

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CODICOTE C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **CODICOTE**

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117392

Headteacher: Mr Peter Browning

Reporting inspector: Mr David Owen - 1957

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 192425

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Meadow Way,  
Codicote,  
Herts.

Postcode: SG7 5PF

Telephone number: 01438 820255

Fax number: 01438 821162

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Connold

Date of previous inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D. Owen	Registered inspector	Mathematics History	What sort of school is it? How high are their standards?
Mrs J. Darrington	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr B. Emery	Team inspector	English Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	How good are curricular and opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr N. Hardy	Team inspector	Information technology Art Music English an and additional language	How well are the pupils taught?
Mr D. Maxwell	Team inspector	Science Geography Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Codicote is average in size compared with primary schools nationally. It has 262 pupils on roll including 32 children who attend the nursery part-time. Most of the pupils live in Codicote although some travel from other villages and from Stevenage. They live in a mixture of privately owned and rented properties. As noted in the previous inspection report they come, in the main, from homes where the socio-economic conditions are favourable. The attainment of the majority of the pupils is above average when they enter the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, 53 on the register, is in line with the national average. However the proportion with statements of special educational needs, one per cent, is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, 6 per cent, is below average. One per cent are from ethnic minority families and the same percentage do not have English as their first language. Excluding the nursery teacher, but including the headteacher, each teacher is responsible for 28 pupils on average, which is above the national ratio.

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

Codicote is a good school which is very well led and managed. There have been very significant improvements since the last inspection in January 1997 when the school was found to have serious weaknesses. Teaching is good throughout the school, the pupils learn well and they make good progress in lessons. They enjoy their work and become very involved in it. They are well behaved. The arrangements for the pupils' welfare are effective and the school has established a good partnership with parents and carers. Attendance is very good. The headteacher, governors and staff show a strong commitment to improvement. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are above average and often well above average. Attainment is satisfactory in most other subjects. The school gives sound value for money with some good features.

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

- The school is very well led and the quality of management is very good.
- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science at both key stages are very good.
- In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds the school's results were well above average.
- The pupils respond well to the school's very good arrangements for encouraging good behaviour.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school.
- There is very good provision for clubs and other activities outside lesson time.
- The school is very successful in promoting high attendance.
- The school has good strategies for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy.

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

- Some pupils have unsatisfactory listening skills particularly in subjects other than English.
- Too much time is devoted to teaching English and mathematics in separate literacy and numeracy sessions.
- Assessment in other subjects is not as good as it is in English and mathematics.

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

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

There has been a very great improvement in leadership and management, the performance of the pupils has risen, there has been very good progress in relation to the key issues identified in the previous report and numerous other areas of school life have been improved. Most notable of these are improvements in the quality of teaching, much better staff morale and the enhanced quality of the learning environment within the school building.

The results achieved by seven-year olds and eleven-year olds in the national tests have risen in line with the national trend and remain well above average when compared with all schools nationally. Teaching and standards of attainment in information technology have improved greatly since the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	B	A	B
Science	B	C	A	C

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

Over the last three years the school has maintained well above average standards in English and mathematics and performance in science has improved. There was particularly good improvement between 1998 and 1999 in the results for mathematics and science with a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 and above indicating good achievement by the more able pupils. When comparisons are made with schools taking pupils from similar social backgrounds, pupils' attainment in the national tests in English and mathematics was above average and in science it was average. The school's targets for English and mathematics in 2000 are appropriate for the pupils currently in Year 6.

As judged during the inspection the pupils' attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. Of particular note is the fact that the pupils use and apply their mathematical knowledge much more effectively than they did at the time of the last inspection. Their skills in scientific investigation and exploration have also improved considerably. In most other subjects the pupils achieve satisfactory standards. They achieve good standards in music throughout the school, in information technology at the end of Key Stage 1, and in swimming and games by the end of Key Stage 2.

In the 1999 National Curriculum tests the seven-year old pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieved very high standards in reading and writing and above average standards in mathematics.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to school and they are eager to learn. They show a great interest and involvement in the activities given to them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. The pupils know and understand school rules and appreciate the need for them.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and the pupils show initiative and personal responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. Punctuality is good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and as a result the pupils learn well. 95 per cent of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better with 75 per cent of it good or better. 29 per cent was very good or excellent and 5 per cent was unsatisfactory. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects and it is good in English and mathematics where the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. The pupils apply these skills very effectively within English and mathematics and, when given the opportunity, in lessons in other subjects. However, in many lessons across a number of subjects their listening skills are limited and this impedes their learning. In most subjects the teachers have high expectations. They employ a good range of appropriate teaching methods and they manage pupils well. As a consequence, in lessons pupils of all abilities make good progress in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. They work at a pace appropriate to the task, concentrate well and develop good levels of independence.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and the provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. Although there is good provision for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy, too much time is spent on teaching these in separate sessions.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well planned and there are detailed and appropriate individual education plans. The teachers and classroom assistants give skilled, sensitive and effective support and this helps pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school supports these pupils very well and they make very good progress in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good. There are good examples of provision for spiritual development which extend beyond collective worship and religious education. Good provision is made to foster the pupils' social and moral development in lessons and in activities outside of the classroom. There are wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge of both their own culture and that of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are effective arrangements for the care of pupils with very good procedures to promote attendance and behaviour.

The school works well in partnership with the parents and it communicates effectively with them through newsletters. It provides good information about the progress made by pupils but there is a lack of information about current curriculum topics. The parents make a significant contribution to school life educationally, socially and financially. Good curriculum provision is made for English and mathematics although the overlong literacy and numeracy sessions impinge on the time allocated

for other subjects and limit opportunities for the pupils to use their basic skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. Whilst there have been great improvements in the provision for information technology, the pupils do not use computers extensively in other subjects. Assessment arrangements are good for English and mathematics and sound for science. They are less effective in other subjects. In English and mathematics assessment information is used well to help the teachers to plan lessons.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very effective leadership is provided which gives the school a clear sense of direction. The headteacher is a very good manager, making decisions that have a positive effect on the pupils' attainment. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the curriculum co-ordinators. However, the latter have not, as yet, been able to fulfil properly their roles in monitoring attainment within their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors play a very important part in shaping the work of the school and they are very effective in ensuring that statutory duties are fulfilled. They are very well led by the chair of governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school identifies its strengths and weaknesses very well and has been very successful in improving standards in English, mathematics and science. The governors and staff use national test results very effectively to monitor the work of the school and to set targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school has developed a most appropriate set of educational priorities which are well supported through very good financial planning.

The school is very well led and managed. It is very effective in applying the principles of best value to all aspects of its decision making.

The teachers strengths are well matched to the needs of the pupils and the curriculum, the accommodation is good and there is a satisfactory range of learning resources. There are very effective arrangements for the induction of new members of staff and the systems for performance management and the appraisal of teachers are good.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of teaching is good, pupils are expected to work hard and they are helped to become more mature.</li> <li>Their children are making good progress, they behave well and they like school.</li> <li>There have been many improvements since the last inspection and the school is now led and managed much more effectively.</li> <li>They feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have concerns.</li> <li>The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>	<p>A small number of parents are concerned that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school does not work closely enough with them.</li> <li>There is insufficient structure to homework.</li> <li>The school does not keep them well informed about their pupils' progress or the curriculum.</li> <li>Attainment is higher in English than mathematics.</li> <li>The number of pupils in each class impedes the progress of the more able.</li> <li>In the term after the inspection there will be too many pupils in the reception class.</li> </ul>

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' positive views. Little evidence was found to substantiate the concerns which had been expressed by a minority of parents. All mechanisms are in place to keep parents informed about the progress made by their children. However, the school does not take sufficient steps to ensure that the parents are kept informed about the current curriculum topics. The school does have a higher than average number of pupils in each class but there is no evidence that this is affecting the progress of more able pupils. In fact there are effective arrangements to make sure that pupils of all abilities make good progress. The school has good plans for dealing with the increased number of pupils in the reception class. There is a clear structure to homework although amounts set are variable and the work is not always linked to lessons. Apart from differences in the 1999 National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 there is no inspection evidence to show that the pupils' achievements are higher in English than mathematics.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. The children entering the nursery have a wide range of abilities, although their overall levels of attainment are above average for the age group. Good teaching ensures that they progress well in the nursery and the reception class and by the age of five almost all of them exceed the nationally specified Desirable Learning Outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and personal and social development. Their achievements in physical development are sound. The majority have started work on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study before the age of five.

2. The pupils at the foundation stage use their initiative well, organise themselves and work at their tasks enthusiastically. They recognise that writing carries meaning and use this developing skill to write appointments in 'the dentist's'. Many older children read the words as they follow familiar stories and can accurately sequence events that have taken place in a story. They are secure in counting to 20 and many are able to count well beyond this. They have a good knowledge of parts of the body and they cut paper and card with care. They have satisfactory skills in climbing, jumping and balancing. They draw and paint snowdrops carefully and they have an appropriate sense of rhythm.

3. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 7 were very high in reading and writing. In mathematics the pupils' results were above the national average. When compared with similar schools the results were well above average in reading and writing and they were average in mathematics. The more able pupils achieved good standards particularly in writing where the proportion of pupils reaching level 3 and above was very high. Over the period 1997 to 1999 results have been consistently well above average and often very high. The results of the teachers' assessments in science in 1999 were well above average when compared to schools nationally with a very high proportion reaching level 3.

4. In 1999 the results for Year 6 pupils were well above average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools the results were above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Over the last three years results in English have been consistently well above average. In mathematics and science results have been above average with a particularly sharp increase between 1998 and 1999. The percentage of pupils achieving level 5 was well above average in English, mathematics and science.

5. Whilst National Curriculum results reveal some differences in achievement between girls and boys the school's effective system of tracking individual pupils show that these discrepancies are directly related to the prior attainment of individual pupils.

6. The school sets itself challenging targets, based on the predicted performance of each pupil, for attainment in English and mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2. The school has set appropriate targets for the cohort of pupils in the present Year 6 and is likely to meet them. As judged during the inspection the pupils achieve standards above the national expectations in English,

mathematics and science by the end of both key stages. Attainment in literacy and numeracy is above average. There is no evidence to support the view expressed by some parents that attainment in English is higher than attainment in mathematics. In information technology attainment is in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2 but above this at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of both key stages the pupils reach standards in religious education which are in line with the expectations of the local education authority's agreed syllabus. At both key stages the pupils' attainment in art, design and technology, geography, history and most aspects of physical education is in line with the expectations for the age group. It is better than expected in music and by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above expectations in games and swimming. During the inspection there was no discernible difference between the performance of boys and girls.

7. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection when it was found that attainment was not high enough and that progress was not good enough, particularly for the most able. Progress throughout the school is now at least satisfactory for all pupils with most of them achieving standards that are appropriate in relation to their prior attainment. The pupils with special educational needs make consistently good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans, and those with English as an additional language make very good progress. In mathematics the pupils now use and apply their knowledge much more effectively. Standards in experimental and investigative science are much higher and levels of attainment in information technology are now well above those seen in the last inspection. Satisfactory attainment in religious education has been maintained. The pupils achieve higher standards in physical education. These improvements are directly attributable to the improved quality of leadership and management and the dedication and hard work of the staff.

8. Throughout the school the quality of teaching is good and this contributes well to learning and to the pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy has had a very significant impact on the pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The development of a computer suite and the work of the information technology co-ordinator has led to a rapid rise in standards in this subject.

9. Standards of attainment in design and technology and physical education are above those observed in the previous inspection. In art, geography and history they are about the same. This is hardly surprising in the context of the great deal of effort that has, quite rightly, been put into improving standards in English, mathematics and science. One factor that inhibits progress and high attainment in, for example, history is an imbalance in the curriculum with too much time devoted to teaching literacy and numeracy as separate entities. This also limits the opportunities that pupils have to apply their knowledge of English and mathematics to other subjects.

10. The pupils' attainment in speaking is very good overall. However, whilst their listening skills in activities related to English are good, their listening in other subjects is less good and is sometimes poor. This applies particularly, but not exclusively, to older pupils. In many lessons, excluding those devoted to literacy, the pupils do not listen carefully enough to either the teacher or to other pupils. Standards of reading are very good. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are reading very fluently and they understand how to locate information in a book or in the classroom library. At the end of Key Stage 2 nearly all pupils are very fluent readers. They read with great confidence and poise and can discuss details of the text. Pupils' writing is very good at both key stages. In Year 2 most pupils have some understanding of punctuation and they use capital letters and full stops. They write with neat, regular letter formation for a variety of purposes. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use their good writing skills in some other subjects as well as in English lessons. Good examples of pupils' writing were observed in science and in mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2 handwriting is neat and often very mature, and the overall presentation of work is very good.

11. Throughout the school the pupils show considerable mental agility as they calculate in their heads and they skilfully explain the methods they use. They are aware of the connections between mathematical operations and use this knowledge to help them carry out mental calculations. For example, in Year 2 they know that  $5 + 4 = 4 + 5$  and that these facts are connected to  $9 - 5 = 4$ . There are examples of high standards in mental calculation in Year 6 where some pupils can work out  $1 - (2/3 + 1/9)$  in their heads. The pupils use their knowledge and understanding effectively within mathematics itself and, on occasions, they use skills well within other subjects. For example in a geography lesson Year 6 pupils interpreted well the results of a survey of local traffic using tables and graphs. However, opportunities to apply what they know in other subjects is somewhat limited.

12. The pupils have good investigational skills which enable them to set up experiments in science, make their own observations, and they understand the need to have fair testing conditions. They make sensible predictions. For example, in an investigation at Key Stage 1 into the conditions for growing plants, they pointed out that powder paint was unlikely to be very successful. By the end of the Key Stage 2 most pupils understand how animals such as camels and polar bears, and some plants, have adapted to their habitats and in an investigation into decomposing microbes they show a good understanding of the need to control the experimental conditions in order to make reliable observations.

13. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils' skills in using the computer keyboard are good. They use the mouse confidently and accurately and they can carry out basic word processing functions. They can use a programmable toy and explain what they have done to make the vehicle move in a particular direction. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have acquired skills in drafting and revising work on a computer screen and know how to improve their work through editing. Currently they do not use CD-Roms to carry out research and neither do they use electronic mail. However, the school plans to develop these aspects of information technology in the near future.

14. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a sound understanding of significant events in the life of Jesus and they understand the significance of Christmas and Easter. By the end of Key Stage 2 they know about the customs and the major festivals of Christianity and Hinduism, and know some of the objects that are special for Hindus. They understand something of the relationship between family life and the values and beliefs of religious families. They understand religious symbolism within paintings.

15. In other subjects attainment is generally in line with national expectations but with variations from class to class depending on the teacher's knowledge and the amount of time devoted to the subject. In Year 1 many pupils create good quality paintings paying careful attention to both foreground and background. In Year 6 some pupils create good quality paintings, drawings and collages in the style of famous artists such as Picasso and Monet. Whilst standards in singing are only sound, most pupils have a good understanding and appreciation of different traditions in music. Almost one pupil out of six in the school receives additional music tuition and these pupils make very good progress. In geography the pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of places and the use of atlases at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 they understand the development of settlements and land use. In Year 5 they have a good knowledge of the earth's crust. At Key Stage 1 the pupils have a good grasp of historical facts but they are less confident with ideas of chronology. So that, for example, some of them know a great deal about The Plague but they can not agree whether it was in 1996 or 1997! At Key Stage 2 the pupils are equally confident with regard to factual recall and they understand

the principles of historical enquiry. However, they lack confidence when talking about the possibility of bias within sources of evidence. No lessons in design and technology were observed but discussions with pupils and an analysis of past work indicates that standards are in line with the national expectation at both key stages. The pupils' work in physical education is as expected although standards are higher in swimming and in games at the end of Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 pupils are well motivated and work hard during gymnastic and dance sessions where they were observed planning and performing a sequence of movements to a Strauss waltz.

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

16. Pupils are keen to attend school and eager to learn. They are enthusiastic and are very interested and involved in the lessons and activities which the school provides. Almost all pupils arrive punctually in the morning; they settle quickly to the tasks set and work hard. Many pupils take part in the good range of extra curricular activities that are offered. Attendance is very good and there has been no unauthorised absence in the last year.

17. Behaviour is good. The pupils are courteous, trustworthy and demonstrate respect for their own and the school's property. Bullying occurs very rarely and when it does there is a swift and appropriate response. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Relationships are good. Older pupils look after younger ones and the younger children feel confident to ask older pupils for advice or assistance. The pupils are aware of the school rules and the code of conduct and they were involved in drawing up the school's behaviour policy. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. In the main pupils are polite, caring and very friendly towards one another and towards adults. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Other people's feelings, values and beliefs are mostly respected but some pupils are not good listeners, which occasionally impedes learning for groups as a whole.

18. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the work of the school and provides good opportunities for personal development. There is an effective structure to ensure that pupils have progressive roles of responsibility as they move through the school. For example, the younger pupils tidy away equipment and take the class register to the secretary whereas the Year 6 pupils have a wide range of responsibilities such as organising lunchtime play equipment, operating a school shop and controlling the overhead projector in assemblies. All year groups are represented on the school council providing a good opportunity for the pupils to be involved in the discussion of school issues or concerns. This gives them an insight into the process of democratic decision making, opportunities for problem solving and it encourages individual and group initiative. An annual residential visit for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils also supports personal development and provides a very good opportunity for the pupils to become more independent.

19. The school has maintained and extended the good standards observed in the previous inspection. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus now include information on pupils' attendance. Punctuality has improved and the personal development of the pupils is now more consistent throughout the school. For example, in the previous inspection only Year 6 pupils were involved in the school council.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching across the whole school has improved significantly since the last inspection. In over 75 per cent of lessons it is now judged to be good or better, including 29 per cent where it is very good or excellent. This is better than the national figures published in the most recent report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools. Only 5 per cent of lessons are now seen to be unsatisfactory, a considerable improvement on the last inspection. 80 per cent of the teaching was good or better in the nursery and Key Stage 1. 70 per cent was good or better at Key Stage 2. The rise in the quality of teaching over the last three years reflects the carefully planned developments initiated by the current head teacher and his staff in response to the issues for action identified in the previous report.

21. In nearly all lessons, in response to the effective teaching, the pupils make good progress as they consolidate and increase their knowledge and improve their skills. Generally the teachers employ good teaching methods, classrooms are well organised and they strongly encourage the pupils to use correct technical vocabulary. They share with the pupils what they are to learn during the lesson. Good use is made of resources to support the teaching and to promote independence in learning. This is particularly so in the nursery and reception classes.

22. Where the teaching is good, the planning is detailed and clear, and lessons are well organised. The teachers' use of questioning and explanation are effective and exposition is lively, professional and motivating. The methods associated with the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are well understood and appropriately implemented by teachers. The work in numeracy has helpfully increased the focus on pupils developing their own methods, thinking for themselves and explaining their strategies to others.

23. Where teaching is very good or excellent, the tasks are particularly worthwhile and thoroughly engage the pupils, enabling them to increase their skills and knowledge and achieve well. Furthermore, learning objectives are very specific to the needs of the lesson, they are very well planned and provide very good challenges for all pupils.

24. There are no significant variations in the overall quality of the teaching at the foundation stage, at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2, although there are variations between individual teachers and year groups. The teaching of pupils under five is good with some very good teaching seen in language and literacy and in mathematics. Teaching is good and often very good at Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is more variable with a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. However, it is good overall with very good teaching in some lessons. Examples of good or very good teaching are seen across all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. In unsatisfactory lessons the teaching is less challenging with weak questioning, restricted introduction of new learning and, occasionally, some difficulties in managing the pupils. In these lessons the pupils lose interest and make slow progress.

25. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and expertise in English, mathematics and science and most other subjects although not all of the teachers have sufficient expertise in information technology and art. Some teachers have very good knowledge in particular subjects. The quality of planning is good in English and mathematics and sound in other subjects where there is sometimes too little detail on what pupils will learn and the skills they will acquire. Teachers' expectations are good especially in the nursery and at Key Stage 1 and pupils respond by doing their best. They are expected to concentrate, and produce work of quality. Good and sometimes very

good classroom management fosters good behaviour and effective co-operation between pupils. In many lessons supportive relationships contribute very effectively to pupils' positive attitudes to their work. However, in some lessons the teachers do not ensure that all pupils listen carefully to them and to other children; when this happens interest is lost and the pace of learning is impeded.

26. The use of time and resources is good in most classes. This was seen in an information technology lesson where pupils collected and processed data before creating graphs using their new skills. This lesson moved at a brisk pace and pupils were highly motivated. Support assistants and parent helpers are well briefed and deployed. Teachers' ongoing assessment is sound overall. Where it is good it enables pupils to understand how well they have done and how their work can be improved. Pupils' work is regularly and conscientiously marked but the quality of marking is not consistent between all classes. It does not always inform pupils of their strengths and weaknesses or provide a record of what they need to do to improve. At its best, marking encourages pupils to examine and improve their work. Suitable homework is set in English and mathematics and in several other subjects. Amounts are variable and the work is not always linked well to current lessons.

27. The teachers make effective provision for pupils of all abilities including the most able. They ensure that boys and girls progress equally well. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are well met. Planning contains evidence of work at appropriate levels for these pupils, designed to meet their needs. Pupils' individual education plans contain appropriate detail on areas for improvement and these are met through challenging tasks. The teaching and class support provided is good and as a result the pupils' concentration improves, they have an increasing awareness of how to improve their work and they make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress and are well supported by the class teachers and other staff assigned to their classes.

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

28. The curriculum throughout the school is broad, balanced and relevant to the pupils. It meets statutory requirements by including provision for all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Discussion sessions known as 'circle time' enrich the curriculum by supporting the pupils' personal and social education development. Sex education and drug misuse are appropriately addressed. The previous inspection report noted an over-emphasis on basic skills. This is no longer the case.

29. Organisation of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Pupils at both key stages now work for the recommended time each week and an efficient start and end to the day ensures that time is used effectively. However, the current arrangements for English and mathematics mean that some classes spend up to seventy-five minutes in literacy or numeracy sessions which exceeds national recommendations. In most classes the whole of the morning is taken up with these sessions. Consequently up to two and half hours at Key Stage 1 and three and three quarter hours at Key Stage 2 are lost to other subjects each week. Not only is this disadvantageous to the rest of the curriculum but it also limits the opportunities that pupils have to apply their literacy and numeracy skills within other subjects. However, the curriculum is well balanced within subjects and, given the constraints imposed by the allocation to literacy and numeracy, the school makes the best possible use of the time that remains. To ensure appropriate coverage of art, and design and technology these two subjects are paired so that pupils study one or the other during each half term. There is a similar pairing of history and geography.

30. Curriculum policies and schemes of work are of good quality and since the last inspection improvements have been made to long-term and medium-term planning to ensure sufficient detail and attention is given to the National Curriculum programmes of study and to developing the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills progressively as they move through the school. Good use has been made of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. An appropriate priority within the school development plan is an intention to improve the links between curriculum planning, schemes of work and the National Curriculum. There is a good policy for the foundation stage which has appropriate links to the nationally specified Desirable Learning Outcomes for pupils under five and the National Curriculum. Planning is detailed, covers all areas of the curriculum, and contributes well to a broad and balanced programme of work.

31. Teachers support each other effectively with resources and materials and work well together as a team. All subjects have curriculum co-ordinators who, as part of the monitoring procedures, review the planning arrangements for the subject across the school. These duties are helpful in ensuring coverage of the curriculum.

32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is well planned and fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Good support by teachers and classroom assistants helps pupils to make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages all procedures very effectively.

33. Equality of access and opportunity is good; teachers are fully aware of the need to ensure it and they are always conscious of ways to promote it. For example, in physical education boys and girls work together, girls play soccer if they choose and boys often play netball. In other subjects and in extra-curricular activities teachers were seen carefully but firmly promoting equality of access. However, some of the pupils who receive individual music tuition regularly miss parts of lessons in English and mathematics. This is unsatisfactory.

34. The range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils is very good. It includes a wide range of sports and arts activities and is very well supported by pupils. Sport plays an important part in the curriculum and extra-curricular experiences of pupils. They have opportunities to represent the school in a wide range of different team games and they achieve a high degree of success. Many of the extra-curricular activities make a direct contribution to the pupils' progress in school subjects. There are appropriate curricular and sporting links with other schools including the receiving secondary school.

35. The provision within the curriculum for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a daily act of collective worship which meets statutory requirements, and assemblies and many lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to reflect. For example, in a literacy lesson pupils reflected on the meaning of words in a particular piece of poetry. Musical productions, art and the study of world religions all help develop pupils' spiritual awareness.

36. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong; they clearly understand the school's rules and meet the school's expectations for good behaviour. They show respect for property and have a sense of pride in their school and in their own behaviour. They respond well to the school's expectations that they co-operate in all activities, care for one another and take responsibility for their own and others' actions.

37. The provision for pupils' social development is good and has a very positive impact on their education. For example, the older pupils are encouraged to help younger pupils and to acknowledge others' efforts. The pupils respond well to this provision as was observed in physical education lessons where the pupils observe, acknowledge and support each other's performance. In circle time pupils show that they respect each other's views. A relative weakness, within the good standard of social maturity which pupils demonstrate, is their poor listening skills. Most pupils listen well in English, for example, when listening to stories. However, in some other subjects, including mathematics, teachers were observed repeatedly requesting pupils to pay attention and to listen to instructions. Few pupils, particularly the older ones, have developed a thorough understanding of the conventions of not speaking when others are, and not interrupting a speaker.

38. Good use is made of pupils' own cultural heritage which includes good links with the community. For example, many visits are made to art galleries and theatres, artists and musicians visit the school and pupils' own artwork shows an appreciation of cultural influences. There have been visits to the school by representatives from a wide range of culturally and ethnically diverse groups. Pupils study other faiths in religious education and they study art from other cultures in art lessons, although most of the work displayed is by white, western artists.

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

39. The school provides a very caring learning environment for all its pupils. Secure child protection procedures are in place and all staff are fully informed of procedures to follow in the event of any concern. The general welfare of the pupils is the responsibility of caring class teachers who receive very good support from classroom assistants, midday and administrative staff. Sound systems are in place for the regular monitoring of standards of health and safety, and the maintenance of equipment, on the school premises and in the school grounds. The fire alarm and fire fighting equipment are regularly maintained and safe storage areas are provided for hazardous substances and equipment. However, termly emergency evacuation practices are not accurately recorded and there is no record of any difficulties encountered. The first-aid provision does not fully comply with guidance from the Department for Education and Employment. The teachers make sure that pupils are made aware of safe working procedures in lessons and about the school.

40. A very effective whole school approach to discipline and positive behaviour ensures good standards. The introduction of certificates for regular attendance has meant that pupils are positive towards it and very good standards of punctuality and attendance are maintained. There are rigorous and effective systems in place for the overall monitoring of attendance.

41. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is sound overall. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good in English and mathematics and they are sound in science. In English and mathematics assessments are used to good effect to guide curriculum planning and teaching. They make a significant contribution to raising the achievement of individual pupils and attainment overall. Targets set for each pupil form the basis for school targets in these subjects. These are challenging and accord with the school's clear intention to set high standards. These arrangements have contributed well to improvements in the standards of literacy and numeracy. Assessment arrangements are barely adequate in the other subjects and thus they do not make a significant contribution to curriculum planning, teaching, learning and achievement.

42. There are effective procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support especially in literacy and numeracy. Parents are regularly involved both formally and informally. Reviews and reports are up-to-date. Where pupils are withdrawn for additional help this is done carefully and sensitively so as not to restrict curriculum opportunity. The school provides effective support and advice for all the pupils and maintains regular and sound links with appropriate support services and agencies

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

43. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in developing an effective partnership with parents and carers. The majority of them are happy with the information that the school provides and with its achievements. However, some of them feel that there are still occasions when communication is less than adequate.

44. Parents and carers are generally very pleased with the quality of individual pupil reports, parental consultation meetings and correspondence from the school. Regular newsletters and other letters are written in a friendly, easily accessible style and provide detailed information on many aspects of school life. Inspection findings do not support the contention of some parents that the school does not keep them well informed about their children's progress. Annual reports, which include individual pupil targets, comply with statutory requirements and provide detailed information on pupils' progress. However, the weaknesses in assessment procedures in most subjects limit the accuracy of the information available to teachers when writing reports. Formal consultation evenings are provided twice each year and informal contact is encouraged. Parents are fully involved when pupils are identified as having special needs and they have regular opportunities to discuss progress, both formally and informally.

45. Inspection evidence does not support the concern of some parents that there is insufficient structure to homework. The homework policy sets out clearly a framework for each week, yet is sufficiently flexible to accommodate pupils' out-of-school activities. Reading books are taken home regularly and, in relevant year groups, spellings and multiplication tables are learnt. However, actual practice does not always follow the policy that an increased amount of work should be set as pupils progress through the school. Furthermore, the homework set is not always appropriately linked to the work carried out in school.

46. A minority of parents are concerned about the problems caused by large classes. Although they recognise that the teachers are skilled and effective, they believe that the progress of the more able pupils might be impeded. Some parents are also concerned about the large number of pupils who will be in the reception class in the term after the inspection. The inspectors found no evidence that large classes are affecting the progress of more able pupils. In fact, there are effective arrangements to make sure that pupils of all abilities make good progress. The school has good plans for dealing with the increased number of pupils in the reception class.

47. Information concerning the curriculum is provided in general terms, but detailed information on topics to be studied each term, which would be welcomed by many parents in order to support pupils' learning, is only provided in the nursery and reception classes.

48. The parent teacher association raises very large amounts of money each year through a wide range of social and fund-raising events, which are very well supported by parents and the local community. These funds are used to very good effect enhancing and extending resource provision, in consultation with the head teacher. This is a big improvement on the previous inspection where it was observed that the money raised by the parents was spent by the school with little consultation. Parents are very supportive of school productions and events and a few parents and volunteers help regularly in the school particularly in lessons.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The previous report judged that the management of the school was a serious weakness and a key feature in the unsatisfactory educational provision for the pupils. Since that time a new head teacher has been appointed. He has strong qualities of leadership so that the school has made very good improvements in matters requiring effective management. He provides a very clear educational direction for the school, and has a sharp understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. He has good interpersonal skills to motivate people and manage change, taking action rapidly when needed. The governing body, which is very well led by the Chair, is strongly committed to raising standards and improving the school. Since his appointment, the headteacher has identified priorities for school improvement that are challenging and entail long-term management. Improvement is predicated on the school's aim of providing high quality experiences for the pupils that lead to high attainment. Members of the governing body provide very good, well informed and considered strategic management. The school's ethos is now good and staff morale has improved significantly. Teachers and all other adults make sure that the school's aims and values are made explicit in its daily life.

50. The school has made very good progress on the key issues identified in the previous inspection. The leadership and management of the school has improved significantly. A well-defined school development plan, with a related staff training plan, gives a very good focus for the work of the school. The teachers and learning support assistants form a strong team. Good strategies are in place that promote effective teamwork. The ethos encourages partnerships throughout the school community. The flow of information from the school to parents has improved, although there is still room for further improvement. There are good schemes of work for all subjects, but not all of the teachers are completely familiar with them as yet. The quality of teaching has improved substantially. The pupils have equal access to a balanced curriculum and to tasks that are mostly of good quality. The statutory requirements identified during the previous inspection as not being covered are now being met.

51. The deputy head teacher and other members of the management team, make a significant contribution to identifying needs and supporting the management of change. The headteacher, teachers and governors have all taken a full part in implementing and resourcing the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, and this has brought improvements in standards.

52. Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers and for performance management are good. There are very effective systems for the induction of new members of staff and newly qualified teachers are very well supported. The headteacher has introduced procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and standards that are welcomed and accepted by the staff as supportive and indicative of good management. The subject co-ordinators have not yet begun to make classroom observations, through a mixture of professional restraint and limited finances. They have an understanding of curriculum coverage by monitoring planning in their subjects and there are several informal ways in which they keep in touch with provision. However, apart from the English and mathematics co-ordinators, they do not have secure evidence on standards through the school, gained for example by sampling pupils' work. There are good procedures in English and mathematics that provide suitably accurate data to enable the school to evaluate its performance, in teaching and curriculum balance. Regular and on-going assessments in English and mathematics and science are used carefully to set targets for each pupil and an aggregated school target. These are challenging and accord with the school's clear intention to set high standards.

53. Members of the governing body ensure that they are very well informed through regular, focused monitoring visits. They report back fully to their committees and use the observations to

oversee the strategic direction of the school and evaluate the effectiveness of their spending decisions. All the school developments and initiatives are supported carefully to ensure members of staff are confident and prepared. The process of development planning is very good. The learning environment has improved considerably during the past two years, and the headteacher and governing body are fully aware of further outstanding work. The school meets statutory requirements in all respects. It provides daily assemblies and opportunities for pupils to pray or reflect on their beliefs and experiences.

54. There are sufficient well-qualified teachers to meet the needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum. The school's good management and practice reflects a concern that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, should have equal access to worthwhile activities. The school has been able to increase the number of learning support staff recently. The pupils with special educational needs receive good support and staff are used very well at the foundation stage.

55. The school has made satisfactory improvements overall to the provision and quality of resources since the previous inspection so that they are now sound. The new information technology suite gives pupils good access to computers that is beginning to be used to good effect across the curriculum as pupils gain new skills. Co-ordinators are now responsible for budgets for their subjects and careful planning has increased the quality and range of learning resources throughout the school. However, the school has been unable to improve resources to the level intended due to severe budgetary constraints. The accommodation is good and there have been significant improvements to the quality of the learning environment in the last two years. There is sufficient classroom space, although pupil numbers are high in a few classes. Several other facilities, such as the library and hall contribute well to the quality of learning. There is a useful outside play area for children at the foundation stage but this has not yet been fully developed.

56. The headteacher and governing body have made very good improvements to the efficient running of the school since the previous inspection. The chairman of governors and the headteacher meet frequently to discuss issues and forward plan. Financial planning is good, with detailed and thorough attention to budget costs. The governors' finance committee sets a balanced budget based on identified priorities. The governing body has very good oversight of finances through regular monitoring of budget statements. It fulfils its strategic responsibility fully for planning the overall use of resources. The school has an appropriate carry forward figure.

57. The teachers and support staff are deployed well so that their various talents and experience are used effectively to ensure that the pupils learn well and achieve their full potential. The expertise of the subject co-ordinators is used effectively overall, although they are not yet able to have time to visit other classes and do not use alternative means of gauging standards. It is planned to increase the funding for classroom release time for subject co-ordinators.

58. Earmarked funds for staff training are used effectively. The funds for pupils with special educational needs are used efficiently, and individual education plans are carefully focused to identify where support should be directed. The provision for these pupils is very effectively co-ordinated. The use of learning resources and accommodation is sound. Financial control and school administration are good. The temporary school secretary has inherited very good procedures and routines but she has also made a very significant personal contribution to the smooth running of the school. The school has taken action on all the recommendations of the recent auditor's report, which acknowledged the substantial improvements to financial systems. The school uses the advice of the local authority finance department well.

59. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average, and the area that the school serves has above average socio-economic circumstances. The expenditure per pupil is above average. Pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2 with well above average attainment. Pupils are taught well

throughout the school and their attitudes to work and school life are good. Taking account of all these factors and that the school is in transition, the school is judged to provide sound value for money, with some good features.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

60. In order to maintain the existing well above average standards in English, mathematics and science and improve attainment in other subjects the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- improve the pupils' listening skills in subjects other than English to match the very high level observed in some lessons. [Paras. 10, 17, 25, 37, 78, 90, 98]
- review the time allocation for the teaching of English and mathematics in separate literacy and numeracy sessions in order to provide:
  - ◇ more time for the teaching of other subjects; [Paras. 29, 114]
  - ◇ increased opportunities for the pupils to apply their skills of literacy and numeracy within other subjects. [Paras. 11, 29, 80, 93]
- in all subjects develop manageable assessment procedures to match the quality of those currently in use in English and mathematics in order that:
  - ◇ assessments of the work of individuals and groups can be used to help the teachers plan further work for them; [Para. 41]
  - ◇ assessment information can be used more effectively to inform curriculum planning; [Para. 41]
  - ◇ more accurate information is available to the teachers when writing reports. [Para. 44]

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Reviewing the pattern of withdrawal of pupils for instrumental tuition so that they do not always miss part of a lesson in the same subject. [Paragraphs 33,122]
- Enhancing further the role of the co-ordinators by enabling them to evaluate standards of attainment in subjects. [Paragraphs 52, 57, 100, 110, 114, 118, 133]
- Fulfilling the expressed intention in the school development plan to improve the links between curriculum planning, schemes of work and the National Curriculum. [Paragraph 30]
- Ensuring that pupils are given increased opportunities to use information technology in other subjects. [Paragraphs 13, 79, 116, 118]

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	27	47	20	5		

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	230
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		53

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.28
National comparative data	5.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998 (99)	13 (18)	23 (16)	36 (35)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12 (18)	12 (18)	12 (18)
	Girls	23 (16)	22 (16)	22 (16)
	Total	35 (33)	34 (34)	34 (34)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (97)	95 (97)	94 (97)
	National	81 (81)	82 (81)	86 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12 (18)	12 (18)	12 (18)
	Girls	22 (16)	23 (14)	23 (16)
	Total	34 (34)	35 (32)	35 (34)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (97)	98 (91)	97 (97)
	National	80 (80)	85 (83)	86 (85)

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

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**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	13 (13)	16 (13)	29 (26)	29 (26)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10 (11)	11 (9)	10 (11)
	Girls	15 (11)	15 (10)	15 (10)
	Total	25 (22)	26 (19)	25 (21)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (85)	90 (73)	86 (81)
	National	65 (63)	59 (62)	69 (68)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11 (9)	11 (10)	11 (11)
	Girls	14 (10)	14 (9)	12 (11)
	Total	25 (19)	25 (19)	23 (22)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (77)	86 (77)	79 (84)
	National	65 (63)	65 (64)	71 (68)

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	32.9
Average class size	28.6

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16

Number of pupils per FTE adult	32.9 : 1
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

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

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

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	411,881
Total expenditure	424,539
Expenditure per pupil	1,854
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,799
Balance carried forward to next year	13,141



***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	246
Number of questionnaires returned	103

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	39	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	49	8	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	7	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	55	19	2	2
The teaching is good.	46	47	6	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	54	24	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	34	1	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	47	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	50	14	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	51	47	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	52	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	39	17	5	14

## **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**

61. The nursery provides for children between the ages of three and a half and four and a half with pupils entering nursery in the term before they are four and moving to the reception class at the beginning of the term they are five. At the time of the inspection nearly all children in the reception class were five. The teaching provided in both the nursery and the reception class is good and sometimes very good and, with the exception of physical development, enables most children to achieve above the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they enter compulsory education. In physical development the majority achieve the Desirable Learning Outcome by the time they are five.

62. On entry to the nursery pupils have a broad range of ability but overall attainment is above the standard typical for children of this age. By the time they reach the age of five the great majority of the children have made good progress and are working within the National Curriculum.

63. There is a good policy for the early years which is informative and has good links to the Desirable Learning Outcomes and the National Curriculum. Planning is appropriately detailed and covers all areas of the curriculum. It provides a broad and balanced programme of work. The children with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified early and supported effectively. Assessment of children's work is used well to plan and match activities to the attainment of the child. Appropriate records are kept and learning is carefully tracked. Resources are adequate in most areas except outdoor play equipment. Displays of children's work are of good quality and stimulate other children to learn.

#### **Personal and social education**

64. In personal and social development the children make very good progress. On entry to the nursery they are made to feel very welcome and quickly settle down to their new routines and surroundings. They enjoy coming to school and are happy, secure and confident learners. The relationships between the children, their teachers and other adults in the school are very good. The children clearly know what is expected of them and all are very well behaved. In both the nursery and reception class they have opportunities to choose their own activities and they respond positively to those that are specifically directed by the staff. When given the opportunity they use their initiative well, organise themselves and their activities and work enthusiastically, becoming absorbed in their tasks. The curriculum is well organised and matched to the needs of all the children. Teaching and support staff work hard to create a variety of interesting and exciting learning situations where children can express themselves. The staff provide very good role models. They demonstrate very high expectations of behaviour. The children clearly understand their responsibilities and tidy away effectively and look after their materials and resources, for example clearing painting materials and aprons after art work. The parents are very supportive and many make significant contributions to their children's learning.

65. The teaching of personal and social development is good. Learning focuses on listening and taking turns, and activities are presented in challenging and interesting ways. The curriculum is well organised and good use is made of differing ways to achieve the learning objectives. Staff are very patient and consistent with the children, unfailingly polite and caring.

### **Language and literacy**

66. In language and literacy, the children make good progress so that by the end of their time in the nursery and reception classes most are achieving above the standards expected nationally. The children learn a good range of rhymes and counting songs and much work is linked to improving listening and speaking skills where standards are high. By the time the children reach the reception class some of them have begun to read and most recognise some letter sounds. They know that writing carries meaning and use this developing skill to write appointments in 'the dentist's'. Older children develop well their understanding of reading and know that books have authors and that print is read from left to right. Many read the words as they follow familiar stories and can accurately sequence events that have taken place in a story.

67. The teaching of language and literacy is very good. The teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of how to enhance children's progress in literacy. A high priority is placed on the development of children's ability to listen and describe what they can do and see. A good example of this was when pupils looked closely for signs of new life on trees and plants describing what they could see. The staff talk continually with the children to reinforce what has been taught and to extend the children's understanding and learning. The children are engaged in high quality learning experiences throughout the day. Maximum use of available time is made to teach language skills and activities are planned well to ensure relevance to everyday life. Children enjoy the activities, talk confidently, have an extensive vocabulary, behave well and co-operate happily with one another.

### **Mathematics**

68. The children achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. By the time they are five the attainment of the majority of them is above nationally expected targets. Children can name simple shapes and are able to sort a range of small equipment by shape and colour. They learn counting songs and rhymes and are secure in counting to 20. Many of them are able to count well beyond this, relating the numbers to objects. They learn the values of numbers through games such as dominoes. In the nursery children begin to talk about simple fractions and learn to divide things into halves and quarters. Their mathematical experience is further increased through sand and water play as they measure amounts using non-standard measures. They count objects in every day situations such as laying a table and recognise from notices round the classroom how many pupils can work in an area. Through art activities they gain experience of symmetry through painting and paper cutting. Some children can create complicated patterns using beads to repeat shape and colour. In reception children extend this so that they can spot missing numbers in a series. They have a secure understanding of mathematical words such as 'before' and 'after', 'tall' and 'taller' and 'long' and 'short'. The teacher reinforces the children's understanding of the passage of time through teaching the days of the week and months of the year and for some older children begins to relate this to clocks.

69. The teaching of mathematics is very good. The class teachers plan a good range of interesting activities that stimulate the children's interest in the mathematics within everyday situations. Teachers have good subject knowledge and develop the children's technical vocabulary very well to enable them to describe accurately what they are doing and why. The children respond well to mathematical activities and show enjoyment and interest in the tasks.

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

70. The children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and by the age of five the level of attainment for most is above the national expectation. In the nursery the children work with 'office equipment' acting out various roles. During the inspection children in the age group did not have the opportunity to use computers which were broken. This is being rectified by the school in the near future. Children have a good knowledge of parts of the body and accurately identify elbows, wrists and foreheads. They measure and mix ingredients when making jam tarts, taking care with safety and hygiene precautions. They experience traditions from other cultures and in celebrations for the Chinese New Year attempt to eat with chop sticks. Children learn to care for animals and experience the wonders of new life as they watch chicks hatch. On visits around the school and to a pond, they learn to use magnifiers to examine in detail what they see, developing a strong sense of caring for living things.

71. The teaching of knowledge and understanding is good. Lessons and activities are well prepared and concentrate appropriately on developing the children's technical vocabulary. Children are sufficiently confident to describe what they are doing when, for example, they examine how plants grow and discover signs that spring is approaching. The children show very good levels of interest in these activities.

### **Physical development**

72. The development of children's manipulative skills when painting, cutting and gluing is good and attainment is sometimes above the expected outcomes. However, the development of their skills in climbing, jumping, balancing, and in playing with balls, hoops and ropes is only satisfactory. The children make good progress in handling a variety of small equipment such as scissors, paint brushes and spreaders. They use a range of construction kits to make shapes and models which they are able to describe. They cut paper and card with care and are beginning to use a variety of writing tools with increasing confidence and skill. During the inspection there were no opportunities to observe the children's skills in throwing, kicking or catching. In a physical education lesson they moved with good awareness of the space around them. Some activities take place outdoors but this area has not been fully developed and children do not have opportunities to climb, balance or swing.

73. The teaching of physical development is satisfactory overall. The children are provided with a range of appropriately challenging activities to develop co-ordination and spatial awareness. The teachers plan satisfactorily, linking current and past learning. The children enjoy physical activities and behave well.

### **Creative development**

74. The children's attainment in creative development is above the national expectation and they have achieved well since entering the nursery. They are developing a wide range of skills in art and are beginning to use a variety of media with confidence. They use paint boldly and are beginning to understand that a range of colours and shades can be mixed from red, blue and yellow. Their observational skills are developing well and these are illustrated in their careful drawing and painting of snowdrops. They listen closely to the teacher's instructions and act upon suggestions as to how to improve their work. Music is developed satisfactorily in the nursery. The children learn the names of some instruments and develop an appropriate sense of rhythm as they play their instruments enthusiastically.

75. The teaching of creative development is good and as a result the children make good progress. The teachers and support staff work effectively as a team. Relationships between staff and children are very good. There is a good balance between teacher directed tasks and activities the children choose themselves. Learning activities are practical, well thought out, interesting and relevant to children's previous experience.

## ENGLISH

76. The 1999 National Curriculum test results indicate that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment in reading and writing was very high when compared with all schools and well above average when compared with schools which have pupils from similar backgrounds. In the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 the results in English were well above average in comparison with all schools and above the national average for similar schools. These high standards have been maintained over recent years and are in line with the inspection report of 1997. The fact that a well above average proportion of the pupils attain level 3 or above at the end of Key Stage 1 and level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 2 indicates very good achievement by the more able pupils. Although there are differences in the results for boys and girls, the school's efficient system of tracking the progress of individuals shows that this is due to individual rather than gender variation. The evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils progress well in lessons and are achieving at levels broadly in line with the results of national tests.

77. Standards of speaking and listening are very good. At Key Stage 1 pupils listen intently to stories read to them in literacy hour activities. They show interest in characters and can recall elements of the plot. They listen well during shared reading and make good contributions to discussion about the story. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their speaking and listening skills. By Year 6 they have good skills of co-operation for example when working together on text from 'The Silver Sword'. Although pupils listening skills in activities related to English are good, their listening in other subjects is less good and is sometimes poor. This applies particularly, but not exclusively, to older pupils.

78. Standards of reading are very good. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are reading very fluently, and the most able pupils are reading with great confidence and expression. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have already mastered many aspects of information finding. They can locate information using the contents page in a book, an index and the classroom library. At the end of Key Stage 2 nearly all pupils are very fluent readers. They read with great confidence and poise and can discuss details of the text. Pupils are almost always aware of the errors they have made and attempt to correct them. In Year 6 they read for pleasure as well as for information and their ability to locate and use information, for example by employing the Dewey system in the library, is very good. Whilst they use information technology to find information, there is no evidence of the pupils being given opportunities to use a CD-ROM to carry out research.

79. Pupils' writing is very good at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 most have developed some understanding of punctuation, using capital letters and full stops. They write with neat, regular letter formation for a variety of purposes including comprehension of texts they have shared during literacy activities. They can write reports of events and are developing the ability to analyse stories they have composed. For example, pupils in the reception class were able to identify the main features of a story they wished to write, they described the plot and the characters, and how the story was to begin and end. Pupils' phonic skills are well developed and this supports their spelling. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use their good writing skills in some other subjects as well as in English lessons. Good examples were observed in science where pupils used good technical language to describe an experiment and in mathematics where pupils took notes as they planned a survey. However, the opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills in other subjects is limited by the fact that an undue proportion of the school day is devoted to literacy and numeracy sessions. By the end of Key Stage 2 handwriting is neat and often very mature, and the overall presentation of work is very good.

80. The high standards in literacy are clearly influenced by the good and, occasionally very good, teaching observed in English lessons. The high quality of the teaching strongly impacts on pupils' learning and the progress which they make. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, plan their lessons carefully and demand high standards. Lesson observations and test results show clearly that pupils very effectively acquire new skills and understanding as they move through the school. In a lesson for Year 5 some exceptionally good teaching, and particularly the teacher's very successful interaction with the pupils, enabled the latter to make very high quality verbal responses and suggest ideas which were very imaginative.

81. The subject is well managed by a subject co-ordinator who monitors pupils' performance in test results carefully and scrutinises all teachers' planning for English. However, she has little opportunity to monitor teaching quality by first hand observation. She maintains a portfolio of pupils' work and individual assessment records on all pupils; these strategies, in addition to the careful monitoring of national tests, means that a close and accurate picture of performance in English is available at all times. Assessment information is used well in curriculum planning. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy very effectively and the co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the process and its implications. The balance of activity within literacy hours is carefully controlled indicating that all staff also have a good understanding of the aims of the system. The impact of the strategy on pupils' learning is very positive.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average and consistent with those found in similar schools. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above the national average and better than those found in similar schools. At both key stages an above average proportion of the pupils reached higher levels in the tests. This was particularly the case at the end of Key Stage 2 where 41 per cent reached level 5 compared with a national figure of 24 per cent. Over the last four years the improvement in test results has been broadly in line with national improvements. However, there was a sharp rise in standards between 1998 and 1999 in the Key Stage 2 tests.

83. The inspection findings are that at both key stages the pupils' attainment in all aspects of mathematics, including numeracy, is above the national expectation. The fact that there is a greater proportion of pupils with average or below average attainment in Year 6 accounts for the slightly lower achievement this year. The pupils in this year group are reaching standards in line with the targets set by the school for the year 2000. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.

84. At both key stages the pupils conduct investigations and carry out practical work well and they have a very good understanding of the mathematical content of lessons. They skilfully carry out mental and written calculations using, in the latter case, mainly prescribed methods. Throughout the school pupils show good levels of flexibility when they calculate in their heads and they can explain the methods they use.

85. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils understand the mathematics they are tackling and many exercise initiative and develop strategies of their own. The pupils have a very good understanding of the number system and they know addition and subtraction facts up to 20, with many knowing facts beyond this. Pupils in Year 2 can count to 400 in tens, they understand and record numbers with up to three digits and they know how these ideas link to money. They understand some numerical patterns and use these to help them carry out mental calculations. For example, they know that  $5 + 4 = 4 + 5$  and that these facts are connected to  $9 - 5 = 4$ . They have a good knowledge of mathematical

vocabulary; for example, in the measurement of length where they can distinguish between 'thin' and 'narrow' and between 'length' and 'breadth'. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils successfully carry out calculations mentally and on paper selecting from a good repertoire of methods. At times standards are high. For example, pupils in Year 6 mentally carry out calculations such as 'If I add  $\frac{2}{3}$  and  $\frac{1}{9}$  what is the difference between the answer and 1?'

86. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages and in 25 per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection it was very good. However, there is too much variation in quality at Key Stage 2 where 17 per cent of the teaching is unsatisfactory. Most of the teachers have a good or, in some cases, a very good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. This combined with an understanding of the pupils and their needs enables them to prepare interesting and appropriate activities which motivate the pupils, generate enthusiasm and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. The teachers encourage the pupils to use and explain their own methods particularly when calculating mentally. This, alongside skilled questioning, observing and listening, enables the teachers to find out what the pupils know. In many lessons they use this information to provide a starting point for further teaching, either immediately or sometimes in a subsequent lesson. This on-going assessment ensures that the pupils make good progress. Classroom assistants, parents and other adults are used well to support groups of pupils and individuals in lessons.

87. In most lessons the pupils respond enthusiastically to the good classroom management and high expectations. Generally the teachers have good relationships with the pupils, interact with them sensitively and encourage them to make progress. In their turn the pupils behave well, work purposefully and, when given the opportunity, show initiative.

88. In the very best lessons the teachers often provide appropriate opportunities for the pupils to develop their own strategies and make decisions and choices. In one example in Year 5 a group of pupils was given the opportunity to design their own survey. They were very well supported by the teacher who provided them with a set of criteria to help them make decisions and joined their discussions to provide further challenges. As a result they produced work of good quality which subsequently provided the starting point for a lesson in information technology. This and other activities in mathematics provided good opportunities for speaking and listening and writing and thus made a good contribution to literacy.

89. The main weaknesses in the unsatisfactory lessons were weak questioning, limitations in subject knowledge, difficulties in managing the pupils and in ensuring that they listen, and instructions which are not clear. In these lessons the pupils lose interest and make slow progress.

90. Good attention is given to the teaching of numeracy and the teachers have been particularly successful in developing the pupils' skills in mental calculation. They ensure that they teach the pupils specific strategies for calculating and provide good opportunities for the pupils to develop their own methods. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for the pupils to use calculators either in mathematics or in other subjects.

91. The school has very successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and the subject is well planned. There are very effective strategies for monitoring and improving performance. These factors make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and the above average attainment.

92. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection. The results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 are much better and there has also been a great improvement in attainment and learning as judged during the inspection. In particular the pupils use and apply their knowledge of number, shape, the measures and data handling more effectively within mathematics. Occasionally they use this knowledge well in other subjects such as geography. However, the opportunities for doing this are limited by the comparatively short amount of time allocated to subjects other than English and mathematics. The performance of more able pupils in the National Curriculum tests, and as observed during the inspection, is much higher. The role of the co-ordinator has improved considerably and the current holder of this post has a good grasp of standards of attainment throughout the school. However, his subject expertise is not fully utilised as he has not as yet had the opportunity to work in other classrooms. The headteacher provides good support by monitoring the quality of teaching. The arrangements for assessment have been improved and are now very good. Assessment information is used well to inform curriculum planning. The governors are now effectively involved in the school's provision for mathematics particularly in connection with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy.

## **SCIENCE**

93. Standards in science have improved since the previous inspection. Results in the 1999 teacher assessments for 7 year olds were well above the national average and a very high proportion reached the higher level 3. The pupils' attainments were well above average in experimental and investigative science, and in physical processes. They were above average in life and living processes, and in materials and their properties. Inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards in science are above average and reflect these National Curriculum assessments.

94. Standards in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests for 1999 were well above average. Improvements over the past four years are better than the national trend. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, pupils' performance in science tests was close to the average overall, but was above average for the percentage of pupils reaching level 5 and above. These results indicate that effective teaching is enabling the higher attaining pupils to achieve appropriate standards. Inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 2, standards in science are above average and reflect the national test results for 1999.

95. Following a good range of experiences in the nursery and reception classes, pupils at Key Stage 1 take part in science lessons eagerly and are keen to learn. They know the main parts and organs of the body, and are beginning to understand that nerves carry messages. Pupils know the basic conditions that animals and plants need to keep alive, and that their bodies have a skeleton. They make sensible predictions about which growing media will be best, for example that powder paint won't be very successful. They have the investigational skills to set up experiments, make their own observations, and understand the need to have fair testing conditions. Most pupils know the meaning of the scientific terms used in their tasks as a result of a good emphasis on correct language by the teachers. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the physical properties of materials. They know that water changes to ice, for example, and that light will pass through some materials but not others.

96. At Key Stage 2 the teachers' very good emphasis on scientific investigation provides a good basis for developing the pupils' skills in scientific exploration. Pupils think carefully about how to set up their experiments and what to look for. In one experiment on the absorption of water by rocks they sensibly decided to try to control the amount of water by, for example, using a pipette. Other pupils carried out an investigation into how the heart responds to effort. They took care with measuring their pulse, and made suitable records of their measurements. By the end of the key stage most pupils understand how animals such as camels and polar bears, and some plants, have adapted to their habitats, although their research was limited by a lack of reference books. In an investigation into decomposing microbes, pupils showed a good understanding of the need to control the experimental conditions in order to obtain reliable observations. Their predictions and observations were sensible but in the absence of hand lenses they were not able to make close observations. Overall pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding is above average by the end of the key stage across the science topics.

97. Pupils throughout the school enjoy science, and apply themselves well so that they gain new knowledge and skills well. Most work hard at the tasks so that they understand the ideas and complete the work to a good standard. They make sound progress to Year 6 through their good levels of interest and effort. A science scheme provides good support in ensuring coverage of scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special education needs are carefully monitored and supported in the classroom and make good progress in the targets that are set for them. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They have positive attitudes to the activities and most concentrate reasonably well. There are good relationships in most lessons. The teachers give positive feedback to pupils which helps to motivate them. Pupils listen attentively in most but not all lessons and are keen to answer questions.

98. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers choose tasks well, building effectively on previous knowledge, skills and understanding. This ensures that the pupils make good progress. The teachers have good subject knowledge so that tasks are clearly explained to the pupils. Most set high expectations for behaviour and standards of work which helps to keep pupils focused on activities. Many teachers use a good questioning style to stimulate and challenge the pupils, for example when discussing how the heart works. The teachers' classroom management is usually good, so that pupils are clear about what is expected. A good selection of appropriate resources is provided for most tasks, although pupils seldom have responsibility for setting up an experiment. There is a lack of reference books and items of equipment such as hand lenses in some lessons. Teachers mostly respond well to the pupils, although some behaviour management with the oldest pupils is not effective. Most teachers give pupils praise and encouragement, and a clear view of what should be completed. Marking is up to date and although it is occasionally diagnostic it does not generally show pupils how to improve their work. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall with sound arrangements for them to inform curriculum planning.

99. The school has a sound policy for science and uses Local Education Authority guidance for coverage and progression. The subject meets statutory requirements. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership. She monitors teachers' planning and is able to give advice to staff and identify areas that need strengthening. She is not yet able to make lesson observations to check on standards through the school, and does not look at samples of children's work as an alternative. This limits her overall view of the development of science or the recognition of difficulties across the school.

## **ART**

100. Pupils' attainment in art is sound at both key stages. Work of above average quality in drawing and painting is produced by some pupils at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. National Curriculum requirements are met in investigating and making and in the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and artists. All pupils including those with special educational needs make sound progress. These findings are similar to those in the previous inspection report.

101. Although art is often taught in conjunction with other subjects it is also taught as a discrete subject. At both key stages, pupils have opportunities to record their responses by observing and developing their own ideas. The best work occurs when the pupils are required to apply their existing knowledge in a new context and when they are taught to develop the use of texture, tone, colour, line and form. At Key Stage 1 pupils experience a good range of media, including paint, pencil, pastel, pen and ink. They know of and can use a satisfactory range of techniques. They explore alternative ways of applying colour using tools other than paint brushes. In Year 1 many pupils create good quality paintings paying careful attention to both foreground and background. They also experiment with computer generated art using their skills to draw and colour portraits.

102. At Key Stage 2 the quality of art work varies and is dependent on the teachers' knowledge and understanding and the amount of time devoted to the subject. There are, for example, times when the task provided lacks challenge and gives limited opportunities for the exploration of colour and shade when creating patterns. Pupils give satisfactory attention to detail when completing observational drawings. Sketch books are used but the school has still to develop their use as a source of art experience. Pupils investigate how to achieve artistic effects, for example, using pastels to create the effect of sun coming through clouds. Their understanding of the work of famous artists is satisfactorily developed. Pupils in Year 6 create paintings, drawings and collages in the style of famous artists such as Picasso and Monet. These show an understanding of the artists' styles and some of the pupils' work is of good quality. Although limited in range pupils also study the work of artists from other cultures in Africa and in the East, and express their views on what they see. Insufficient attention is given to three-dimensional art.

103. It was only possible to observe a limited number of lessons during the period of inspection. These indicate that the overall quality of teaching is sound with some lessons being good. Most teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subject and lessons are planned satisfactorily. In the best lessons subject knowledge is very good and through good questioning and attention to detail teachers encourage pupils to improve the quality of their work. In a small number of lessons teachers had insufficient knowledge to extend and challenge pupils' thinking and skills. Lessons are conducted at an appropriate pace and sufficient emphasis is placed on techniques and composition and on the choice of tools and materials. Standards in art are a reflection of the limited amount of time spent on the subject. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the subject and are appropriately organised and accessible to pupils. There is a scheme of work for teachers to follow but as yet it has not been adapted to meet the particular needs of the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

104. Due to timetabling arrangements no design and technology lessons took place during the course of the inspection. However, a scrutiny of completed work, discussions with pupils and staff and an examination of planning and record keeping suggests that the pupils make sound progress and standards are in line with national expectations at both key stages.

105. Resources for design and technology are good and pupils report that they enjoy the subject. Planning documents suggest there is an appropriate emphasis on designing as well as making and that the evaluation of finished products is also properly addressed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. The quality of pupils' learning and their progress are sound overall at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 teachers introduce pupils to features of the locality to help them understand physical and human characteristics of places nearby. The pupils use atlases and find the location of particular places. There are good links with information technology and using it pupils demonstrate a good understanding of compass point directions. At Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the earth's crust and the way in which particular physical features arise, such as mountain ranges. They understand the development of settlements and land use. In Year 6 many pupils interpret well the results of a survey of local traffic. Using tables and graphs they sensibly compare and contrast data from two different time periods during the day. The pupils are beginning to understand the importance of particular characteristics of places and their impact on human activity, in relation to opportunities for employment or food production for example. They are also developing an appropriate understanding of environmental issues and people's responsibility for the world they inhabit. Residential visits provide good opportunities for geographical enquiry.

107. Pupils take part actively in their lessons, and the quality of learning is mostly good. The practical survey arranged for pupils in Year 6, for example, provided a very good basis for the pupils to consider how the lives of people in Codicote are affected by circumstances beyond their control. They are learning appropriate skills of analysis as they investigate places and themes. Their good attitudes and interest, and mostly good behaviour, support their learning well. Pupils including those with special educational needs make sound progress.

108. Teaching is generally good in relation to the areas covered, although occasionally objectives about what the pupils should learn are not clear. The planning is usually careful, with appropriate attention to geographical skills, the raising questions and geographical enquiry. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and most have a good questioning style that helps the pupils to reason and explain.

109. There have been a number of improvements since the previous inspection. The school now follows a Local Education Authority scheme of work that provides for coverage and progression through the school within a planned topic structure. This forms a suitable basis for developing the pupils' geographical skills and understanding. The co-ordinator provides helpful informal support to colleagues but has no time for lesson observations. She is able to monitor provision for geography informally but does not yet look at samples of pupils' work.

## **HISTORY**

110. Two lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 but none were seen at Key Stage 2. To supplement observations past work was considered and discussions with pupils were held. Overall the pupils' work is what is expected for the age groups concerned. Comparisons with the previous inspection, when evidence was also limited, are difficult. However, whilst the pupils currently in Key Stage 1 have a good grasp of historical facts they are now less confident than their predecessors with ideas of chronology. The pupils at Key Stage 2 match the pupils in 1997 with regard to factual recall and they understand the principles of historical enquiry. However, they lack confidence when talking about the possibility of bias within sources of evidence.

111. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have a good knowledge of the work they have covered which includes The Plague, the Fire of London, Guy Fawkes, and Florence Nightingale. However, their insecure grasp of chronology leads them to a disagreement about whether The Plague was in 1996 or 1997! By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils can talk well about recent work on the Victorians and they have a reasonable recall of periods which they have studied in earlier years. The pupils talk enthusiastically about their experiences on a visit to a 'Victorian school' in Hitchin,

112. The quality of the teaching in the two lessons seen was good overall. The pupils were well managed, made good progress and behaved well. The use of artefacts - soft toys - in one of the lessons motivated the pupils and in the other lesson skilful questioning checked that the pupils had understood the lesson objectives in relation to the Crimean War and the work of Florence Nightingale. At Key Stage 2 an analysis of past work indicates a good contribution to literacy as pupils are involved in a variety of forms of writing including poetry and the writing of letters. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they reflect, for example, on the lives of the rich and poor in Victorian times. There is little evidence, however, that a significant contribution is made to the learning of numeracy or that numeracy skills are practised within the subject.

113. A number of factors make a satisfactory or good contribution to attainment in history. For example, planning is sound and has improved since the previous inspection. There is a useful policy and a scheme of work which ensure coverage of the curriculum, as specified by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and sound progress by the pupils. The co-ordinator has a sound knowledge of provision throughout the school but she has not had the opportunity to monitor standards of work in the subject. Resources are satisfactory and the staff supplement these by bringing in items and using the pupils' families as a source of interesting artefacts. The curriculum is enriched by visits which include mansions and a toy museum. A weakness is the limited amount of curriculum time devoted to the teaching of history.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. Pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2 but above this at the end of Key Stage 1. This reflects the significant improvements in standards that have taken place over the last six months as a direct result of the planning, investment and enthusiasm of the teaching staff and particularly the subject co-ordinator. Levels of attainment are now well above those seen in the last inspection.

115. Many pupils have access to computers at home and this helps them to practise skills learned at school. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have acquired skills in drafting and revising work on the screen and know how to improve their work through editing. They know how to use application programs to collect, display and interpret data they have gathered. They have experience of, and skills in, control technology and use these to program computer controlled robots. Currently there is no evidence of pupils using a CD ROM to carry out research or of pupils gaining experience in the use of digital cameras or electronic mail. However, recent progress has been rapid and developments in these areas are planned.

116. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have experience of using tape recorders to listen to story tapes. Their skills in using the computer keyboard are good. They can carry out basic word processing functions when writing on screen and, with some guidance, print their work. They use the mouse confidently and accurately and are familiar with simple commands on the task bar. They enter simple instructions to control a programmable toy and can explain what they have done to make the vehicle move in a particular direction.

117. Throughout the school most pupils have made good progress over the last six months. Teachers have significantly increased their knowledge, skills and confidence in using the new technology and this, together with the direct teaching sessions which are now part of the curriculum, has contributed to these improvements. Most pupils are well motivated by the subject and show interest in their work. Higher attaining pupils are especially enthusiastic and spend additional time on the school's computers during the mid-day break. At all ages pupils are careful when using equipment and materials. They work independently and are considerate towards each other when working in pairs or in small groups. Good quality direct teaching takes place and pupils benefit considerably from this. Most teachers are developing sound and sometimes good subject knowledge and the school has, in partnership with the Local Education Authority, arranged further training sessions to increase teacher confidence and skills. However, apart from mathematics, art and geography there is very limited evidence of computer technology being used in other subjects. Support material is well organised and teaching programmes to enhance the learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs are being developed. Some limited monitoring of pupils' attainment is carried out but currently no systematic, cross-school records of pupils' skills and knowledge are available.

118. The quantity and quality of learning resources are now satisfactory having improved significantly in the recent past. The subject co-ordinator together with other teaching staff are eager to develop the use of information technology across the curriculum and plans are in place for this to take place over the next twelve months.

## **MUSIC**

119. Overall pupils make good progress throughout the school and standards of attainment are above those expected at both Key Stages 1 and 2. This is broadly in line with the judgement contained in the last inspection report. There were limited opportunities to listen to pupils sing during the period of the inspection. Where these did occur, most pupils sang in time but did not demonstrate an understanding of clear articulation or phrasing in their singing. Overall inspection evidence indicates that there is a lack of emphasis on the teaching of the skills necessary to develop a good singing voice. Pupils do, however, have good opportunities to learn to read music and in Years 2 and 3 they learn to play the recorder. Many of them have good skills in reading musical notation and they continue to develop these skills through involvement with musical groups later in the school.

120. Very good provision exists for those pupils who wish to learn to play an instrument. Almost one pupil out of six in the school receives additional tuition from the Local Education Authority music service in string, brass or wind instruments. The quality of this provision is very good and many pupils make very good progress in this area. Similar standards are achieved by pupils in understanding and appreciating music. They recognise the works of classical composers and show a very good appreciation of different traditions in folk music. Currently, older pupils are examining the music of the 1950s and 1960s as part of a study on the roots of popular music.

121. The teaching of musical appreciation is good as is instrumental tuition. Where the teaching is good there is a strong emphasis on the musical elements of the lesson, good use is made of subject

specific vocabulary and an importance is attached to improving the quality of performance. However, the provision of individual music tuition raises issues of equality of access for those involved as they regularly miss parts of lessons in core subjects such as English and mathematics.

122. Pupils enjoy music. Most listen carefully and contribute to discussions. They are keen to participate in the composition of music and verse and respond positively to challenges. Music is an important part of the school's tradition and is well placed to remain so.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

123. Standards of attainment in physical education are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Within some aspects of the subject, for example games at the end of Year 6, standards are high.

124. At Key Stage 1 pupils follow instructions and practise and refine their balancing, jumping and travelling skills. They can sequence movements and are developing poise. In dance they plan a range of movements successfully; for example a Year 1 class created a sequence of movements to a Strauss waltz. Pupils are well motivated and work hard during gymnastic and dance sessions. At Key Stage 2 pupils use a range of large apparatus very successfully in lessons. They create, compose and refine a wide range of balancing, climbing and hanging skills; they use the equipment imaginatively and safely.

125. At both key stages good teaching ensures that the pupils progress well as they learn new skills, support each other and work safely. In the best lessons teachers have immediate control which means they do not have to ask repeatedly for pupils to pay attention and listen; they give good demonstrations and are properly dressed for the subject; they have good subject knowledge and understanding. In these lessons pupils are constantly challenged to improve their performance. In games lessons there is good provision for the development of skills as well as actual games; teachers, coaching skills are generally good.

126. The subject is well managed by a co-ordinator who has good subject knowledge and ensures a good balance within the main aspects of the subject. Resources are very good and the school obtains very credible results in inter-school fixtures in a variety of team games. Swimming is restricted to one year group per term, but standards are good.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

127. The school has maintained sound standards in relation to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress.

128. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have an understanding of the major Christian festivals, for example the main events of Christmas and Easter. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of significant events in the life of Jesus. They know that He called the twelve disciples to follow Him, and understand what it is to be a friend. Pupils are encouraged to develop moral and spiritual awareness. For example, they are in awe of the great variety of plants and animals in the world.

129. Within Key Stage 2 pupils gain a more detailed knowledge of events in the life of Jesus, for example the wedding feast of Cana. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of customs and the major festivals of Christianity and Hinduism, and know some of the objects that are special for Hindus. They understand something of the relationship between family life and the values and beliefs

of religious families. Pupils know many features and items in Christian churches. Following a visit to the National Gallery pupils in Year 5 showed a good recall and knowledge of religious symbolism within paintings. Pupils understand the significance of special religious places to many people. Lessons give significant prominence to developing pupils' wider understanding of religious festivals, from a number of faiths including Christianity.

130. The pupils recall details of Hindu stories and have a developing understanding of their meaning as they acquire new knowledge. Most pupils apply themselves well and are very interested in the activities given to them. Pupils' attitudes towards religious education are good at both key stages. Most enjoy discussing their ideas, and work hard to produce a good finished piece of work. The pupils are thoughtful in considering the meaning of symbols such as a dove or skull. The behaviour of most children is good and this supports their attainment well.

131. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Planning is effectively linked to the locally agreed syllabus. Subject knowledge is sound, and sometimes extensive, and the teachers use good methods that encourage thoughtful discussions. Some teachers have a good questioning style that helps pupils to think and reason, as in the lessons on friendship and symbolism. In some lessons the teaching is of high quality, as for example in a lesson on religious symbolism within paintings, and helps pupils extend and consolidate their learning. There are usually suitable resources. Everyday assessment practice is sound as teachers respond to pupils within lessons, although the school does not have procedures to note progress through the years.

132. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role and provides helpful support to the staff. Overall management of the subject is sound, since it is not a current focus for development. The co-ordinator monitors coverage of work through the years informally, but does not yet look at samples of children's work to ascertain standards through the school. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus carefully and ensures balance and full coverage within a slightly tight time allocation.