

INSPECTION REPORT

REED FIRST SCHOOL

Royston

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117129

Headteacher: Mrs Olive Millington

Reporting inspector: Frances Forrester
11590

Dates of inspection: 23 -25 May 2000

Inspection number: 189933

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Jackson's Lane Reed Royston Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG8 8AB
Telephone number:	01763 848304
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Peter McMeekin
Date of previous inspection:	14 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Frances Forrester	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Mathematics Science Information technology Physical Education Religious education Equal Opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning
Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Susan Powlesland	Team inspector	English Art Geography History Special Educational Needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 - 10
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11 - 14
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14 - 15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15 - 17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17 - 18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18 - 19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19 - 20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20 - 21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22 - 25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26 - 38

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is in the small village of Reed, some five miles from Royston. The school's numbers have increased in recent years and there are now 51 pupils on roll. Pupils live in surrounding villages or towns and only a very few live locally. The school's immediate environment has an above average number of families with higher education qualifications, who commute to other towns and cities. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average, and unemployment in the area is low. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are 7 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below the national average and one pupil has an educational statement, which is again below the national average. The attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, but with some very able children. Children are usually admitted at the start of the school year before their fourth birthday, although a high number join the school in later years. All classes accommodate two year groups. During the inspection, a few three year olds were visiting part-time as the school tries to compensate for the lack of pre-school provision available. There are 20 children who are under six. One permanent teacher was absent and a supply teacher had been appointed to take her class for the rest of the term. The headteacher has a substantial teaching commitment and there is one additional part-time teacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Reed First School is a very good school which provides a good range of opportunities for its pupils. Many pupils achieve above average standards in English, mathematics, science, physical education and information technology by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4. Pupils of all levels of ability learn well and make good progress throughout the school. This is largely due to the quality of teaching, which is good overall and often very good. It has a very positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the school. Children who are under five make very good progress in the early years class. The leadership is very strong, and the headteacher and governors are committed to raising standards. The school has excellent procedures in place for monitoring its performance and school development. The school is very effective; it has made very good improvements since the last inspection and it provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher and governing body ensure clear educational direction.
- The standard of physical education is good. The school provides effective swimming lessons and good sporting events and games tournaments.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and their behaviour is very good.
- A very good range of school clubs and after-school activities is organised for pupils.
- Social development is very good and the school cares very well for its pupils.

What could be improved

- Handwriting standards vary and the presentation of pupils' work is often untidy.
- Parents are not sufficiently involved with the school and very few give regular support to its work.
- More multi-cultural activities would enhance pupils' awareness of other cultures.
- There is insufficient equipment for outside play for the children who are under five.
- There could be more opportunities for promoting an awareness of good literature.

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

Most of these areas for improvement have already been identified by the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has successfully raised the standards of English, mathematics, science, information technology, physical education and sport, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school is very well placed to make further improvements. In the last inspection, the standards of physical education were adversely affected by lack of outdoor accommodation but this is now much improved. The school has good facilities for a school of this size. The early years class has been well established and the youngest children now make good progress and they are well supported. Throughout the school, pupils have improved attitudes to their work. They are well motivated and relationships are very good. Behaviour is also improved and is now very good in most lessons. The school has worked very hard to sustain the good standard of its partnership with parents. Information for parents is now very good. The school is especially good at keeping parents well informed about pupils' progress.

STANDARDS

When pupils leave the school most attain good standards which are above average in English, mathematics, science, information technology and physical education. In their foundation year children learn well and make good progress so by the time they are five they reach the national standards. Those pupils who have special needs learn well and make good progress. The school's National Curriculum results in 1999 show that the percentage of pupils at Key Stage 1 who attained the national expected standards or above for this age group in reading and writing was above the national average. In mathematics, the results were close to the national average. The school very effectively monitors its performance, and realistically high targets for improvement have been agreed for 2001. It is difficult to make reliable comparisons with other schools or to judge trends in improvement because the numbers in some school years are very small. For instance, this year there are only three pupils in Year 2. Despite this, when results are compared with other schools, mathematics was above average and reading close to the national average. The school recognises that writing standards were below average in 1999 and it implemented more writing activities in the literacy hour in an attempt to raise the standards. Taking the last four years together, results in reading at Key Stage 1 were close to the national average, with standards of writing being above average. In mathematics, results were close to the national average.

Evidence from the inspection shows that standards are continuing to rise in English, mathematics, science and information technology. Good work was seen in these subjects as well as in physical education. In religious education, pupils meet the standards expected of them in the locally agreed syllabus. The school achieves very good results, bearing in mind that high numbers of pupils are not admitted at the age of five and in some cases, pupils have changed schools several times.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are proud of their school and they have very good attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and any natural boisterousness is quickly contained in most lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good at all levels. The pupils' personal development is very good and is a priority for the school.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are eager to come to school.

These aspects are a significant strength of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very 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.

Of the 21 lessons observed, three quarters were good or better. Almost half of the lessons were very good. Just under a quarter of lessons were satisfactory. Teaching of English and mathematics at Key Stage 1 varies. It is always satisfactory and sometimes good. At Key Stage 2, the standard of teaching in English and mathematics is very good. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout the school, although in other subjects the standard of pupils' writing is not consistently monitored by teachers. Despite this, teachers have high expectations of their pupils at all levels of potential attainment, and they plan their lessons well. In most lessons, the teacher ensures pupils are learning well. In these lessons, pupils are motivated to work hard and they concentrate on their activities for a long time. In a few lessons at Key Stage 1, some less able pupils found it difficult to concentrate on learning new skills in the formal part of the literacy and numeracy lessons. In this part of the lesson, the progress they made was less than in the follow-up group work. However, in most lessons, the school effectively meets the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. A particular strength of the provision is the very effective use teachers make of a published mathematics software program. This provides individualised mathematical activities for a wide range of abilities and it successfully motivates pupils of low ability. This has further raised pupils' attainment and allowed more able pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and it provides a very good range of additional clubs and out-of-school events.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs and, in the best lessons, there is good support from the teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for pupils' personal development. They are encouraged to become caring, responsible citizens, and social development is very good. Teachers provide good role models and they promote pupils' moral development well. Satisfactory provision is made for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very effectively for its pupils. It is particularly good at giving educational and personal support and guidance.

The school keeps very detailed records of discussions with parents at meetings to discuss pupils' progress. It works very hard to be approachable and informative. Staff and their families work very hard to organise events and raise additional funding for the Friends of the School. They do their utmost to get more parents involved in school life and dedicate much of their time to holding regular after-school clubs. All pupils benefit from regular swimming lessons and, the school is one of the smallest in the country to be awarded a charter by the Football Association. An example of the very effective care which the school demonstrates is the good natured way staff provide extra activities to amuse pupils when parents are very late collecting them. The school works very hard to meet all legal requirements for the National Curriculum. Religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership is very good. Despite a substantial teaching commitment, the headteacher has introduced excellent procedures for monitoring standards and the quality of teaching. Teachers have appropriate co-ordination roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors make an excellent contribution. They have extended the school's resources, including providing a classroom and donating equipment.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has excellent procedures for evaluating its performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very effective use of resources.

The school has adequate staff and the accommodation is good for a school this size. There are sufficient learning resources. The school's leadership is a strength. This is having a significant impact on the school's development and the raising of standards. The school effectively applies the principles of best value to all spending decisions. The budget

is managed carefully and decisions are cost-effective and linked to the school development plan which is regularly and effectively reviewed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards of pupils' work • Pupils' enthusiasm for school • The regularity of swimming lessons • The high number of after-school clubs • That teachers are very approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents strongly disagree that the school provides an interesting range of activities • Some parents would like their child to have more homework • Some parents do not feel comfortable about approaching the school

Only four parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and only one was not a school governor. The school recognises that communication is difficult for families who live and work in nearby towns and villages. The school development plan has repeatedly identified the importance of parents' involvement in their children's education. Questionnaires have recently been sent to parents and the school has appropriately reviewed the responses. The inspection team does not agree with parents who feel the school does not provide interesting activities. The school provides a wide range of activities and its clubs and sporting activities are impressive for a school of this size with such a small staff. The school governors have appropriately agreed a policy for homework, but a recent school development review has identified that some parents find it difficult to support the school's policy. The staff are anxious to involve more parents in the school's work. The inspection team feel that they already do as much as they can to make parents feel comfortable about approaching the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school makes good provision for children's all-round development in their foundation year. In the last inspection, children made only sound progress and the school's programme for physical development was criticised. This is now improved and children learn well and make good progress. When children start part-time at the age of three, they settle quickly into the school, benefiting from working with four and five year olds in the class. The teacher often involves them in National Curriculum work which reception pupils are effectively covering. As a result, children learn quickly and make good progress so that, by the time they are five, they attain the nationally agreed standards. Several children benefit from working with older reception children and they achieve higher than average standards in language, literacy and number work. The early years class is well equipped and there is good class support. Children enter the school with broadly average standards. Most have had no pre-school provision and some have special educational needs and find it difficult to take turns and share. From this low starting point, children learn well and make good progress in developing socially, and in literacy and numeracy this makes them increasingly confident. They make very good progress in their personal, creative development and in developing a knowledge and understanding of the world. Although children make very good progress in physical education lessons in the school hall and the resources for outside play are still limited.

2. The good standard of teaching is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning and, as a result, standards are rising. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the percentage of pupils at Key Stage 1 who attained Level 2 or above in reading and writing was above the national average. In mathematics, the results were close to the national average. The school monitors its performance and realistic targets have been agreed for 2001. It is difficult to draw conclusions about trends over time as the numbers are often very small. For instance, there are only three pupils in the present Year 2 and, of these, two have special educational needs. It is also difficult to make comparisons with other similar schools. However, despite this, when the results are compared with other schools, the standard of mathematics is above average and in reading the standards attained are close to the national average, but with writing well below average. Taking the last four years together, results in reading at Key Stage 1 were close to the national average, with standards of writing being above. In mathematics, results were close to the national average. Results fluctuate each year but dipped in 1998. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls.

3. In the last inspection, the standards in English, mathematics and science were in line with national expectations for the age group, but physical education was adversely affected by the lack of outdoor accommodation. The school has effectively raised the standards of English, mathematics, science, information technology and physical education.

4. In English, speaking and listening is a strength. Throughout the school, attainment in speaking and listening is very good. Pupils have a wide vocabulary and they can explain their point of view clearly. Pupils generally enjoy reading and they develop a liking for books. They learn well and often talk about their current book with interest and understanding. They know how to use the contents pages and the index to help them find information they want. Pupils' writing skills are satisfactory in all classes. Many children in

their reception year write independently. They learn quickly by participating in written group activities in the class literacy lessons. The oldest pupils write for a range of purposes, including poetry, letters, instructions and stories. Spelling is generally good throughout the school and pupils regularly learn spellings and they acquire appropriate punctuation skills. However, although pupils learn to write appropriately, the standard of handwriting is inconsistent and work is often presented in an untidy way. The introduction of the literacy hour has had a positive impact on raising the standards of English and pupils make good progress and learn well.

5. In mathematics, the National Numeracy Strategy has had a significant impact on pupils' ability to do mental and oral work. During the inspection, although the standards of Year 2 pupils' work were below average, in Year 1 several pupils attained above average standards. Throughout the school, pupils learn well and make good progress. They double and halve numbers and, as early as the reception year, enjoy the challenge of counting and recognising numbers to a hundred. In Years 3 and 4, they understand fractions as parts of objects and numbers, and use quarters and halves accurately in different contexts. Throughout the school, pupils learn to carry out a range of investigations of increasing difficulty. By the end of Year 4, their rate of progress is good and they confidently learn to carry out tasks such as designing seating arrangements to show ways in which two tables can be placed to seat eight people. The most able pupils have a secure knowledge of equivalent fractions and they understand the use of the decimal point.

6. In science, pupils make good progress. At Key Stage 1, the present Year 2 are below average but the attainment of Year 1 pupils in the same class is higher and above average. Pupils have effectively learned the scientific names for parts of the body. In Year 1, they know how to make a circuit and they explore materials and understand which are waterproof. At Key Stage 2 in Year 3, they successfully learn to investigate the factors necessary to improve light reflection. By the end of Year 4, most pupils attain above average standards. The more able pupils attain within Level 4, which is well above average. The very good teaching at Key Stage 2 is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils have a good understanding of materials and their properties, and they confidently make scientific predictions when they experiment.

7. Pupils make good progress in information technology, and they are learning well throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations but, by the end of Year 4, they exceed them. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Since that time, the school has invested heavily in a determined attempt to raise standards. Pupils have considerably more 'hands on' experience than is seen in most schools of this size. In the early years class, very young children effectively learn the functions of the keyboard and the mouse. They work with a variety of programs, learning to draw pictures and to drag shapes with a mouse. By the end of the key stage, they save and retrieve their work. They effectively learn computer skills when they work alone on a mathematics program, independently logging on and completing a selection of mathematical activities. At Key Stage 2, pupils word process their writing, selecting different fonts to make their work more attractive. They learn to create a simple database and, in doing so, work well in groups to design relevant questions for this. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a good understanding of the importance of technology in the modern world.

8. In religious education, the school meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils appropriately learn about a range of specified religious topics and they attain standards which satisfactorily meet the requirements of the

Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn about the Bible and they recognise some religious symbols. By the end of Year 4, they have an appropriate knowledge of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, learn appropriately and make satisfactory progress.

9. The standards of physical education have improved significantly and they are now good. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, most have learned well and they achieve good standards which are above the national expectations. The school is justly pleased with the progress pupils make in swimming. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils are able to swim 25 metres with confidence. Throughout the school, pupils are confident in learning gymnastics skills. Floor work is energetic and pupils make good use of space. By the end of Year 4, even the less able pupils are willing to attempt new skills. Games lessons rightly focus on learning and improving tactics and ball skills. The effectiveness of their learning as well as participating in small-sided games promotes good attitudes and develops a competitive spirit. Dance skills are appropriately developed through responding to music or learning traditional dance from other cultures.

10. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported. They benefit in mathematics from their regular tutorial using a computer program and they learn quickly because it is matched to their own standard of attainment. They learn well when they are given additional support and they make good progress through the targets on their individual educational plan. They are well motivated. In lessons, pupils are often grouped according to ability. In this way, the teacher can give additional support. The teacher's intervention and careful questioning often helps pupils who are having difficulties to understand. In the classes where additional support is available from class assistants or volunteer helpers, pupils learn quickly and make good progress. In other lessons, where no additional support is available, pupils learn less and their progress is slower. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' levels of ability and assessment procedures are very detailed and informative. Pupils' profiles are maintained which record in detail discussions at parents' meetings, with references to pupils' progress and targets for improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good which is an improvement from the last inspection when they were found to be good. Attendance is very good and most parents report that their children are happy at school. Conversations with pupils, including those who have come from other schools, indicate that pupils are proud of the school, think it is good and are happy to attend. The very good relationships and the strong school ethos of mutual care and respect contribute to these good attitudes, as do the rich and interesting extra-curricular activities which the school provides.

12. Pupils' behaviour is very good, both within most lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and helpful. They are friendly and supportive to each other and attentive to their teachers. They collaborate well in lessons, listening to each other and respecting each other's point of view and contribution to the current task. They take care of the school equipment and environment, and there are no examples of destructiveness or carelessness. There have been no exclusions in the last three years. Pupils with special educational needs who have behavioural difficulties are well supported by their class teachers and assistants, and make good progress. The other pupils in the same class mostly respond to them positively and with understanding, without being deflected from their own work.

13. During some very effective acts of collective worship, pupils reflect on their own

feelings and the feelings of others, and consider the impact that actions and words can have. The discussion of a text and imaginative writing tasks are also sometimes effectively used to promote pupils' development of empathy and their ability to understand others' point of view. However, they have only limited opportunities to develop their understanding of the values and beliefs of others from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

14. Both the parents' questionnaire and conversations with pupils indicate that there is no significant problem of oppressive behaviour or bullying in the school and there are few incidents; inspection evidence bears this out. Staff know the pupils very well, quickly become aware if any pupil is becoming unhappy or anxious, and intervene effectively. There is a positive behaviour policy which details procedures both for recognising good behaviour, kindness and helpfulness, and steps to take if undesirable behaviour occurs. However, the good relationships make any kind of formal procedure rarely necessary.

15. Pupils readily take initiatives in their work and around the school. They often make decisions about their activities, for example, deciding which character to write about or putting forward suggestions about topics for discussion. The latest charity to be adopted was suggested by one pupil and supported by the whole school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The standard of teaching is good. Of the 21 lessons observed, three quarters were good or better. Almost half of the teaching was very good. A third of the lessons observed at Key Stage 1 were satisfactory. The standard of teaching is better at Key Stage 2, where the teaching was consistently good. Teaching of English and mathematics at Key Stage 1 varies in quality although it is always satisfactory and sometimes good. At Key Stage 2, the standard of teaching in these subjects is very good. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout the school although, in other subjects, the standard of pupils' writing is not consistently monitored by teachers. Despite this, teachers have high expectations of their pupils at all levels of potential attainment, and they plan their lessons well. In most lessons, the teacher ensures pupils are learning well. In a few lessons at Key Stage 1, some pupils found it difficult to sit and listen in the formal part of the literacy and numeracy lessons. However, in most lessons, the school effectively meets the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. A particular strength of the provision is the very effective use teachers make of a published mathematics computer program. This provides individualised mathematical activities for a wide range of abilities. The school has used it successfully to motivate pupils of low ability and to extend more able pupils.

17. The quality of teaching for the children under five is good. The teacher has a very good relationship with her class, and she has high expectations of all children. Right from the start, she encourages children to be self-reliant. Her class management is very good. For instance, activities are effectively planned to be interesting. A flower shop is used for role-play and, in artwork, children printed their own wrapping paper. Praise is given when children try hard and this generates confidence when, for instance, they try hard to get dressed and undressed in only five minutes in a physical development lesson. Children happily join in with whole-school activities such as playtimes and assemblies. The staff have high expectations of behaviour and even children who find it difficult to play with others without upsetting them make good progress. Staff are skilled at asking questions which encourage children to think carefully. They promote children's confidence by praising effort and good behaviour. This ensures that the children make good progress in developing confidence in speaking and concentration when listening. Children with special educational needs are effectively supported right from the start. Staff encourage them to

work independently and to make choices in their play activities.

18. Throughout the school, most teachers manage their pupils well. In very good lessons, the class management and effectiveness of teaching methods is a strength. In science and physical education, the quality of teaching is consistently good. In these subjects, good subject knowledge and specific emphasis on teaching basic skills ensures effective learning is taking place and the class are well motivated to try hard. Assessment is effective and teachers have a good understanding of pupils' individual abilities. This is particularly successful when they support pupils who have learning difficulties.

19. Pupils learn very well. Right from the start in the early years class they work hard. They put a lot of effort into getting their work right. Throughout the school, pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are motivated well by their teachers to attempt challenging work and, in the best lessons, their interest, concentration and perseverance when they have challenging activities to do, is excellent. At Key Stage 2, this is particularly apparent. Pupils discuss issues maturely and they try very hard to please their teacher, for instance, in a computer lesson where they were working in groups to create a simple data base. Pupils of different ages suggested ideas and the group were able to decide which one was the best. There was no hint that they chose their particular friend's suggestion, and their infectious enthusiasm led to good results from all of the class. Those pupils who have special educational needs also have very good attitudes. During the inspection, some were very anxious to give inspectors a good impression, especially in Key Stage 2. They reacted well to their teacher's instructions and worked hard to make a good impression. They have good self esteem which is well promoted through good teaching. Pupils accept they have learning difficulties, but they recognise they have other skills to offer such as good ball skills in physical education lessons.

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

20. The previous inspection found that most National Curriculum requirements were met, except for physical education, for which there were no outdoor games facilities. The school has successfully improved physical education. Pupils have good access to outdoor facilities and physical education is now a very strong subject. The curriculum lacked breadth because creative and expressive activities were under-represented. There were few schemes of work. There has also been good improvement in these aspects. Subjects now have schemes of work and the curriculum is broad and relevant, includes the creative, and gives pupils good opportunities for developing independence, initiative and expression.

21. The school provides a curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant. The provision meets the legal requirements for the National Curriculum. Religious education appropriately meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The early years class provides the children with good experiences in the nationally agreed areas of learning and it prepares them well for Key Stage 1. The school focus on the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive effect on raising standards and ensuring continuity and progression. Literacy and numeracy skills are further enhanced by being widely used across the curriculum, for instance in reading about life in Roman Britain and then writing descriptively about some of its aspects. In science, graphs record data from investigations. Some foundation subjects, for example art, design and technology, geography and history, are taught in alternating blocks and this is effective in ensuring adequate coverage and sound standards. Computer skills are taught well, particularly at Key Stage 2. Computers are regularly used as part of most lessons, and this ensures that pupils acquire confidence and make good progress. Physical education is a

strength of the school and the programme includes weekly swimming lessons for all pupils from reception age, so that all reach good standards. A specialist music teacher who comes into the school is used well to teach every class and contribute to school singing and this ensures that pupils make at least satisfactory progress in music.

22. All pupils have equal access to, and equal opportunity to benefit from, the whole curriculum and all the activities the school offers. Girls and boys take part in all aspects of the school equally; for example, the school football team is mixed. Relationships between all pupils are very good, irrespective of gender, age or which town or village pupils come from. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all lessons and activities. They have appropriate targets set for them which are regularly reviewed. Parents are informed and involved at every stage. The school makes good use of the available outside services, such as the speech therapy service. The class assistants who support pupils with special educational needs are very effective. They have had training and are used well. Class teachers know the pupils well and ensure that they make good progress.

23. Extra-curricular provision is very good. The school provides a number of after-school sports clubs including rounders, football, kwik-cricket, basketball and athletics. It hosted a recent 7-a-side village school football tournament. Last year, older pupils took part in a three-day residential camp with an emphasis on outdoor and adventure activities. Subjects of the curriculum are enriched by visits to and from the school. Pupils visited Roman sites as part of local and Roman studies. As part of a study of Ancient Greece, the school organised an afternoon of Greek Olympics. During the day, pupils also enjoyed a traditional Greek meal prepared for them. A group of local scientists visited the school and organised a 'floating and sinking' workshop for pupils, who also visited the Science Museum. These examples also demonstrate the school's good links with the local community. The school also invites parents, as well as the wider local community, to many events such as fetes and sports events such as the 'Greek' Olympics. This rich provision has a positive impact on standards and also helps to maintain pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to the school. However, there is a lack of wholehearted parental participation and support for the school, and this results in an undue expenditure of time and effort by the staff to maintain this provision. Although most parents actively participate in the home-school reading scheme, they do not fulfil other aspects of the home-school agreement, and many parents do not support the school's attempt to introduce further homework.

24. The school provides well for pupils' personal and social education. Teachers know the children well and provide informal support and counselling to their classes and to individual pupils when the occasion arises. Weekly sessions of personal, social and health education in every class cover a wide range of issues and sometimes include circle times when pupils share their problems, feelings and aspects of their lives. Older pupils have recently taken part in an effective drugs awareness programme. There is a sex education policy which has been agreed by the governors but, although it has been shared with parents, it has not been formally agreed by them yet. Pupils develop a sound understanding of health issues and also of personal safety; for example, they were assured that it was safe to talk to the inspectors in the school although we were strangers, because we wore badges. Sex education takes place as part of other lessons, especially when aspects of it are part of the science curriculum.

25. The school has a strong ethos of mutual care and respect. Pupils are taught to be polite and kind to each other, and this is evident in every aspect of their school lives. Children in the early years class learn to share and take turns well. Teachers deliberately include paired and group collaborative work in many lessons, and pupils work well together,

listen to each other's ideas and are helpful and supportive of each other. Older and more able pupils frequently help others; for example, there is a 'buddy' system where more fluent readers share a hymn book with others during hymn practice. During the swimming session, in which the whole school takes part, an older pupil voluntarily came to help reception age children get dressed at the end of the session. Discussion of the text and some imaginative writing tasks during the literacy hour are used well to help pupils consider other people's point of view, as in letters written by a contrite cat to the Little Red Hen, or a letter of apology by Little Boy Blue to the farmer. Pupils' social and moral development is very good and the school promotes the principles which distinguish right from wrong well.

26. Collective worship is used very well to promote the shared values of the school. It is well planned and delivered to have a strong impact and to help pupils develop their spiritual awareness, self-knowledge and understanding of others. One assembly, for example, was based on a very powerfully and graphically illustrated story of a child whose feelings were hurt by a succession of incidents, and pupils were asked to suggest ways to restore his self esteem. However, spiritual awareness is not generally promoted in other aspects of the school's life.

27. The school is suitably teaching pupils to appreciate aspects of their own culture. Much of the music programme is based on traditional English nursery rhymes. A distinctive piece of music is used to introduce the assembly every day for a week, and pupils are told the name of the piece and the composer. This is generally of European origin. The art curriculum includes learning about notable artists and attempting to paint in the style of that artist; for example, older pupils recently learnt about the work of Seurat and produced work themselves in the pointillist style. Again, this generally includes European artists. The school has tried to introduce pupils to multi-cultural themes, for instance, in an African project pupils wrote poems based on the style of an African poet's work and they also listened to music. Although the school acknowledges the festivals of some other religions, for instance Diwali and Eid, there are limited opportunities to promote an understanding of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. The care and welfare of pupils are high priorities for all who work at the school. Each child is known as an individual and the very good relationships that have been formed between staff and pupils ensure that children are well supported in their personal and academic development. Procedures for Health and Safety are effective. There is a full policy and risk assessments are carried out. There is appropriate coverage for First Aid, and detailed records are kept of any incidents. Staff are aware of Child Protection procedures which follow a comprehensive policy for this area. Attendance is recorded accurately and absence is followed up. As a result, figures for unauthorised absence are below the national average and attendance is very high in comparison to national figures.

29. The high standards of behaviour in and around the school are underpinned by the 'Golden Rules' of care, courtesy, consideration and co-operation. Pupils in assembly enjoy receiving rewards in the form of leaves for the Achievement Tree. The good behaviour management strategies, and the positive use of praise, play an intrinsic part in the teaching and encourage positive attitudes. The behaviour and personal development of pupils is monitored well.

30. Although procedures are in place to deal with bullying, there is little evidence of incidents of this nature and relationships between pupils are very positive. One of the reasons for this is the 'buddy' system that has been introduced by the school. Older pupils

are paired with younger pupils and are seated together in assemblies. While the younger children develop confidence they are also encouraged to sit with their buddy at lunchtime. Older pupils take this role seriously and, as a result, new pupils are integrated well into the school. The same care is taken when pupils transfer to the school. Taster sessions are offered to very young pupils; this was seen during the inspection and is particularly beneficial to those children who have had no pre-school experience.

31. Lunchtime is a positive experience; children are able to develop social skills at this time. Pupils are supervised well in the playground and enjoy using a range of toys and equipment. The school's commitment to the overall care of pupils was shown during the inspection when teachers provided activities for some children who were collected late, well after the end of the school day.

32. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good; they are comprehensive and thorough. Attainment in maths is particularly well recorded. As a result, academic progress is supported well; for example at parents' consultation evenings, a careful analysis of each child's academic development is produced for discussion with parents; targets are discussed and recorded. The school uses the optional Year 3 and 4 SATs to monitor pupils' performance. The school has identified writing as a weakness and, as a result, has introduced more specific targets for children in this area, has started to collect portfolios of writing, and is beginning to adapt the curriculum to address this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. Most parents and carers are supportive in their views of the school. At the inspection meeting which only four parents attended, they stated that staff are approachable and children are happy. They feel that relationships are good and pupils have good attitudes. They said that pupils make good progress in English, that the new maths computer program is helping to raise standards, and that the provision for information technology is very good. They appreciate the after-school clubs and had no concerns about the school.

34. The results of the questionnaire showed that just over three quarters of respondents strongly agreed that teaching in the school is good, and slightly less strongly agreed that the school expects their child to work hard and that the school is helping their child become mature. All parents who responded also agreed that behaviour is good and that they would feel comfortable in approaching the school. Almost half of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the school provides an interesting range of activities. The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed in the meeting and in the questionnaires. However, they do not agree with parents' criticisms about the school's curriculum. The provision of activities to enrich the curriculum, including after-school clubs, is very good.

35. The information provided to parents by the school is very good. Good information about the curriculum and the daily life of the school is available in the prospectus and the well produced monthly newsletter, the Owl. Parents are invited to curriculum evenings on topics such as numeracy. At parent consultation evenings, parents are given good information about progress, and pupil profiles show that teachers prepare well for these meetings and record discussion points and agreed targets for development. Annual reports are also detailed and meet requirements. To aid communication with parents, the headteacher has started to hold a 'surgery' once a month and one of the governors has assumed responsibility to oversee communication. The school has sent its own questionnaire to parents and has acted on the results, for instance to address the waiting

time at consultation meetings; these will now be spread over two evenings.

36. Although a home-school agreement has been in place since September 1999, there are many parents who are not fulfilling their commitments and who are not sufficiently involved in their child's education. Parents' consultation evenings are well supported and there is a very good attendance at events such as assemblies when pupils are performing. However, few parents attend meetings about wider issues in education. Very few attended the inspection meeting and three of these were members of the governing body. A meeting about numeracy was attended by only 10 parents. As a result, the contribution many parents make to homework is adversely affected by their lack of knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy. While parents generally support reading at home, the support for other homework, such as writing, is much more variable. Many fundraising events organised primarily by school staff are supported by a small group of loyal parents. Although the effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good, the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and the standards achieved by pupils is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The leadership and management of the school are very strong and making an extremely positive impact on the high quality education provided for the pupils. In the last inspection, the school was criticised for not monitoring curriculum coverage. This weakness has been addressed very effectively. The school has made very good improvements. The headteacher has excellent leadership. Despite a substantial teaching commitment, she has developed outstanding systems for monitoring and evaluating school improvement. Governors play an outstanding role in fulfilling their duties. They work closely with the school to achieve the highest possible standards for all the pupils.

38. The school has suitably delegated curriculum co-ordinators' roles. However, because the staff is very small, teachers are responsible for several important areas. For instance, the headteacher is co-ordinator for the provision for pupils with special educational needs as well as having several subject responsibilities. However, the impact she has on the standards achieved by all pupils, is very significant. The school meets requirements for the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Governors ensure that all legal responsibilities are fully met. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The relationships between the governors and the school are very good. The governors have clearly defined roles and they are knowledgeable about issues affecting the school and the wider context of education. School development planning is excellent. Regular reviews and critical evaluation of results significantly influence the direction of the school. The governors provide good support while maintaining a critical overview. The chair of governors is very actively involved in the school, and there are efficient procedures in place for evaluating cost effectiveness of long term spending decisions.

39. The headteacher effectively monitors the quality of teaching in the school. The school is well placed to introduce and agree a policy for appraisal and performance management. The strengths of particular staff members are recognised and good practice is shared across the school. The strong teamwork results in careful curriculum planning and efficient use of resources. For instance, art lessons are carried out in slightly larger groups to allow the headteacher time to carry out administration duties. Since the last inspection, standards in English, mathematics, science, information technology and physical education have improved. This reflects the effective monitoring and curriculum leadership of the headteacher. Other subjects, while having a lower profile in the light of

the literacy and numeracy initiatives, have been successfully implemented across the school. Teachers' expectations challenge pupils appropriately and the school has set appropriately high targets for the pupils and for each year group. The school analyses pupils' achievements very well and continuously uses the results to influence pupils' work. There is a very efficient system for tracking pupils' progress that enables staff to set realistic and achievable targets.

40. Financial planning is very good and the headteacher and chair of governors closely monitor the targets for the school development plan. The school's administration is very efficient and staff ensure that procedures are followed meticulously, enabling the financial and other administrative work to be carried out unobtrusively. Additional funds, available for the school's work in supporting pupils with special educational needs, are used effectively and this results in pupils making good progress. The school uses new technology well to support the administration. It has introduced a computer program which is having a positive impact on raising attainment in mathematics. The school applies the principles of best value to good effect. Spending decisions are cautious and contingency funds are presently reserved to purchase new furniture for an expected replacement classroom.

41. The small staff is sufficient for the number of pupils on roll. The school's accommodation has been recently extended and it is good for a school this size. The Early Years class was provided and decorated by the governors who nicknamed it 'The Chocolate Box'. In this class, children benefit from adequate facilities and a suitable outside area for play. The school hall is well used and there is a very good grassed area adjacent to the school. The school building is attractively decorated with pupils' work and displays, which often support the curriculum. Overall, there is an adequate supply of resources with good resources available for physical education. The book resources in English have been recently extended but there are insufficient novels and classical literature for the more able pupils in Years 3 and 4. Children who are under five use the school's climbing frame and they have access to a range of play equipment including a play house. However, there are insufficient toys for the very youngest, and the resources are barely adequate for the numbers of pupils in the class.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

42. In order to continue to raise the good standards already being achieved, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of work so that they are consistent in all subjects; (Paragraph 53)
- Review the home-school agreement to make sure parents understand the importance of supporting and working with the school in order to take a full and active part in their children's learning; (Paragraph 36)
- Review the multi-cultural provision to promote a better awareness of other races and their traditions. (Paragraph 27)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

43. The school should:

- Review the resources for outside play as part of the school's plans to introduce the Early Learning Goals for the youngest children; (Paragraph 41)
- Continue to broaden pupils' awareness of literature through story telling and by increasing book resources. (Paragraph 41, 50, 52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	45	30	25	0	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	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	51
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (58)	91 (57)	91 (57)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (57)	91 (57)	91 (85)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	51
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR- – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.9
Average class size	14.3

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	130,239
Total expenditure	121,675
Expenditure per pupil	2,535
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,628
Balance carried forward to next year	17,192

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	43
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	33	11	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	22	11	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	44	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	44	17	6	6
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	28	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	28	0	11	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	33	6	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	44	44	0	0	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	28	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	28	22	22	0

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal and social

44. Children make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. They move confidently around the school and they enjoy talking to older pupils. Most share equipment, taking turns happily when they play in the class flower shop. They have a developing sense of right and wrong. Children have very good attitudes, they concentrate well and try hard to please their teacher. Children work hard to write independently and to read. They enjoy school and work well both independently and with other children in a group. They enjoy joining in with numeracy activities and they are delighted when they identify a number on a wall number chart. The children quickly understand the routines of school life and they use the facilities independently. Their spiritual and cultural development is effectively promoted through celebrations of festivals such as Chinese New Year. By the time they are five, most children, including those with special educational needs, are likely to have developed good social skills.

Language and literacy

45. The school makes good provision for the development of language and literacy. When most children start school, their language skills are at an early stage of development. Some find it difficult to sit still in a class group to listen to stories. By joining in the daily literacy hour, children quickly understand that pictures and print convey meaning. By the time they are five, children confidently re-tell their favourite stories and they enjoy talking about books. Several can read well for their age. They eagerly take their books home to read. The teacher follows the pattern of the National Literacy Strategy to develop and extend the children's listening, speaking and reading skills. All children use pencils to form letters correctly. They regularly practise early writing skills that encourage their hand and eye control. By the time they are five, most children write simple sentences independently, for instance to record their observations of growing beans. Their letters are increasingly controlled and well formed. They make good progress in developing appropriate speaking, listening and writing skills.

Mathematical development

46. The school makes good provision for children's mathematical development. Most children make good progress in developing suitable number skills. They benefit from joining in the daily numeracy activity with the rest of the class. They confidently use numbers to ten and, by the time they are five, most count to twenty or beyond. Some add on and subtract small numbers. They roll a die, record the number and accurately add one on. They identify missing numbers in a simple sequence. They recognise individual digits on a number square and some confidently recognise numbers greater than ten. All children effectively reinforce this knowledge through learning and singing simple number rhymes. They know the names of simple mathematical shapes and most recognise 1p, 2p, 5p and 10p coins. The children use computers to sequence shapes and to reinforce their knowledge of numbers. They record the different hair colours in the class on a simple block graph. By the time they are five, children meet the recommended criteria for the Desirable Learning Outcomes for mathematics and higher attainers are already attaining

National Curriculum Level 1.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

47. The school makes good provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world by linking their work with the National Curriculum science curriculum. Children make good progress in this area of learning and the more able achieve well. They observe signs of growth in their bean seeds and name simple parts such as roots and leaves. They explore their local environment and look carefully at blossom. They create a mini garden and observe the similarities and contrasting features of different vegetables. They build with bricks and construction materials and have access to a computer and quickly learn to drag a shape around the screen. They confidently use simple tools and build models with construction materials. By the time they are five, children attain appropriate standards to meet the agreed expectations for this desirable learning outcome.

Physical development

48. Good physical education lessons allow children to achieve well. Even those who are not yet attending school full-time, and still only three years of age, join in with lessons and attain above average skills for their age group. Activities in the outside play area regularly promote physical development and a free choice of play equipment including bicycles. Children run confidently and have increasing control and co-ordination in their movements. They use small apparatus with increasing skill. They have a good sense of space and a developing awareness of working as a member of a team. They ride a tricycle confidently and steer with increasing accuracy. They handle construction and malleable materials with care. Children have good pencil control and they have increasing skill when they assemble simple models. As a result, children will attain the standards expected of this age group and the more agile will achieve above average standards for their age group in physical education.

Creative development

49. The school makes good provision for creative development. Children paint and draw and make up stories of their own. They cut and stick and print with a variety of textures. They make good progress in drawing and painting, with a good understanding of colour mixing and some sense of using shade to convey shape. They chose their media from a simple range and hold their brushes correctly and carefully. The children mix paint well to achieve different colours. They look carefully at prints of work by famous artists and listen to a range of music in school assemblies. They make up tunes using percussion instruments, and they sing a variety of songs well. In a project about mini beasts for instance, they listened to the story 'The very hungry caterpillar' and then sang 'Caterpillar, caterpillar'. They enjoy playing in the class flower shop or garden centre, and they pretend to play a variety of roles. They enjoy dressing up. By the time they are five, children have confidence and they attain the level of skills necessary to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

ENGLISH

50. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for the end of Key Stage 1 show that pupils' attainment was above the national average for both reading and writing, and broadly in line with averages for similar schools. The number reaching the higher levels was above the national average in reading but below in writing. The small number of pupils taking the tests, which varies year by year, makes it difficult to judge trends. The previous inspection found that the overall attainment of pupils at the end of both key stages was at least in line with national expectations and sometimes better. Pupils made good progress as they moved through the school. Standards have at least been maintained, and there is evidence to indicate that they are improving further. Speaking and listening were a strength and this is still the case. Pupils' reading skills were good but there was some over-reliance on the reading scheme and pupils had a limited knowledge of authors. The school has started to address this, but needs to develop this aspect of reading further. Writing skills were good but there was a narrow range of tasks, with limited poetic or imaginative work. There has been good improvement of this aspect. There has been further improvement in the progress pupils make as they move through the school, and this is now very good.

51. Throughout the school, attainment in speaking and listening is very good. Pupils use and understand a wide vocabulary and they can explain their point of view clearly, taking account of the audience they are speaking to. Most teachers use good questioning which encourages pupils to answer fully and thoughtfully. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in contexts which are interesting to them, for instance when discussing the arguments for and against homework or whether children should be paid for attending school!

52. Pupils generally enjoy reading and develop a liking for books. They often talk about their current book with interest and understanding. Younger readers acquire a good knowledge of letter sounds to help them read simple books, and many older readers can read more complex fiction and non-fiction fluently and with understanding. They know how to use the contents pages and the index to help them find information they want. Pupils are often asked to write reviews of the books they have been reading and have had a local librarian to visit. However, few pupils acquire a wide knowledge of and tastes for quality children's authors. Pupils read widely across the curriculum, for instance when sharing a big book about how a bean grows in the early years class, or when looking up information about life in Roman Britain in Years 3 and 4.

53. Pupils' writing skills are satisfactory in all classes. Many children in their reception year are developing good independence in their writing and can express their meaning in simple words, often using phonetically plausible spelling. The oldest pupils can write for a range of purposes, including poetry, letters, instructions and stories. They begin to write in a varied and lively way and introduce humour and imaginative ideas into their writing. Pupils write widely across the curriculum, especially in the context of subjects such as history, geography and science. Spelling is generally good in both key stages and pupils acquire sound punctuation skills. However, the development of neat and attractive handwriting is very inconsistent and presentation of work is often unsatisfactory.

54. The introduction of the literacy hour has had a positive impact on standards in English. It has raised teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for English, and has promoted good continuity and progression across the school. Attainment is consistently good in all aspects of English for the youngest pupils who have participated in the literacy hour since they started school.

55. Learning and progress in the aspects of literacy are good. Pupils start in the school with little or no experience of pre-school education, and their knowledge and skills are developed well. Pupils learn to join in discussion thoughtfully and pertinently, and older pupils express their ideas clearly and with good diction. They generate their own idea for a discussion, for example whether zoos should be closed, and can carry it through; they can also listen well to each other and respond to others' ideas. In reading, they develop their fluency and their ability to tackle a range of books with understanding. However, they do not sufficiently learn to discuss character and motivation with insight and an awareness of the author's intentions, and many do not develop a knowledge of a range of good authors and books. Pupils' writing skills develop well as they go up the school. Many older pupils write correctly punctuated sentences and use standard spellings for a wide range of words. Some develop a lively and imaginative writing style as they get older. This is promoted by a good range of writing experiences. However, the use of a fluent, attractive and legible handwriting style is inconsistent and work is sometimes unattractively presented. Pupils' learning is good within the many lessons where the teacher sets a good pace, presents the lesson in a lively way to engage pupils' interest, asks open-ended questions and sets interesting and challenging tasks. Teachers know all the pupils in the class well, including those who have special educational needs. They are very aware of the targets set for these pupils and support them well in working towards them. Specialist help is well used when it is available to support their learning effectively and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

56. Pupils' attitudes to their work in English are consistently good. They nearly all enjoy reading and are particularly interested in the work on texts and the discussion during the literacy hour. They usually work diligently and sustain concentration well. They are supportive and helpful to each other, for example, when a group of pupils independently read a play together, taking different parts and were very absorbed in their roles. They usually behave well and listen attentively to their teacher and to each other. They are generally interested in each other's work and points of view. They readily take initiatives in their work, for instance when deciding which characters to represent and which incidents to write about in their letters.

57. Teaching of English is good, particularly for the older children. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Their class management is at least good and sometimes excellent. Teachers have high expectations, both of work and behaviour, and are unfailingly positive, friendly, supportive and at the same time consistent and fair. Teachers all use an agreed format for planning the literacy hour for the half term and for the week. These plans usually contain good detail and it is clear what pupils are intended to learn. In the best lessons, teachers use a good questioning technique to elicit full and thoughtful responses from pupils and they provide work which is well matched to pupils' attainment and challenge for all. The school is setting up a portfolio of examples of assessed pieces of writing to help inform teachers' records of the progress of individual pupils. Teachers use the results of tests and records to plan the grouping of pupils and the level of the tasks set for them. Pupils throughout the school regularly take books home to read and keep a home-school reading diary which has full entries by teachers and often also by parents. This makes a useful contribution to pupils' progress in reading. The school has found it difficult to set homework in English as it is not done at home to a consistent standard.

MATHEMATICS

58. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1, the pupils achieved standards which were close to the national average. The very small numbers of pupils in some year groups make it difficult to judge trends or to make comparisons with other similar

schools. For instance, this year there are only three pupils in Year 2 and, of these, two have special educational needs. When results over the past four years are compared, standards have risen steadily. Inspection findings confirm that standards have risen particularly at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be mostly average. The standard of mathematics are good and above average. In Year 4, four out of seven pupils attain Level 4 which is well above average for their age group. In Year 3, most pupils attain above average standards and three pupils are well above average. Pupils throughout the school make good progress. Those who have special educational needs are benefiting from using an individualised mathematics program. This is motivating them well and raising their attainment so that they make good progress along with their peers. The school has identified one Year 3 pupil who is already attaining Level 5 in mathematics.

59. The National Numeracy Strategy has had a significant impact on the pupils' ability to do mental and oral work and they use a wide range of strategies to work out their answers. During the inspection, although the standard of Year 2 pupils' work was below average, in Year 1 several pupils attained above average standards. The school is good at identifying pupils whose ability in mathematics is good, and successfully fosters them. Pupils double and halve numbers and as early as the reception year they enjoy the challenge of counting and recognising numbers to a hundred. In Years 1 and 2, they count money and calculate the correct change. They measure and estimate. They understand the significance of numbers on a 100 square and know how to add in twos, five and tens. In Years 3 and 4, they understand fractions as parts of objects and numbers, and use quarters and halves accurately in different contexts. They know the names of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and describe some of their properties. They experience reflective symmetry using regular and irregular shapes. They regularly solve number problems such as dividing a three digit number by one with two digits.

60. Throughout the school, pupils carry out a range of investigations of increasing difficulty. At Key Stage 1, they estimate and investigate the amount of liquid they need to dissolve a jelly. By the end of Year 4, they carry out calculations such as designing seating arrangements to show three ways in which two tables can be placed to seat eight people. They calculate how far a space ship has travelled if it uses a number of tons of space dust to travel one light year. They find the areas and perimeters of regular shapes and the areas of triangles. They estimate accurately and skilfully measure angles, using a protractor. They measure in metres, litres, and kilograms, and their multiples and carry out calculations using the full range of measures. In number work, pupils use fractions, decimals and percentages and translate from one to another. The most able pupils have a secure knowledge of equivalent fractions. They halve and double numbers mentally, adding and subtracting numbers with two or three digits. They understand the use of the decimal point. They use their good knowledge of multiplication tables to understand multiples and factors of numbers.

61. The pupils enjoy their work and, in numeracy lessons, most work with concentration and appropriate effort. They are eager to have their personal time on the mathematics computer program. They willingly participate in full class sessions and some have the ability to confidently make quick responses in response to their teacher's questions. They enjoy the challenges set for them, and they respect each other's contributions. They have good relationships with each other and work well co-operatively.

62. The school has appropriately implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes good at Key Stage 1, and very good at Key Stage 2. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good.

They use correct mathematical terminology and encourage pupils to use appropriate mathematical language. This makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking skills. Teachers plan their lessons well, and they build effectively on pupils' previous experiences. Most teachers manage their pupils well and regularly praise and encourage them to work hard. Time is used well and, in the best lessons, there is a good pace and challenges are presented for more able pupils. The teachers provide activities that move smoothly from one part of the lesson to the next. They enable pupils to consolidate their learning and renew their interest, without breaking their concentration. For instance, in a good lesson in the early years class, the teacher used small white boards on which pupils wrote their quick responses to her questions. She flashed cards with patterns of dots for pupils to recognise the clusters as numbers. This effectively motivated the class and one little girl delightedly exclaimed, 'You just have to look and you see three sets of three dots and that makes nine'. Teachers make good use of assessments of pupils' attainment which effectively influences their planning for the next lesson.

SCIENCE

63. In the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments at Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining the national expectation of Level 2 was above the national average. In the last inspection, science standards were judged to be good. The small numbers in some year groups make it difficult to judge trends or to make comparisons. However, it seems that the good standards in 1996 have been effectively sustained.

64. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. At Key Stage 1, the present Year 2 is very small with only three pupils. The standards of recorded work in science are below average but this is because, of three pupils, two have special educational needs. The attainment of Year 1 pupils in the same class is higher, and several are in line to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. From their start in the early years class, pupils have a simple understanding of growth. They have a good knowledge of the scientific names for parts of the body and major organs. In Year 1, they know how to make a circuit and recognise that to illuminate a light bulb the circuit must not be broken. They explore materials and understand which are waterproof. They record their investigations in graph form and draw simple diagrams to explain their findings. For example, in an experiment to discover which shoes slipped on a wet surface, they discovered that heavily patterned soles were less likely to slip. At Key Stage 2, in Year 3, they realise it will be necessary to have a light source to investigate what factors improve light reflection. They understand the benefits of healthy eating. They understand heat conduction. By the end of Year 4, most pupils attain above average standards. The more able are attaining within Level 4, which is well above average. They have a good understanding of materials and their properties. They make scientific predictions and understand what makes a fair test. In investigating examples of soil, they make intelligent observations which rely on local knowledge, for example, of the Roman occupation.

65. Pupils have very good attitudes to science and they enjoy investigating and experimenting. In the early years class, they eagerly watch their beans for early signs of growth. At Key Stage 1, they are curious and like to examine objects through magnifying glasses. By Key Stage 2, their observations and enquiries are more scientific and they readily collect samples of soils for their experiments. Pupils behave very well in science lessons and they have very good relationships, sometimes challenging each other's opinions during experiments.

66. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers plan their work to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Sufficient

emphasis is given to investigative work, and teachers have good assessment procedures so they are well aware of individual levels of ability. Pupils usually work in groups which are organised by ability. In this way, the most able pupils are extended and often benefit from working with older pupils in their class. For instance, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, the most able Year 3 pupils benefited from experimenting with more able Year 4 pupils as they carried out tests on samples of different soils. Their in-depth discussion and the scientific observations they debated enhanced their understanding and promoted good learning. Similarly, less able pupils worked at their own level and the class teacher effectively supported them by asking pertinent questions.

ART

67. The previous inspection found that attainment was generally sound or better. However, pupils did not use what they learnt about other artists in their own work. There was not sufficient imaginative work, learning objectives were not clearly related to the National Curriculum for art, and there was no scheme of work. Inspection evidence indicates that there has been good improvement in these aspects of the subject. The school follows the Hertfordshire scheme of work which is clearly related to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Older pupils, when learning about the artist Seurat, tried out his way of painting in their sketch books and then painted pictures in this style. Some of the work seen is imaginative and aesthetically pleasing.

68. No lessons of art were seen. Evidence was taken from the scrutiny of work, displays, timetables, the scheme of work, interview with the co-ordinator and conversations with pupils. Evidence indicates that standards of work in art are satisfactory. Pupils have experience of a range of materials and processes. They start to learn to mix the colours of their choice from primary colours in their reception year, and this skill is revisited at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress as they go up the school. Younger pupils doing observational paintings of a doll and a teddy bear begin to put in good detail and make good use of colour. The oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 observe the patterns on cross-cut slices of wood, and use fabric to reproduce these patterns in various ways, using imagination and choosing materials and style. The older pupils have recently started to use a sketch book in which they try out their ideas before engaging in the final product. There is evidence that pupils sometimes use information technology in art, and there is a display of computer generated symmetrical patterns. Pupils also have experience of printing, mosaic work and collage. There is little evidence of three-dimensional work using materials like clay or large chunks of chalk, although records show that pupils studying the Ancient Greeks last year made ceramic tiles. There is also little work in different scales, nor is there evidence that the younger pupils are introduced to the work of different kinds of artist. Although the older pupils were introduced to the art of Seurat and produced work in the pointillist style, pupils are not introduced to art and artists from non-Western cultures. Pupils' attitudes to their work in art is good. They talk about what they have done with interest and take pride in their work which is on display.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

69. The previous inspection found that attainment and progress in design and technology was generally sound and good at the junior stage. During the current inspection, no lessons in this subject were seen but evidence indicates that attainment is still sound overall and standards since the last inspection have generally been maintained. Although no lessons were seen, other evidence was taken from the scrutiny of work, teachers' timetables and conversations with staff and pupils.

70. Timetables show that design and technology takes place in blocks, alternating with art. This is a satisfactory method, enabling pupils to prepare, design, make and evaluate their products. The school follows the Hertfordshire scheme of work which covers the National Curriculum programmes of study for the subject and provides for continuity and progression. Pupils in the early years class confidently design and plan model gardens. They make choices when preparing materials such as the wrapping paper for the florist, and design the patterns on the paper independently. Although making skills are developed well and children learn to handle tools safely and competently, the design development is inconsistent in the lower school.

71. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have recently made a burglar alarm. Although no models were still available to look at, their books showed their design and pupils talked about their model and the processes they went through. Pupils prepared well for this task and first experimented with various ways of making electrical circuits and discussed the purposes and uses of alarms. They produced a simple design in their workbooks and made choices in the kind of alarm they would make. However, the designs do not show any details of how pupils planned to make the model, the sequence of the steps to take in the making, or a list of materials and tools they would need. A good variety of alarms was made and pupils had choices of a range of materials to make them.

72. Pupils who talked about their work in design and technology showed good attitudes. They enjoyed the work, took a pride in what they had achieved and talked about their models with enthusiasm. Overall, evidence indicates that pupils make good progress as they go up the school. They improve their designing skills, although these are inconsistently developed in both key stages. Their making skills are good and older pupils can talk about the tools and materials they use, about safety procedures and can make appropriate choices of materials.

GEOGRAPHY

73. The previous inspection found that attainment in geography was good in Key Stage 2, and inconsistent in Key Stage 1. Younger pupils did not acquire an adequate knowledge of other places. Evidence indicates that pupils in Key Stage 1 now have a greater knowledge and understanding of other places and that standards in Key Stage 2 have been maintained. Only one lesson of geography, in the Key Stage 2 class, was observed during the current inspection. Additional evidence was obtained through the scrutiny of work, observations of displays and conversations with staff and pupils.

74. Younger pupils keep weather records. They develop their knowledge of routes and simple maps through drawing their route through the village. They begin to use simple keys for their maps of an imaginary island home, and investigate places around the local town. Pupils begin to know about a number of other places, both in the British Isles and abroad, through a successful 'Jackson Bear' project. Pupils and teachers who were going to visit other places on holiday took a school bear with them and sent back descriptive postcards to the school. The bear's various journeys are marked up on a world map and many pupils can name the countries and places where he has been and describe some of the features.

75. In the lesson seen, older pupils investigated life in a village in Kenya and compared it with their own locality and way of life. Pupils showed a good knowledge of the locality, could identify it on a map and a globe and name the surrounding countries. Some could talk about it in relation to the equator and knew about the weather and its effect on

people's way of life. They were able to draw inferences and make comparisons with our way of life. They were able to use secondary sources such as book extracts as well as primary sources such as photographs to find information. The knowledge, understanding and skills shown in this lesson indicate good attainment and learning.

76. Pupils' attitudes in the lesson seen were very good. They were interested and attentive and worked well collaboratively. Younger pupils took pride in the work on display and were interested, particularly in the travels of Jackson Bear.

HISTORY

77. The previous inspection found that that pupils acquired knowledge about past times well, but there were few opportunities for pupils to learn through investigation. There has been some improvement in this aspect, as older pupils visit places and see artefacts to do with their period of study and gather information for themselves.

78. History is taught in blocks, alternating with geography, and no history lessons were taking place at the time of the inspection. Other evidence was taken from the scrutiny of work and from conversations with staff and pupils. There were no displays to do with history, as these had now given way to geography displays.

79. Younger pupils have learnt about notable historical people such as Mother Theresa and Florence Nightingale. Their books showed factual information but did not contain evidence such as personal or historical time lines to indicate that they were developing historical skills such as chronology. In Key Stage 2, pupils had most recently been studying the Roman invasion of Britain and, previous to that, the Ancient Greeks. They had acquired a good knowledge of the period, knew about the way of life of the people, the architecture and the main notable characters. They had good opportunities to develop the skills of historical enquiry and talked about a lesson when, working in groups, they found answers to questions about the period by choosing from a selection of books and using index and chapter headings to access the information. The curriculum for history in Key Stage 2 is also enriched by visits and events. The class visited the local archaeological site at St Albans when studying the Romans. When studying the Ancient Greeks, pupils visited the Fitzwilliam Museum, dressed up as Ancient Greeks and had a traditional Greek meal at a local pub, and organised a version of the Greek Olympics. These visits and events evidently had a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and involvement with their studies and also provided more opportunities for historical investigation. However, their sense of chronology is less well developed. They were not sure how the two periods studied related to each other in time, and there is no evidence in their work that they became aware of the changes within a period or leading up to or resulting from that period.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

80. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations but by the end of Year 4 they exceed them. This marks a significant improvement since the last inspection. Since that time, the school has invested heavily in a determined attempt to raise standards. The Key Stage 2 class has a mini-computer suite which, when supported by two additional computers, successfully allows the whole class to work simultaneously. In addition, a mathematical program is available throughout the day, for pupils from both key stages to work on individualised work based on National Curriculum mathematics. The generous level of provision allows pupils considerably more

'hands on' experience than is seen in most schools of this size, and it makes it possible to have more direct teaching of computer skills.

81. In the early years class, very young children in the foundation year are familiar with the names of the different parts of the computer and the functions of the keyboard and the mouse. They work with a variety of programs, learning to draw pictures and to drag shapes with a mouse. By the end of the key stage, they save and retrieve their work and have a growing confidence and familiarity with computers. They work alone on their mathematics program and follow instructions by reading text and listening to a recording through headphones. They log on and complete a package of activities, designed for their individual level of attainment in mathematics. As they progress through this program they increasingly become more confident in using a computer. At Key Stage 2, pupils word process their writing well. They effectively improve the appearance of their work by selecting different fonts. They refer to information stored on CD ROMs to further their studies in other subjects. They know how to create a simple data base and work well in groups to design relevant questions for this. Pupils' standards are undoubtedly helped by the fact that some have access to computers out of school. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that systematically develops pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding very effectively. When they leave the school, pupils have a good understanding of the importance of technology in the modern world.

82. Pupils make good progress and they are learning well throughout the school. When the lesson is very good, progress is enhanced. Pupils are very enthusiastic about working on computers and they use them responsibly and independently. They work well in pairs and, at Key Stage 2, in fours. They concentrate well on their task and respond well to other group members. They try hard to solve their own problems and their attitudes and behaviour are very good.

83. The quality of teaching is good. Throughout the school there is a weekly timetabled class lesson to teach skills. At Key Stage 2, the teaching is very good. Resources are well used and the chair of governors plays an active part in readily contributing both additional resources and maintenance when necessary. Lessons are well planned and they have a clearly defined purpose. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and, at Key Stage 2, the standard of computer knowledge is very good. Teachers effectively extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. They set challenging tasks for pupils and they motivate them well. Computers are very well used to support learning in literacy and numeracy, which is having a significant impact on raising standards. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, practise writing for a specific purpose and in a particular style by preparing a 'Nursery Newsletter' which included reports of traditional stories such as Goldilocks breaking into the three bears' house.

MUSIC

84. The previous inspection found that attainment in music was sound throughout the school, and this has been maintained. Pupils only had the opportunity to learn to play the recorder. The school now offers lessons in brass and piano. However, while the previous report noted that pupils learnt to recognise and respond to music from different cultures, these opportunities are now limited.

85. Pupils have experience of work in the different aspects of music such as pitch, tempo and structure. They can respond to a simple rhythmic pattern, the younger pupils by copying it, the older pupils by improvising an answer. They are able to select, name and play a variety of tuned and untuned musical instruments and can respond to signals for

varying the pitch of either the instrument or their voice when singing, sometimes responding to symbols drawn and devised by themselves. Pupils can respond accurately to the tone, mood and pitch of a taped piece of music played to them, with a variety of movements. Pupils sing well in unison, and the older pupils sing in parts. They can sing with gusto, but also control their voices well to respond to the mood of the song. The aspect of listening and appraising is promoted well in assemblies, which always start with the playing of a piece of taped music. Pupils are expected to listen to this carefully, are told the name of the piece and the composer, and often discuss some other aspect; during an assembly based on 'feelings', for example, pupils listened to a piece with harpsichord playing and discussed how different instruments, including the harpsichord, made them feel. However, although they listen to music from different times and in different styles, they have insufficient opportunity to become familiar with music from different, non-western culture. There are only a limited number of instruments from other cultures included in the resources. Although they have some experiences of composing, this is not generally well developed and they have few opportunities to create and organise simple musical structures and to record them with symbols.

86. The subject is taught by a specialist part-time teacher. She has a good understanding of the subject and a sound understanding of the National Curriculum requirements for music. In some lessons, particularly when the class teacher is also present, pupils behave well, are interested in the activities and become very involved. However, the music teacher sometimes does not use effective strategies for class management and this occasionally reduces pupils' learning in part of the lesson. During whole-school singing occasions, pupils behave very well, are thoroughly involved in the occasion and are very responsive. They support each other well and there is a 'buddy' system where the most fluent readers share hymn books with younger or less able ones to enable them to join in fully.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

87. The school makes very good provision for physical education and, despite its small size, has received Charter recognition from the Football Association. This is a great improvement since the last inspection, when the whole curriculum was not fully covered. By the end of Year 4, most pupils have good standards of attainment which are above the national expectations for this age group. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided, with all pupils regularly having swimming lessons. The curriculum is enhanced through after-school clubs which offer pupils further opportunities to cover team games, or athletics. The school is justly pleased with the progress pupils make in swimming. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils are able to swim 25 metres with confidence.

88. Throughout the school, pupils use apparatus confidently, know how to land safely and to check that apparatus is not already in use. From their first days in the early years class, pupils' floor-work is very energetic and they make a good use of space. At Key Stage 1, they cover a good range of gymnastic skills. They work as a small team and confidently carry out a variety of movements. By the end of Year 4, even the less able pupils are willing to attempt new skills. They travel in interesting ways on the apparatus and surrounding floor. They jump high and some pupils can turn in the air through various angles. In games lessons they rightly focus on the development and refining of their individual skills. Participating in small-sided games effectively develops a competitive spirit and a sense of fair play. Netball, basketball, unihoc and short tennis are just a few of the games pupils effectively cover in Years 3 and 4. In dance lessons at Key Stage 1, pupils respond spontaneously to stimuli such as recorded music or percussion instruments. At Key Stage 2, sequences of movements are suitably improvised to tell a story, for instance

as part of a history topic. Opportunities are also provided to learn traditional dances. The school's good provision very effectively motivates all pupils to work hard and they make good progress. During the inspection, it was impressive to see a three year old , visiting for the afternoon, making excellent progress along with older children in the class.

89. Pupils work very enthusiastically and with obvious enjoyment during physical education lessons. They follow instructions carefully and strive to improve their performance. Pupils work very well together and their behaviour is consistently very good. They have very fair attitudes to competitive events and they are good sports. At Key Stage 2, they celebrate each other's achievements. Two boys have been spotted and trialled by West Ham United and Charlton Athletic. Although very proud to be picked, they are modest, with one telling a newspaper reporter: 'this is an opportunity I only dreamed about!'

90. The quality of teaching is good. In the early years class, the teaching is very good. The school has a very good scheme of work which ensures teachers follow very detailed stages of progression. Teachers make effective use of pupils' demonstrations to illustrate important features. They pay due attention to safety issues, particularly in the safe use of available space. Lessons have appropriate 'warming-up' and 'cooling down' activities. They are challenging, and pupils are expected to work energetically. In the very good lesson at Key Stage 1, the teacher had high expectations of even the youngest children. When she set a time limit for changing their clothes, the children changed quickly and independently. The lesson had a very good pace and the teacher was able to effectively build on previous learning. The enthusiasm of the teaching staff in supporting and helping with after school sporting activities greatly benefits the pupils and it has increased the popularity of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

91. Scrutiny of pupils' work and curriculum planning show that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain appropriate standards which meet the requirements of the Herfordshire Agreed Syllabus. At Key Stage 2, pupils attain the required levels in the agreed eight level scale of attainment. Throughout the school, pupils are appropriately learning about religions and from religions. This is a similar judgement to the last inspection.

92. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn about the Bible and they recognise some religious symbols. They understand that the Bible and other holy books teach people about 'truth' and 'being good'. By the end of Year 4, they identify the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam. Pupils know that the Bible is valued as a special book for Christians and that the Qu'ran is a special book for Muslims. Pupils recognise Christian stories in the New Testament. They can explain some of the differing ways in which believers express their beliefs, ideas and teachings. They have an appropriate knowledge of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. They have some understanding of how shared beliefs of what is right and wrong affect behaviour and they relate this to the school's 'Golden Rules of Conduct'. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They increase their understanding of religious concepts so that, by the age of nine, the most able are beginning to apply the principles of religion to everyday life. Much of their work is oral discussion in religious education lessons and most written recording is of a variable standard.

93. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They are interested in the topics and respond well. At Key Stage 2, they think carefully about important issues. They show respect for the ideas and opinions of other pupils in the class, and they confidently share

their thoughts. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to put forward their own ideas. Behaviour is good.

94. Religious Education was not timetabled to take place during the inspection. From scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, the inspection team judged the teaching to be satisfactory. Teachers cover similar topics at the same time, and they appropriately prepare their lessons, often using work sheets for follow-up work. Their marking is positive and praise is given for effort. The local education authority has recently published a revised agreed syllabus, which the school is appropriately introducing.