientific understanding. Pupils identified with special educational needs at Key Stage 2 do the same activities as their peers, and make similar progress, as additional help is given by the class teacher to aid their recording.

90. Almost all pupils throughout the school approach science lessons with high levels of interest and enthusiasm. These good attitudes to learning have a very positive impact on the progress that pupils make. The overall quality of teaching is good, and it was very good in a quarter of lessons observed. It is stronger at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1, where one lesson was unsatisfactory due to a lack of adequate challenge and appropriate subject content. In the better lessons at Key Stage 1, the pupils' prior knowledge is extended, and new knowledge gained. These lessons have a very clear focus and expectations are high. The pupils are given plenty of opportunities to contribute their thoughts and ideas, which are then extended and developed, having a very positive impact on learning. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is never less than good, with some very good teaching at the top end of the school. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, set the pupils challenging and interesting tasks, and provide many opportunities for the pupils to develop the investigative strand of the subject. Teachers use questioning well to ensure that pupils understand new concepts, and this has a positive impact on the learning. The lively pace and enthusiastic approach to lessons ensure that pupils are thoroughly involved with the task and want to

learn. The emphasis on the use of technical language results in pupils having a clear understanding of terms. There are many opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in recording of experiments and describing their observations, but the format used is often prescribed by the teacher, and does not give scope for pupil choice. Good use is made of the pupils' numeracy skills when recording results in charts and graphs. The older pupils are able to look at these charts and tables, and come to general conclusions about what they have found out. The oldest pupils are encouraged to use spreadsheets to examine results, and this has a positive impact on their use of computers. The marking of the pupils' work does not regularly indicate to the pupil how standards could be improved.

91. The leadership of the subject is very good. The enthusiasm for science of the subject leader and her successful leadership qualities have done much to raise the profile of the subject in the school. There is a clear direction for the subject, with an appropriate emphasis on the raising of standards. The teaching is well monitored and appropriate action is taken when necessary to improve teaching quality. The arrangements for tracking the pupils' standards and progress are very good. Although there is evidence of ICT skills being used in Key Stage 2, there are insufficient opportunities in Key Stage 1 for pupils to use computers to support their work in science.

ART

92. Only a few art lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence was gathered from the scrutiny of pupils' work displayed around the school, discussion with pupils, and examination of teachers' planning. This demonstrates that attainment of the oldest pupils is above average, and attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations. Throughout the school, pupils are given a variety of activities which successfully develop their artistic skills. At Key Stage 1, the pupils make sound progress, and at Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. Given their attainment on entry, achievement is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The good achievement at Key Stage 2 is a result of the challenging activities set for the pupils, and the progressive development of the knowledge and understanding strand of the subject throughout the key stage. The overall standards attained at the last inspection have been maintained, but the pupils' knowledge and interpretation of works of art have improved.

93. By the end of Key Stage 1, almost all pupils can use paint effectively, and explore patterns with straight lines. They cut and bend thin card to make paper sculptures of their faces, checking with a mirror to see that the features are correctly positioned. In Year 1, the pupils use paint and recycled materials to print colourful patterns. They use clay to make models of animals, and a variety of paper to make an effective collage of the 'Three Little Pigs'.

94. By the end of Key Stage 2, almost all pupils reach the expected standard for their age. Many achieve a higher standard. The study of the work of famous artists has a good impact on learning. All pupils have an understanding of different styles of painting, such as the abstract impressionist movement. They make masks to depict various emotions linked with their topic on the ancient Greeks. They sculpt imaginative futuristic models, such as a millennium bug, using a variety of different textured materials. In Year 5, pupils use colours, line and tone very effectively to express moods and feelings, and use magazine pictures to make expressive collages showing various emotions. Their ability to interpret the work of Picasso, and in particular his Guernica painting, is well above the standard expected for their age. Pupils in Year 4 use watercolours and paper collage well to make representations of landscapes in the style of Cezanne. Pupils in Year 3 use paint, mixing colours well to make paintings in the style of Kandinsky.

95. In the small number of lessons observed, the teaching was never less than satisfactory and there were features that were good. Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge, and provide interesting and challenging activities for the pupils. The teaching builds successfully on the pupils' enthusiasm for art and the pride that they take in their work. Lessons contain a good balance of teacher-directed activities, and opportunities for pupils to use their imagination, and to express their moods and feelings. Examination of teachers' planning shows that a range of activities is planned to develop the full art curriculum.

96. The headteacher manages the subject at present. She has considerable subject knowledge, and helps and advises the staff. The school has a scheme of work that ensures all the elements of the subject are covered, and assessment sheets for all pupils show what skills they have learned. These give a clear view of pupils' progress. Resources are generally good, but there is a lack of large prints by famous artists from a range of cultures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. Standards in the last inspection were judged to be 'above average'. This inspection found standards to be average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. However, this does not represent a decline in standards since the last inspection. Discussion with teachers, scrutiny of their planning and scrutiny of the pupils' work indicate that standards have been maintained at a broadly similar level since the last inspection. These standards represent satisfactory achievement by the pupils throughout the school.

98. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can use a range of tools, such as scissors and a needle and thread. They are familiar with a limited range of materials and can cut, measure, join and combine to make models, sculptures and puppets. They are able to suggest their own ideas in making a banner to celebrate Citizens 2000. By the end of Key Stage 2, they can work co-operatively in a mini-enterprise project to design, cost, make and evaluate a model of a greenhouse against clear design specifications. In Year 4, pupils make preliminary models of a moving page in a picture book, using levers, tabs and pop-ups. In Year 3 pupils have designed and made their own sandwiches. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the design process throughout the school. Some products, such as puppets in Year 2, purses in Year 4 and shoes in Year 6 show good attention to the quality of the finished product.

99. The teaching of design and technology is satisfactory. Teachers have a clear understanding of the design process. Where teaching is good, teachers ensure that the pupils' ideas are valued and used. Where teaching is less secure, there is too much prescription over the range of materials provided and the outcomes expected. In some lessons, there is not enough focus on the key components of design and technology. The range of materials available for the pupils to choose from is too narrow. The pupils enjoy design and technology and have very positive attitudes to planning and making products. They show considerable pride in their finished products. They co-operate extremely well; for example, in Year 6 they allocate roles such as accountant and secretary to the members of the mini-enterprise group and listen to each others' ideas.

100. The leadership of design technology is satisfactory. The current subject leader holds the responsibility under a temporary arrangement due to staffing changes. The subject has not had a high priority recently in the school, but most teachers are well supported by the scheme of work. The subject contributes well to the pupils' literacy and

numeracy. The scheme of work needs to be extended to include the electrical control of mechanisms.

GEOGRAPHY

101. The standards achieved by the oldest pupils are in line with what is expected of pupils of the same age nationally. Their knowledge and understanding of human and, particularly, physical geographical themes, such as climate and rivers, is often well above the national expectation. However, the ability of the oldest pupils to pose and investigate geographical questions and their knowledge and understanding of places are below what is expected for their age. For most older pupils, this picture represents satisfactory achievement, but many of the oldest pupils are capable of higher standards than this and their achievement is unsatisfactory. Their written work has mainly involved recording of information to the detriment of their ability to engage with geographical questions and use of the subject to improve their literacy skills.

102. Geography is an improving subject in the school. Pupils below Year 6 are making good progress and standards are rising. This is due to better planning, more informed teaching and effective guidance from the subject leader. Below Year 6, the pupils are experiencing a more balanced geography curriculum. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

103. At Key Stage 1, the vast majority of the pupils reach the standard expected for their age. They extend their geographical vocabulary through studying the area around the school, planning a trip to Legoland and through a seaside topic. Reception class children discuss different forms of transport in their topic involving the 'magic ticket' and 'Magic Carpet'. Year 1 pupils learn about the location of the Arctic and the physical conditions there, reaching a good standard for their age. Pupils develop mapping and orientation skills by giving directions on how to reach different parts of the school. They learn how to interpret conventional map symbols. At Key Stage 2, the knowledge of weather in different parts of the world of Year 3 pupils is above the level expected for their age, as demonstrated in their Holidays topic. Year 4 pupils demonstrate knowledge of different kinds of employment, related geographical vocabulary, and enquiry skills that are at least in line and, for many, above what is expected nationally for their age.

104. The teaching was never less than satisfactory and good in half the lessons seen. The teachers' good subject knowledge contributes much to the good teaching. This is a key area of improvement since the last inspection. It is contributing to the improvement in the pupils' geographical enquiry skills that is taking place through the school but which has not yet made an impact on the standards of the oldest pupils. The teachers' marking of the pupils' work is of variable quality and does not always follow the school policy by offering pupils ways in which they could improve their standards.

HISTORY

105. The standards achieved by the oldest pupils are well above those expected nationally. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when they were found to be in line with the national expectation. The main reasons for this improvement are better planning, better resources for teaching and learning and the positive impact on teaching of the good subject leadership. The pupils achieve well in history and there is a continuing trend of improvement evident in the rising standards of younger pupils.

106. Throughout the school, almost all pupils reach the standard expected nationally for

their age. Most pupils achieve a higher standard than this and many achieve standards that are high for their age, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of key features of societies and periods in the past. This represents good overall achievement.

107. The pupils demonstrate a lot of enthusiasm for history. In Year 6, pupils across the attainment range can describe in detail social changes in Britain since World War 2. They can recall significant features of life in Tudor and Victorian times and in Ancient Greece. Their chronological knowledge and understanding is well above average for their age. They can explain in detail how an historian or archaeologist might conduct an investigation into a past society. However, this good knowledge and understanding is not reflected in their written work. This is due to too many written tasks which record information rather than invite the pupils to engage with a key historical question, as an historian would. This means that, for the oldest pupils, their written work is not as good as it could be and also that opportunities to develop their literacy skills through history are being missed. This weakness is largely limited to Year 6.

108. Children at Key Stage 1 can compare toys and features of the seaside in the present with times in the past at a level expected for their age. Many Year 3 pupils have knowledge and understanding of pre-Norman invaders and settlers in Britain that is good for their age. Year 4 pupils demonstrate knowledge of Ancient Egypt that is well above what is expected for their age, including chronological knowledge. Year 5 pupils demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the background to the Second World War and the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany that is generally well above average and, for the higher attaining pupils, very high indeed.

109. The overall quality of teaching is good. In some lessons it is even better but in one lesson it was unsatisfactory. In one outstanding lesson with Year 5, the excellent subject knowledge of the teacher informed the skilful and highly challenging questioning of the pupils. Their intellectual engagement was high. The highest attaining pupils were able to make connections between political, social and cultural developments in Germany before World War 2 that were very advanced for their age. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, the history element of the lesson was too limited. Combined with the slow pace of the work, this meant that the higher attainers in particular did not achieve what they were capable of. The marking of the pupils' work does not consistently help pupils identify how they could improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. By the time pupils leave the school, standards in ICT are above average. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when, although inspection evidence was acknowledged to be limited, the pupils' progress was found to be unsatisfactory. ICT is a rapidly improving subject at the school.

111. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, the vast majority of pupils reach the nationally expected standard for their age. They can use text and graphics software, independently loading, saving, editing, and retrieving files. They use correct terminology to talk about their work. They direct a programmable robot from place to place. Pupils in reception become familiar with controlling the mouse to move pictures on the screen and with the keyboard to write their name, while in Year 1 pupils begin to word process and present information about cars in the school car park on a data-handling programme.

112. By the end of Key Stage 2, the vast majority of the pupils' develop skills in handling

and communicating information that are very good for their age. For example, in studies of Nazi persecution of the Jews, Year 5 pupils can use desk-top publishing applications to make posters or newspaper reports, importing clip art. They are able to make decisions about which applications to use to make a presentation about their design and technology mini-enterprise project. In mathematics, they present data using spreadsheets. However, there are fewer opportunities as yet for them to develop skills in controlling and modelling, although Year 4 demonstrate confidence in directing a turtle through a maze and Year 5 can write repeat procedures to make geometrical patterns using Superlogo. In Year 4, pupils are researching information about Ancient Egypt from the Internet. All Year 3 pupils can send e-mails to a school in Brighton and find out about the weather by locating and using the BBC web site.

113. The extremely high rate of ownership of ICT equipment at home, including laptops, digital cameras and scanners as well as personal computers, has a very positive impact upon the pupils' learning. The ICT suite and recently acquired access to the internet have a significant positive effect on the pupils' rates of progress.

114. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. In Year 2 teacher expertise and confidence is good. In reception, teaching does not always make full use of the available technology. At Key Stage 2, good subject knowledge and teacher confidence contribute to good teaching. ICT skills are developed across the curriculum and serve a genuine purpose. Teaching of ICT is invariably brisk and teachers have high expectations of the pupils. Pupils are expected to be independent as much as possible. Teachers make good use of the pupils to explain or to remind others of certain procedures, such as how to save a file onto disk.

115. Pupils enjoy using the computers throughout the school. When using the ICT suite they show very good co-operation when sharing a computer. They talk with excitement about their work and work with a sense of urgency and purpose. In a Year 2 lesson, there are moans of disappointment when the lesson has to come to an end. In Year 4, pupils help each other to correct mistakes using Superlogo. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils achieve a great deal of work in a short space of time when creating their presentations. Despite relatively cramped accommodation and poor acoustics, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary.

116. The leadership of ICT is good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of how ICT can be used to support teaching and learning in all curriculum areas, which is effectively communicated to the other teachers. There has been a significant improvement in teacher expertise and knowledge since the last inspection, when it was found to be weak. The subject is making a very good contribution to the pupils' literacy and numeracy. The scheme of work lacks reference to all aspects of monitoring and control, such as use of sensors, control boxes and data-logging. The co-ordinator's plans for the further development of ICT provision are entirely appropriate.

MUSIC

117. Few lessons were seen during the inspection, but evidence gained from the scrutiny of pupils' music folders, examination of teachers' planning, and discussion with pupils show that by the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils' attainment is above average. The standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, and attain the expected standards. Good progress is made in Key Stage 2 as a result of the effective use of a specialist teacher who has good subject knowledge, and the achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment is good. The oldest pupils have a

good understanding of the elements of music, such as pitch, dynamics, tempo and texture. They compose music using a range of tuned and untuned instruments, and listen to and evaluate the performance of others. They listen to a variety of different types of music, identifying the instruments used, and recognise the characteristics of different musical traditions such as 'blues', 'jazz', 'reggae', 'calypso', and 'heavy metal'. Overall they have a good knowledge and understanding of all the elements of the music curriculum. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good repertoire of songs, which they sing tunefully, using appropriate actions. They use percussion instruments to accompany their singing, and respond to the demands of a conductor promptly. They have a good sense of rhythm, clapping effectively in time to the music. They are beginning to understand the qualities of tempo, pitch, and whether the piece of music is loud or soft, and interpret symbols to achieve these effects when playing instruments.

118. The pupils enjoy music, and listen well to taped music, and the performances of their peers. Pupils in Key Stage 1 in particular enjoy the fun element of singing. Pupils throughout the school are well behaved, obedient, concentrate well, and become thoroughly involved in the lesson. These positive attitudes help to ensure that standards are above average by the time the pupils leave the school.

119. Insufficient lessons were seen to make a judgement of the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, but the teaching of the specialist teacher in Key Stage 2 is good. She has good subject expertise, and successfully motivates and challenges the pupils to perform. This results in good involvement by the pupils, and good learning therefore ensues. Each lesson is well planned with a very clear focus, and an appropriate balance of teacher input and the pupils' practical involvement. Lessons proceed at a good pace, with effective use of resources, which are easily accessible to the pupils. The teacher has high expectations of ability, and this ensures that all pupils make good progress.

120. The subject is well managed, and there is a good scheme of work that gives teachers a firm structure for their lessons. Lessons are planned according to this scheme of work, which ensures that elements are progressively developed and activities are appropriately challenging. Music is celebrated within the school, and many opportunities are given for the pupils to experience a range of music. For example a group of visitors performed an African drumming workshop for Years 5 and 6. Although there are extra curricular opportunities for playing recorders and a choir meets during other terms of the year, there was no extra-curricular music at the time of the inspection. There are good opportunities for pupils to play string and brass instruments taught by peripatetic teachers, which have a positive impact on the learning for those pupils. Resources are good and used effectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. By the time pupils leave the school standards are well above the national expectations in games, dance and athletics. It was not possible to observe any gymnastics at Key Stage 2. All pupils can swim at least 25 metres when they leave the school. The Year 6 residential trip also provides opportunities for the oldest pupils to engage in demanding outdoor pursuits such as canoeing and rock climbing. Since the last inspection standards have improved from good to very good and inadequacies in resources have been remedied.

122. Pupils in the reception class demonstrate good awareness of space, can climb, balance, jump and land off apparatus and some show ability to climb ropes. They arrive at the school with above expected levels of skills. In Year 2 all pupils are demonstrating an

ability to throw and catch a tennis ball accurately and work co-operatively to make up simple games with rules. They are making satisfactory progress.

123. At Key Stage 2, the pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. At the end of the key stage, pupils' abilities in athletics are very high and for some individuals, exceptional. They demonstrate very good co-ordination in a modified triple jump and in routines to improve their sprinting. They are able to observe and analyse the performance of others. They experience demanding field events such as shot putt and javelin. In rounders, the high level of skills overall enables a successful team game. The bowling is consistently accurate, the ball is hit regularly, fielding skills such as retrieving, throwing, catching and stumping are good. Some pupils demonstrate the ability to execute diving catches, jump catches and fierce hits with the bat. Levels of sporting behaviour are high. In a Year 6 dance lesson on 1960s styles, all pupils demonstrated a very good sense of rhythm and co-ordination in learning the Twist, the Hippy Hippy Shake and the Locomotion.

124. Teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. There are examples of excellent teaching. In a Year 6 dance lesson, the teacher makes connections between previous learning about other dance styles in brief rest periods between extremely energetic activity. Her teaching ensures that all pupils are fully engaged and highly motivated. In an athletics lesson, the teacher uses pupils to model warm-up activities to the group by setting them a problem to solve. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, clear learning objectives and are aware of the importance of teaching a progression of skills. They communicate a high level of enthusiasm. All lessons are well organised with a warm-up and cool down and a range of brisk activities focused on what they want the pupils to learn. Most teachers ensure that the more able pupils are appropriately challenged. Pupils are given responsibility for equipment; for example the reception pupils are expected to put out all the apparatus in the gymnastics lesson.

125. The pupils enjoy the lessons, sustain high levels of effort, particularly in dance, co-operate well in pairs and groups and are ready to watch and comment appreciatively on the performances of others. Their awareness of their own bodies and the quality of the teaching enable them to talk confidently about what they have to do to improve their skills, contributing to their high standards.

126. The leadership of the subject has a significant impact upon standards. There is a very detailed scheme of work for all areas of physical education with a strong focus upon the development of skills. The subject contributes well to the social and moral development of the pupils and is enhanced by good extra curricular provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. The standards achieved by the oldest pupils are above the national expectation. This represents good achievement. Their knowledge and understanding of the key features and beliefs of Christianity and other major world faiths is well above expected standards. This maintains the picture found by the last inspection. The new locally agreed syllabus is well in place and coherent links are made with the school's provision for personal and social education. The knowledge and understanding of the oldest pupils as expressed orally is not reproduced in their writing. This is because they have not been given enough challenging opportunity to write about religious questions and issues. The oldest pupils' good standards of knowledge and understanding of faiths are also found through the school.

128. When pupils are given opportunities to compare how different religions express their

beliefs and conduct rituals, standards are good. This was the case in a good Year 5/6 lesson about a Hindu wedding during which the pupils made comparisons with Christian weddings. Year 4 pupils demonstrated knowledge and understanding of features of Christianity that were well above the national expectation in an excellent lesson on the symbolic meaning of the dress of Christian priests, very well led by the local rector. Children in Year 2 demonstrate knowledge of the life of Jesus that is above the national expectation. The reception class children demonstrate the ability to reflect on the value of human kindness that is good for their age. The pupils are enthusiastic about religious education and engage well with the issues being taught in lessons.

129. The teaching in the few lessons seen was never less than good and, in one lesson involving a visit by the local rector, excellent. The teachers demonstrate good knowledge of their subject and make use of appropriate learning resources. The marking of the pupils' work is variable in quality and regularity and does not tell the pupils how they can improve. The subject leader has a secure picture of the quality of provision in the subject and good plans for further improvement.