

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **AYLESHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Aylesham

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118563

Headteacher: Gerry D'cruz

Reporting inspector: David Tytler  
8990

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 February 2001

Inspection number: 193126

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Attlee Avenue  
Aylesham  
Kent

Postcode: CT3 3BS

Telephone number: 01304 840392

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Peter Cosier

Date of previous inspection: February 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8890	David Tytler	<i>Registered inspector</i>		School's results and pupils' achievements, How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1311	Barry Wood	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12764	Wendy Thomas	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Information technology; Design technology.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Assessment.
11901	Pat Lowe	<i>Team inspector</i>	The Foundation Stage; Mathematics; Art; History.	
18466	Kevin Hodge	<i>Team inspector</i>	Equal opportunities; Geography; Religious education; Physical education.	Spiritual, moral and social development.
23658	Stephen Parker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; English; Music.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Aylesham is a large primary school, serving families living in the former mining village, with 323 pupils taught in 11 classes, five of them mixed-age. A further 50 pupils attend the school's nursery on a part-time basis in the morning and afternoon. In comparison with similar schools, it has a higher than average number of pupils eligible for free school meals and having special educational needs. The attainment of pupils on entry into the school covers a wide range of ability, but is below what is expected nationally for children of their age. In recent years attainment on entry has been well below national expectations, and this is still having an adverse impact on standards.

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

The school provides a sound education for all its pupils and is well regarded by parents and the community it serves. Standards remain too low, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in writing throughout the school, which adversely affects standards in other subjects. The headteacher and governors have introduced a range of strategies designed to raise the attainment of all pupils, but these are too recent to have had an impact. The school has considerable difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, and this too depresses standards over time. When account is taken of all these factors, the school provides sound value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress in line with their individual education plans.
- The nursery is of high quality and is already having a positive impact on the standards of pupils entering the main school.
- The school is well led by the headteacher, who provides a clear educational direction for the school.
- The school forges good relationships with the community and with parents, who are playing an increasingly important part in the life of the school.
- The pastoral care of pupils is good.
- The provision for pupils' moral development is good.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- Standards across the school, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Staffing arrangements to provide for permanent teachers of high quality.
- The use of information on what pupils know and can do to plan for their individual needs.
- The marking of pupils' work.



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

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

The school was last inspected in February 1999, when it was taken out of special measures. All the key issues have been addressed, though standards remain too low, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in writing throughout the school, which adversely affects standards in other subjects. The school now has systems for gathering information on what pupils know and can do, but these are not being used fully to plan for individual needs. The marking of pupils' work is also still in need of improvement. The school has considerable difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, and this has resulted in pupils making slower progress than they should. The proportion of good or better teaching seen during the inspection was higher than at the time of the last report.

## **STANDARDS**

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

<b>Performance in:</b>	<b>Compared with</b>			
	<b>All schools</b>			<b>similar schools</b>
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	E	D	D	C
Science	E	E	C	B

<b>Key</b>	
<i>well above average</i>	<b>A</b>
<i>above average</i>	<b>B</b>
<i>Average</i>	<b>C</b>
<i>below average</i>	<b>D</b>
<i>well below average</i>	<b>E</b>

Standards are slowly beginning to rise for 11 year olds, although they remain well below the national expectations in the tests for children of their age in English, and below in mathematics. Results in science matched the national expectations. Inspection evidence indicated that standards in the current Year 6 are similar to those found in last year's tests in English and mathematics. Standards in science, however, have fallen.

When compared with those of schools having a similar intake, the results were well below them in English, in line with them in mathematics, and above them in science. In relation to the prior attainment of the same pupils in their Key Stage 1 tests, improvement in English was fast in comparison with other similar schools and very fast in mathematics and science. The school exceeded its targets in 1999 and 2000 for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 in the national tests for English and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology are below those expected nationally for children of their age. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and in most cases have satisfactory attitudes to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour was satisfactory at breaks and lunch times and in classrooms, with some good examples seen. Unsatisfactory behaviour was generally linked to shortcomings in the teaching.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is satisfactory. Moral development is good; spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative or take responsibility.
Attendance	Below the national average for schools of this type. A significant minority of pupils are regularly late.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour during the inspection were generally satisfactory, with many good examples seen. They were satisfactory in 41 per cent of lessons and good or better in 49 per cent. They were unsatisfactory in six lessons (10 per cent), mostly centred on a few classes, which had had a number of different teachers.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen: 59	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

*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 observed during the inspection was generally satisfactory, with many good examples seen. Teaching was good in the Foundation Stage, and slightly better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Overall, teaching was satisfactory in 51 per cent of lessons and good or better in 43 per cent. Unsatisfactory teaching was found in four lessons (7 per cent). In the Foundation Stage, teaching was very good in two of the nine lessons seen, good in six and sound in one. In Key Stage 1, teaching was good or very good in 31 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 62 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson (6 per cent). In Key Stage 2, teaching was good or very good in 36 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 56 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in three lessons (9 per cent).

In lessons, the quality of learning matched the teaching, but the turnover of staff and some unsatisfactory teaching in the past has meant that many pupils have not made the progress they should. The teaching of English and mathematics during the inspection was judged to be satisfactory overall, although not all elements of the national literacy and numeracy strategies are applied consistently, and basic skills are not given sufficient emphasis.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A considerable amount of time is spent on English and mathematics. As a result, time is reduced in other subjects, which limits pupils' wider experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are very good, and the pupils make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Personal development is sound. The moral development of pupils is good; their spiritual and cultural development satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils.	The pastoral care of pupils is good. There are satisfactory arrangements for gathering information on what pupils know and can do, but this information is not used fully to plan for their individual needs.

A particular success for the headteacher has been his ability to gain the trust of parents. A growing number are taking an active part in school events and support their children's learning at home. Arrangements for supporting parents of children entering the nursery are particularly good. A significant minority of parents, however, are not yet responding to the school's efforts to involve them in their children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong and enthusiastic leadership and is sensitive to the needs of pupils, parents and staff. Teachers have been allocated specific responsibilities, which they undertake conscientiously. Many of these appointments, however, are recent, and are just beginning to have an impact on school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Key governors, particularly the chair, have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are making an important contribution to school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and senior management team regularly review the school's performance and adjust priorities accordingly. The role of subject managers, however, in monitoring teaching and learning is in need of development.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of all the resources available. The headteacher, in particular, seeks funds from outside agencies to support school projects.

The school has real difficulties in recruiting and retaining permanent staff. Whilst every effort is made to find temporary staff of high quality, the disruption caused to children's learning has resulted in many making slow progress over time. The accommodation is good and resources for learning are adequate to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children becoming mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Good teaching.</li> <li>• Their children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out-of-school activities.</li> <li>• The information they receive on how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The partnership with parents.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• Behaviour.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agreed with the positive views of the majority of parents. Evidence gathered during the inspection also showed that behaviour was satisfactory, that the information provided to parents was satisfactory, and that the homework policy was being applied appropriately. Inspectors also concluded, however, that the range of out-of-school activities was limited.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards are slowly beginning to rise for 11 year olds, although in last year's national tests they remained well below the national expectations for children of their age in English, and below them in mathematics. Results in science matched the national expectations. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that standards in the current Year 6 are similar to those found in the tests in English and mathematics. Standards in science, however, have fallen.
2. When compared with those of schools having a similar intake, the results were well below them in English, in line with them in mathematics, and above them in science. In relation to the prior attainment of the same pupils in their Key Stage 1 tests, improvement in English was fast in comparison with that in similar schools, and very fast in the case of mathematics and science. The school exceeded its targets in 1999 and 2000 for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 in the national tests for English and mathematics.
3. Children enter the school with a wide range of ability, but below what is expected nationally for children of their age. In recent years, attainment on entry has been well below national expectations and this is still having an adverse impact on standards. Standards have also been depressed over time by the high rate of teacher turnover and the very real difficulties in recruiting permanent staff. Many children are also making slower progress than they should because of some poor teaching in the past.
4. Children are making good progress in the Foundation Stage thanks to good teaching in both the nursery and the reception classes. In personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development, attainment at the end of the Foundation stage is below national expectations for children of their age. Attainment is in line with national expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.
5. In last year's national English tests for seven year olds, standards were very low. Inspection evidence indicates that standards continue to be very low in writing, and well below average in reading, speaking and listening. Whilst there has been some improvement from a very low base, results in last year's tests for 11 year olds were still well below the national average and the average of similar schools. Results were very low in writing, whilst results in reading were close to the national average, which represents a good improvement on the standards achieved by this group when they were seven. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards in writing in the current Year 6 remain very low. The unsatisfactory progress pupils make in writing as they move through the school limits their achievement in other subjects. Standards in reading in the present Year 6 are below the national average, but much better than standards in writing. Standards in listening and speaking are below average, although pupils make good progress given their low standards on entry to the school.

6. By the age of seven, most pupils pay attention to instruction and willingly join in class discussions, but very few extend their answers and develop their ideas. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to take turns in discussion and generally listen politely to the views of others. Many 11 year olds, however, do not speak clearly enough, and most need more coaching and planned experiences to reach the expected standard. Nevertheless, pupils with higher attainment across Key Stage 2 responded very well to the challenge of speaking formally to the large audience of a school assembly attended by parents.

7. By the age of seven, those pupils with average attainment and above are able to read independently from books matched to their level of attainment, although the level of language difficulty is below that expected for their age and many are unable to read aloud confidently with expression. By the age of 11, most pupils read longer texts silently with good concentration. Few pupils, however, reach the higher level in the national tests. Pupils with special needs and low attainment make good progress when they are withdrawn for the well structured programmes which are organised to develop their literacy skills.

8. Standards of presentation are low in Key Stage 1 and many pupils have poorly formed handwriting. Pupils with higher attainment write stories based on traditional tales, showing sound understanding of story structures. They do not, however, write independently at length often enough. Pupils with average attainment can write single sentence answers. Those with special needs and lower attainment need significant help to write whole sentences. In Key Stage 2, the range of writing is satisfactory. Nevertheless, pupils continue to show a lack of confidence in writing independently at length. Throughout the school the most significant weakness in writing is the high level of inaccuracy in spelling and punctuation in daily work in all subjects.

9. In mathematics, the attainment of pupils in last year's national tests for seven year olds was well below the national average for children of their age and well below the average for similar schools. The attainment of pupils in last year's national tests for 11 year olds was below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards remain well below the national average at Key Stage 1 and below at Key Stage 2. The weakest areas are in mental mathematics, in using and applying mathematics, and in pupils' ability to apply their knowledge to problem solving activities.

10. By the age of seven, 75 per cent of pupils can sequence numbers and count forwards and backwards in ones and tens from any two-digit number. They know the place value of digits to 100. They are able to place numbers in the correct order. They are able to recall addition and subtraction facts to 10 and know the 2 and 10 times table. About 25 per cent of these pupils can count forwards and backwards in 10s and 100s from any 3 digit number and know the place value of digits to 1000. They recall addition and subtraction facts to 20 and know the 5 times table.

11. By the time they are 11, average and more able pupils understand place value, solve number problems, using a variety of mental and written computations with the four operations, and add and subtract decimals to two places. They can make three dimensional mathematical models and draw two dimensional shapes. They collect data and use a frequency table to record it. They understand mode and median and construct and interpret simple line graphs.

12. Last year, teachers judged pupils' attainment in science at the age of seven to be well below that expected nationally for children of their age. However, there was a marked improvement in last year's test results for 11 year olds, and pupils attained standards in line with those expected nationally. When compared with those in schools of similar intake pupils attained good standards in science. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of both key stages at the present time are below those expected nationally for children of their age. Standards in information and communication technology are below those expected nationally for children of their age. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their individual education plans set out clear, specific and suitably challenging targets for their academic and personal development. They make very good progress when withdrawn for intensive instruction. When they return to class, they generally make good progress because they were keen to do well and try to improve the quality of their performance the second time round.

14. Work is adapted to their needs and they are given extra help. Careful monitoring of their progress and regular adjustment of targets in their plans sustains a good quality of learning, and few require a statement of special needs. The school is in the early stage of identifying more able or gifted pupils, and such pupils were noted as making good progress in lessons when given work at a more advanced level.

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

15. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour observed during the inspection were generally satisfactory, with many good examples seen. They were satisfactory in 41 per cent of lessons and good or better in 49 per cent. They were unsatisfactory in six lessons (10 per cent), mostly centred on a few classes, which had had a number of teachers. They were consistently good in the Foundation Stage, and slightly better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. The picture is similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and given good support by their classmates.

16. In many lessons in the current inspection, especially at Key Stage 2, pupils were motivated and eager to contribute, but in some lessons noise levels rose during group work. Relationships throughout the school are satisfactory, with some good relationships observed between adults and pupils. At Key Stage 1, pupils work well together, listen to each other, and share resources. Older pupils have limited dealings with younger pupils, as a result of the split school and playgrounds. The school makes it clear that it expects pupils to behave well and take their learning seriously. Recent staffing changes, however, have adversely affected the attitudes and behaviour of pupils in a few classes.

17. Whilst pupils' personal development is satisfactory, there are limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility or to show initiative. Children entering the Foundation Stage quickly gain confidence and some independence. They are attentive and respond well to their teachers, learning to find their way around the many activities and areas without displaying any anxieties. They are well behaved and know the classroom routines, occasionally shouting

out in their excitement and enjoyment of the lesson. Reception pupils are enthusiastic learners, developing good work habits through their enjoyment. Relationships throughout the nursery and reception are very good. Pupils are learning to be sympathetic and understanding of each other, allowing the very good integration of children with special educational needs.

18. The attitudes of pupils overall are satisfactory but can be variable between classes and within classes. Where attitudes are good, pupils settle well to lessons, and they are interested, responsive, and listen and concentrate well. Pupils can be keen to develop ideas and arguments, as in a Year 6 lesson on the local community. They like to show off their work, as in celebration assemblies, and generally respond well to good teaching. Where attitudes are unsatisfactory, pupils become passive and disengaged from the lesson, with the result that they make few gains in their learning. Pupils with unsatisfactory attitudes are mostly associated with classes where there has been high staff turnover, or where teaching strategies are inappropriate. The attitudes of girls in Key Stage 2 is sometimes affected by the boys' dismissive demeanour, which undermines the girls' confidence and involvement and causes them to be passive learners.

19. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Where it is good, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils try hard to do well. When attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory, teachers find it difficult to sustain a high quality teaching and learning environment. Pupils become noisy, do not listen, and shout out answers indiscriminately. A minority of the pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, and do not have a good understanding of the school's expectations for self-discipline. Behaviour around the school is good when staff are clearly in evidence. Pupils are aware of the routines for moving around the school. Bullying was not observed, but incident and accident books indicate that conflicts can rise to the surface. Occasionally, the school needs to correct some pupil's bad language. The school uses detentions on a weekly basis to correct poor behaviour and has excluded pupils for extreme poor behaviour in the last two years.

20. Attendance has improved over the last four years, but still remains below the national average for schools of this type. Authorised absence remains at a consistently high level and unauthorised absence has increased significantly in the last year. Both are affected by the absence of traveller children and by extended family holidays, taken during term-time. A minority of pupils are late in the morning, which can disturb the first lesson of the day. Punctuality throughout the remainder of the school day is satisfactory.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

21. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, and many examples of good teaching were seen. Teaching was good in the Foundation Stage, and slightly better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Overall, teaching was satisfactory in 51 per cent of lessons and good or better in 43 per cent. Unsatisfactory teaching was found in four lessons (7 per cent). In the Foundation Stage, teaching was very good in two of the nine lessons seen, good in six and sound in one. In Key Stage 1, teaching was good or very good in 31 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 62 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson (6 per cent). In Key Stage 2, teaching was good or very good in 36 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 56 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in three lessons (9 per cent).



22. The quality of learning matched the teaching, but the turnover of staff and some unsatisfactory teaching in the past has meant that many pupils have not made the progress they should. The teaching of English and mathematics during the inspection was judged to be satisfactory. Not all elements of the national literacy and numeracy strategies are applied consistently, and the teaching of basic skills was judged to be unsatisfactory overall. Teachers do not, for example, ensure that pupils correct their work, and as result many mistakes are repeated.

23. In the Foundation Stage, teachers plan together carefully and ensure that all aspects of the early learning goals are covered. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. The good teaching results in children making good progress in all aspects of their learning. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding, and they teach the basic skills well. They make good use of on-going assessment to inform their planning, which is of high quality. They have high expectations of both work and behaviour and use homework to consolidate and build on work done in the classroom.

24. In both key stages, teachers' knowledge and understanding is satisfactory and is used to enable pupils to expand their own knowledge and develop their skills, with the result that most pupils make sound progress in lessons. In a mathematics lesson of high quality, with a Year 6 top set, the teacher used her very good knowledge and understanding to engage the pupils in a range of activities that captured their interest.

25. Planning is sound in both key stages to ensure that all elements of the National Curriculum are covered. Teachers do not, however, make enough use of continuous assessment to plan for the needs of groups or for individual needs.

26. There were many examples of teachers having high expectations of behaviour and work, though this was not always the case. In a good Year 3/4 science lesson the teacher had high expectations of both behaviour and work, challenging pupils to think for themselves and to explain why different switches are used for different purposes. They enjoyed the work and tried hard to do well, making good gains in their learning as a result. However, in many lessons that were otherwise judged to be satisfactory, teacher's expectations were not high enough and the work offered to pupils lacked challenge. As a result, the progress they made was limited.

27. Teachers in both key stages practised a satisfactory range of teaching methods which engaged pupils' interest. One particularly good example was seen in a Year 6 history lesson on the Victorians. The teacher wore Victorian dress and conducted the lesson in the style of the times, giving pupils' first hand experience of life in the nineteenth century. Satisfactory use is made of homework throughout the school, and teachers are beginning to use the recently introduced homework policy to build on the work done in the classroom.

28. The management of pupils is good at both key stages. The permanent staff in particular establish and maintain clear routines and procedures, which are applied consistently and well understood by pupils. Teachers in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory use of time, support staff

and resources, and teachers in Key Stage 1 make good use of *all* the resources available to them. In a good Year 1 English lesson, the teacher made profitable use of learning support assistants to work with lower attaining groups, whilst another group made imaginative use of an audio tape to extend their vocabulary.

29. The unsatisfactory lessons were characterised by low expectations of what pupils were capable of doing, a slow pace, and too few opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and carry out independent research and investigation. In some cases, too, there was not enough variety in what pupils were being asked to do, and poor skills in behaviour management allowed pupils to drift off task. As a result, pupils in these unsatisfactory lessons became uninterested in the work and made few gains in their learning.

30. Pupils with special needs are very well taught when they are withdrawn for specialist help. They take part in well planned and carefully focused activities taken at a brisk pace to engage them mentally, physically and emotionally. Competitions, games and puzzles make learning interesting for them, and these sessions are productive and happy because pupils realise for themselves that they are making good progress. Most complete their regular homework tasks.

31. On return to class, they make good progress because teachers plan appropriate work guided by the targets of their individual education plans. Teachers encourage them to take part in class discussions and to show their results to the class at the end of lessons. Learning support assistants help them to complete their work successfully and make useful notes on their progress. Support assistants also play a key role in supporting lower attaining pupils when they are withdrawn for structured programmes to improve their basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

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

32. The school provides a broad curriculum, covering all aspects of the national curriculum and religious education. There is a balanced curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage which is based on the nationally expected early learning goals for children in nursery and reception classes. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced successfully, although not all elements are taught consistently across the school, and the booster classes for pupils in Year 6 are proving very effective.

33. Whilst there is no formal policy, the school does have a programme for sex education. The school nurse supports work with older pupils, and parents are invited to view the materials used. A policy for drugs awareness is in place and personal, social and health education is being developed.

34. At the time of the last report, the curriculum was judged to be appropriately broad and balanced, except that information and communication technology was under-represented. Since that time the curriculum requirements for primary schools have changed and foundation subjects now have a higher priority than at the time of the previous inspection. The school is very concerned to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and thus allocates a great deal of curriculum time to English and mathematics. Nevertheless, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities to

develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. This results in a lack of curriculum balance. This is especially noticeable in the investigational and experimental aspects of science and mathematics. The school is addressing its provision for information and communication technology and this aspect of its work is steadily improving.

35. The role of curriculum co-ordinators is developing. Many are new to their roles and their involvement in monitoring teaching and learning requires development. Policies and schemes of work have recently been put in place, but will need to be carefully monitored to ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes make steady progress in their learning.

36. The range of extra curricular activities is limited. There are some sporting activities and a choir, which meets for specific activities such as Christmas services and the summer production. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of local interest, and the school has made strenuous efforts to make links with the local community and partner institutions. There are very good links with secondary schools to which pupils transfer at 11. The local Baptist minister is a regular visitor to the school, which also welcomes story tellers, music groups, theatre groups, police, and youth and community associations.

37. Provision for pupils with special needs is very good. Class teachers are helped by the co-ordinator for special needs to design individual education plans to meet the needs of each pupil, taking account of their background, personality and learning styles. Individuals with special needs, and others with low attainment, are withdrawn regularly from lessons in other subjects for brief but intensive instruction in basic skills. Teaching in these withdrawal groups is supported by a range of well-structured teaching materials, including computer software. The 'small steps' approach to literacy teaching in withdrawal groups is more sharply focused than that for other pupils in the literacy hour. As a result, teaching has more impact and pupils with special needs make better progress than their peers, although at a lower level. When they are withdrawn for this instruction pupils miss some teaching in other subjects, but their timetables are adjusted at half-termly intervals to ensure that it is not always the same subject that they miss.

38. The school provides satisfactory provision for equal opportunities throughout the school, but there are aspects that are not addressed effectively. There are few arrangements to help older boys and girls to socialise more, particularly in the lunch halls and playground. There are also occasions when boys tend to dominate question and answer sessions and girls remain passive. The school makes good efforts to provide equal facilities and opportunities for traveller pupils and those who have severe physical disabilities.

## **Personal Development**

39. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development continues to be sound and their moral development good. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted through assemblies and to some extent through the religious education lessons. Assemblies are well planned, with appropriate content and some time for reflection and prayer. The lack of music, however, does not help to set the mood or tone for the assembly to come.

40. Pupils are encouraged to think about how they treat others, how they are treated, and how to be thoughtful towards each other. In one junior assembly the theme of life being a journey was explored well. The pupils contributed effectively to the activities and enjoyed the experience. A celebration of the pupils' talents, efforts, and good work is a regular feature of assemblies. There are regular visitors who help with assemblies, providing further good opportunities for different views and beliefs to be shared with pupils.

41. Moral education is promoted well through stories told in assembly, reaching agreement on class and playground rules, discussions with the pupils, and displays in each classroom. A system of rewards encourages the pupils to behave in an acceptable way, and to be aware of the feelings of others. All staff provide good role models and apply the school code of behaviour consistently. The headteacher has been particularly effective in raising with pupils and parents an awareness of the school's values and procedures. Recently introduced circle discussion time helps to raise the pupils' consciousness of others, and to help teachers become aware of pupils' needs and worries.

42. The social provision within school is satisfactory. Pupils have some opportunities to take responsibility, although these are limited. A recent project, for example, encouraged pupils to care for their friends when they expressed worries or difficulties. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility for different aspects of school life.

43. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Multi-cultural education has improved since the last inspection. Pupils study the local area and are aware of its heritage. Visits have taken place to study local history. A wide range of visitors has included a string quartet, a brass group and a male voice choir. Some pupils were involved in helping with a village project to produce a sculpture, while a local project cultivated pupils' artistic appreciation. Looking at celebrations from other faiths has enhanced the pupils' understanding of other cultures. Around the school there are good displays of western and non-western art, as well as displays highlighting different faiths.

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

44. The school continues to give a high priority to pupils' welfare, and this remains a strength of the school. The headteacher and permanent staff have a very good knowledge of all their pupils so that they can support them well in the school environment and within the tightly knit local community. Through the personal example of the headteacher, all permanent staff are committed to giving a high level of pastoral care. On many occasions, the headteacher's commitment extends to supporting the whole family within the community.

45. The monitoring of individual pupil's personal development is satisfactory. The headteacher monitors the behaviour of all pupils through written notes. Pupils' behaviour records are passed from class to class. The school's support guidance and welfare policies underpin the pastoral care of pupils. The school is very welcoming to outside agencies and receives good support from them. The school nurse and education

welfare service provide good support to all pupils, including traveller children. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator are responsible for child protection and have received training. Other members of staff are aware of the procedures. There is good child protection support from the outside agencies.

46. There is a very good liaison and relationship between the school and parents during induction to the nursery and reception class, and parents receive considerable support in how to help their children. The school has very good relationships with the on-site private nursery, and many pupils often attend both. The school makes considerable efforts to help parents when their children transfer to a range of secondary schools, including the grammar school. This greatly helps to reduce parents' and pupils' anxieties at a stressful time, and raises the expectation levels of parents regarding the education of their children.

47. The school has realised that behaviour is a major pillar of its support, guidance and welfare agenda. It has a good discipline and anti-bullying policy, which stresses consistency and the raising of pupils' self esteem. Its implementation, however, has been adversely affected by the instability of the teaching staff. Pupils are involved in the producing of class rules, and these and school rules are prominently displayed. A minority of pupils do not have a real awareness of self-discipline or of what the school requires. The school has a good array of awards, and of appropriate sanctions, including detentions and exclusions when required. The school is effective in detecting any poor behaviour and takes swift and effective action to deal with it.

48. Satisfactory procedures have improved attendance, but this has now stabilised at just below the national average. The school uses reward systems well to promote good attendance. Parents are made aware of their statutory obligations through the prospectus, but the school would benefit from a greater focus by the staff on attendance and punctuality, and from raising expectations in this area.

49. The school provides a safe environment for all pupils and staff. There is a low level of accidents, though the school does not keep a comprehensive record of minor accidents. The school has an abundance of first-aiders, but facilities are limited as there is no dedicated medical room. The detailed health and safety policy supports good procedures which are well co-ordinated by the site manager. Pupils are well acquainted with health and safety principles before activities, and through the provision of personal health and social education. A recent site risk assessment has detailed a number of major health and safety projects which will require capital investment by the local education authority.

50. The school provides a good standard of care for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers and other adults set out to promote their self-esteem so that they play a full part in all aspects of school life. A range of tests is used to identify pupils with special needs. The results are used to set precise targets for each pupil, and regular monitoring of their progress allows adjustments to be made to individual education plans. Pupils with special needs make better progress than other pupils because more use is made of assessment information to guide the next steps in their learning. There are close links with outside agencies which are involved in guiding and supporting provision for pupils with special needs.

51. A key issue in the last report was to improve the quality and frequency of assessment and marking and to use information to set targets for teaching. The school has introduced standardised assessments in addition to Baseline Assessment and the statutory end of key stage assessments. The school also administers standardised reading tests in English and mathematics at the beginning of each year. The information gained from these is used to group pupils and to set targets for them. The school administers a non-verbal reasoning test every second year for pupils in Year 2 and in Key Stage 2, to identify gifted and talented pupils and also pupils who may be underachieving.

52. Teachers' evaluations of their lessons do not take sufficient account of pupils' learning needs and are not used to plan the next stages of learning. The school has developed a system for tracking pupils' attainment from entry to the school through to Year 6. This will provide an effective tool to set targets for groups and individuals but this process is too new to have had an impact on standards. The school has developed a system of assessing pupils' progress at the start of each year and setting targets for them. This is a good start to tracking pupils' progress but the school does not identify the exact steps needed to enable pupils to make gains in their learning.

53. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent throughout the school. When teachers mark pupils' work in books they are concerned to support and encourage pupils, but weaknesses are not clearly identified and in too many cases, pupils are not expected to correct their work. Pupils are not taught the skills of proof reading and drafting their work, and teachers' comments do not suggest what pupils need to do in order to improve.

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

54. The headteacher has worked hard to regain the trust of parents, which was severely damaged when the school went into special measures four years ago. Parents continue to appreciate the care the school shows for their children, which was identified in the last report two years ago. Parents are increasingly happy about the standards of work, the school's values and attitudes, pupils' behaviour, the approachability of the school and the information provided on their children's progress.

55. A significant minority of parents, however, have some concerns about aspects of its work: behaviour, the information provided to parents, the amount of homework, and the range of extra-curricular activities. Evidence gathered during the inspection supports the positive views of the majority of parents. Inspectors also concluded that the behaviour of pupils and the information provided to parents were satisfactory; and that the homework policy was being applied appropriately. They did agree, however, that the range of out-of-school activities was limited.

56. The great majority of parents support the school and its aims to do well by their children. Parents are welcome in school and have easy access to the headteacher, who goes out of his way to find time for them and their concerns. A growing number are giving valuable and valued help in school, on trips and with school events. Many support the school generously through the fund raising activities of the Parent Teacher Association. The association also works hard to ensure that the school is seen to be at the centre of the community.

57. The school's links with parents are becoming increasingly effective. Its aims specifically involve parents in a partnership of learning, and their impact on the school is growing. There is still, however, a significant minority of parents who do not become actively involved in their children's education or are distrusting of the education system. The headteacher has been prepared to engage these parents directly, and to try to raise their expectations of what the school can do for their children.

58. The partnership with parents is particularly good in the Foundation Stage. The parents, who are invited to an induction evening before their children join the nursery, receive a 'Welcome to School' booklet, a 'Nursery' booklet and a 'Reading at Home' booklet. Parents are given guidance on supporting their children in reading and writing and in learning a list of high frequency words. Regular letters are sent to parents, explaining what will be covered in the curriculum.

59. Prior to children entering the nursery, an experienced nursery nurse conducts sessions with parents to give them an insight into what their children will be learning. Parents and children visit the nursery together and home visits are arranged with each family. Each term, children send their parents a written invitation to a coffee morning. Children prepare the food and, with adult help, serve their own visitors. Parents give good support to their children by means of help in the classroom, daily opportunities for a two-way dialogue, support with reading each day, weekly homework in literacy and numeracy, and help on outings. Parents' help in reception classes is welcomed and they are kept regularly informed about the curriculum and events.

60. Eight out of ten parents have signed the home-school agreement, although a few do not ensure that their children attend school regularly or on time. Curriculum evenings on the national tests for seven- and eleven-year-olds, and on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, have been well attended. Parents are given clear information about the school's special needs policy and practice. They are kept fully informed of their children's progress and are invited to annual reviews. Whenever they have concerns, they are able to contact the class teacher and co-ordinator for special needs. Parents are encouraged to help their child at home with regular tasks.

61. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are of high quality. Other written communications, including the newsletters, are clear, regular, and respect the roles and feelings of parents. Parents are given an overview of work to be undertaken and most parents approve the present homework arrangements. They find the home-school contact book especially useful in holding a regular dialogue with the school.

62. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress are satisfactory. They tell parents what their children know and can do, but they do not contain targets for improvement. Reports have space for parents and pupils to write their own comments, but this is not always done. A working party is seeking ways of making the computerised reports more personal to meet the concerns of parents.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. The headteacher continues to provide strong leadership but is at the same time sensitive to the needs of pupils, parents and staff. The head, governors and teachers have set clear educational priorities for the school, which are aimed at raising standards. However, standards remain too low, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in writing throughout the school. The governing body is becoming increasingly effective and key governors, particularly the chair, are playing an important role in school improvement.

64. The school has real difficulties in recruiting permanent staff and this, together with some unsatisfactory teaching in the past, is affecting the progress of pupils over time. It also results in many extra duties falling on the headteacher. The school's recent success in becoming an Investor in People reflects the commitment to effective communications and leadership. The school is aware of its weaknesses and is trying to address them.

65. The school came out of special measures after an inspection by HMI in February 1999, having made good progress in meeting all the key issues of the original inspection in 1997. Progress since the last report has been slower, hampered by the staffing difficulties. The school has clear aims for the personal and academic development of its pupils. It is beginning to meet those for personal development but has yet to realise its aims for academic progress.

66. The head and senior management team regularly review the school's performance and adjust priorities accordingly. Curriculum management roles have been delegated to permanent members of the staff, many of them recently. As a result, these roles are still to be developed in order to provide consistent and coherent management. The roles of the administrative staff are ill defined and need to be reviewed.

67. With the exception of ensuring that an act of corporate worship is held every day, the governing body meets all statutory requirements. It has appropriate committees, which meet regularly to review the work of the school and report to the full governing body. They have an increasing role in shaping the future direction of the school, not least in the appointment of the current headteacher. They effectively monitor the progress of the school development plan, and committee chairs have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

68. The regular monitoring of teaching began recently. The headteacher and curriculum managers observe all teachers twice a year in English and mathematics. Common weaknesses are identified and addressed as a school. This process will be extended to other subjects. Plans are collected weekly and evaluated according to a specific focus. The senior management team regularly samples work from across the school.

69. The school has correctly identified the areas for development if standards are to be raised. These are to improve results in the national tests for seven year olds; further raise performance the in national tests for 11 year olds; evaluate and develop the effectiveness of the literacy and numeracy hours; give extra support to under-achieving children; and address the issue of under-achieving boys. The two-year development plan has clear aims, with time scales, costings and responsibilities, and success criteria which focus on improvement and are measurable and achievable. Strategies to



meet these priorities and the school's targets have been agreed but are too recent to have had an effect over time.

70. The headteacher, permanent staff and governors have a shared commitment to improving all areas of the school's work, but their success is being limited by the staffing difficulties. The school has secure financial procedures, and expenditure is tightly linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan and understood by the whole staff. The governors' finance committee takes an active role in the setting of the budget. Day-to-day financial management has improved since the school arranged regular support from the local education authority. There are good arrangements for securing value for money when purchases are made, and the cost-effectiveness of spending decisions is reviewed by the headteacher and senior staff, who report back to the governors. The school makes good use of all the grants available to it and actively seeks new sources of financial support.

71. Special needs provision is very well managed. The new co-ordinator has continued the high standards of provision reported at the last inspection, and has developed very thorough administrative procedures. She sets a very good example of basic skills teaching in leading the well organised team of support staff. The school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for special educational needs and fully complies with the official Code of Practice. There is a named governor for special needs who makes regular reports to the governing body. Teaching support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They are well trained and have a clear understanding of their role.

72. During the last two years there has been a high turnover of teachers. The school finds it difficult to recruit permanent teachers and has had to rely on a succession of supply and temporary teachers. At the time of the inspection, the school did not have a satisfactory number of suitably qualified permanent teachers and was without a permanent deputy head. The school has focused its efforts in the training of teachers on the new educational initiatives of literacy and numeracy, whilst teaching assistants and lunchtime staff have been trained in behaviour management techniques. The school welcomes new teachers into the school and effectively supports them with a mentoring programme. All staff have annual performance meetings with the headteacher, and targets are set.

73. The accommodation is good, with some good outside areas. Resources are adequate to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is good accommodation for teaching pupils with special needs when they are withdrawn for intensive support. Resources are also good, including high quality computer software.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. In order to improve the school's performance, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- Raise standards in English\* by:
  - \* ensuring that all aspects of the National Literacy Strategy are taught consistently throughout the school;
  - \* planning work in other subjects to support literacy targets, particularly to develop skills in writing;
  - \* teaching pupils to take more responsibility for the accuracy of their written work.
  
- Raise standards in mathematics\* by:
  - \* ensuring that all aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy are taught consistently throughout the school;
  - \* introducing more rigour into the mental maths sessions;
  - \* ensuring that more attention is given to using and applying mathematics and problem solving activities.
  
- Raise standards in science\* by:
  - \* giving pupils more opportunities to carry out their own scientific investigations, and providing adequate resources for this purpose.
  
- Raise standards in information and communication technology\* by:
  - \* developing staff expertise and confidence through a planned programme of professional development;
  - \* ensuring that the time allowed is sufficient to develop pupils' skills.
  
- Seek advice and support from the local education authority and other outside agencies to recruit and retain a stable and high quality teaching staff.

- Improve the use of information on what pupils know and can do in order to match work precisely to pupils' prior attainment and to plan for their individual needs, and ensure that teachers' marking identifies pupils' needs and that these are addressed in work that follows. \*
- The governors should also consider ways to strengthen the roles of curriculum managers; provide more opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility, and for boys and girls to work and play together. The governors should also ensure that the need for regular attendance and punctuality is stressed by all in the school community, and that there is a daily act of corporate worship.

*\*These have already been identified by the school as priorities for development.*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	55

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14	29	51	7	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	298
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	100

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	63

#### **English as an additional language**

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

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2000	21	24	45

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	16
	Girls	17	14	18
	Total	25	21	34
Percentage of pupils At NC Level 2 or above	School	56 (80)	47 (71)	76 (87)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	14	16
	Girls	18	16	19
	Total	27	30	35
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	60 (78)	67 (93)	78 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2000	15	19	34

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	9
	Girls	13	12	16
	Total	19	19	25
Percentage of pupils At NC Level 4 or above	School	56 (68)	56 (65)	74 (70)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	16	14	17
	Total	24	23	27
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	71 (65)	68 (65)	79 (70)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	253
Any other minority ethnic group	4

*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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27.3

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

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	373

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	14	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### *Financial information*

Financial year	<b>1999/2000</b>
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	625,302.00
Total expenditure	615,261.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,859.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,698.00
Balance carried forward to next year	31,739.00

**Qualified teachers and support staff:  
nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	36

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.3
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



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

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	256
Number of questionnaires returned	107

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	58.0	34.0	7.0	1.0	1.0
My child is making good progress in school.	53.0	37.0	6.0	2.0	2.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36.0	50.0	7.0	4.0	4.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40.0	40.0	11.0	1.0	7.0
The teaching is good.	56.0	36.0	4.0	0	5.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45.0	37.0	14.0	1.0	3.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65.0	31.0	1.0	0	3.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69.0	26.0	2.0	0	3.0
The school works closely with parents.	49.0	35.0	12.0	2.0	3.0
The school is well led and managed.	58.0	35.0	1.0	0	7.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46.0	49.0	4.0	0	2.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30.0	31.0	21.0	7.0	11.0

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

75. There has been an improvement in the provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. This is because of the better continuity between the nursery and the reception classes, assisted by the introduction of the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. The provision is good in reception and very good in the nursery. Teachers in the early years' department plan together carefully and ensure that all aspects of the early learning goals are covered, with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills.

76. Children enter the nursery at the beginning of the academic year in which they are four. Children attend on a part-time basis, 25 in the morning and 25 in the afternoon. They enter the nursery with standards that are below what is expected nationally for children of their age but make good progress, as a result of good teaching and the support of two experienced nursery nurses. They are formally assessed on entry and those who require specific help are given additional support. Children's progress in each of the six early learning goals is regularly assessed and targets set.

77. Children enter the reception classes at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. All pupils make good progress, due to good teaching and the support of the teachers and learning assistants. They build on their experiences in the nursery and continue to make good progress. The new early learning goals are well established and the results of assessments are used to inform planning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

78. Children's attainment in personal, social and emotional development at the end of the Foundation Stage is below national expectations for their age, though a significant minority of pupils exceed the early learning goals. Many children find it difficult to communicate and express their ideas and feelings. Regular circle time discussion sessions are held for pupils who find it difficult to sit still and communicate with others. They are encouraged to bring a friend and to talk about their ideas and feelings. Most children enjoy coming to school and settle quickly into the routines of the nursery and the reception classes. They learn to feel confident about their achievements and positive about their goals. The calm, welcoming atmosphere helps them to feel secure and valued enabling them to learn to play together and to express their feelings through imaginative play. They become confident in trying out new activities and are encouraged to listen attentively, to speak clearly and to extend their vocabulary.

79. Children select and use resources independently, including use of the computer. They form good relationships with adults and their peers and learn to dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene. Their developing independence is further encouraged in the reception classes. Children are encouraged to take on an increasing number of responsibilities

within the class. They develop an understanding of right and wrong and begin to understand the importance of good behaviour and the impact of poor behaviour on themselves and others.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

80. Children's attainment in writing and speaking and listening at the end of the Foundation Stage is below national expectations for their age. Attainment in reading matches national expectations. The good progress made in the nursery continues in the reception classes and standards continue to rise from a low starting base. All adults are involved in helping to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills as they interact with the children in their different activities. Children's efforts at communicating are encouraged and valued.

81. Elements of the literacy hour are used well in both the nursery and the reception classes. Children enjoy listening to stories and are encouraged to join in. Those in the nursery turn the pages of a book correctly and 'read' the story in their own words. Children in the reception classes identify the title and suggest how the story might end. The early development of phonics helps children to link sounds to letters and learn new words. Many children in the reception classes confidently identify the initial and final sounds and short vowel sounds within words. Several children confidently write letters to their parents; other children interview each other, using a microphone. Very good provision is made for a child with a statement of special educational needs. One of the nursery nurses makes a valuable contribution by working with children in the Reception Classes on designing and making many different types of pop-up books.

### **Mathematical development**

82. Children's attainment in mathematical development at the end of the Foundation Stage is below national expectations for their age. The good progress made in the nursery continues in the reception classes and standards continue to be raised from a low starting base. Elements of the numeracy hour are used well. In the nursery, children learn through planned activities to sort, match, order, sequence and count. They are familiar with counting games, number rhymes, stories and songs. Most children in the nursery say and use number names in order in familiar contexts and count reliably up to 10.

83. Children in the reception classes recognise numerals 1 to 9 and find one more or one less than a number from 1 to 10. They count forwards and backwards to 20 and identify individual numbers and count between the numbers. Children are beginning to use the language of size and can identify a rectangle as having 2 long and 2 short sides, a square as having four sides of the same length and a triangle as having 3 sides of the same length and 3 corners. Activities in the nursery and reception classes support mathematical development. The emphasis is on understanding and using numbers in practical contexts, for example counting how many children are present. There are books relating to number, puzzles, games, weighing activities, tapes and computer programs. Children increase their knowledge and skills through creative activities, matching, threading, counting, sequencing, and sand, water and role play.

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

84. Children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world at the end of the Foundation Stage is in line with national expectations for their age. They enter the nursery with a very basic understanding of their world but make good progress in the nursery and the reception classes. They learn about the layout of the school and the people who work in it, exploring the local area and learn about people in the community who help them.

85. Children in the reception classes are able to talk about the features that they like and dislike. They learn about themselves and their families and begin to develop a sense of time and relationships. Children gain a sense of the past by studying old toys and learn about different cultures and beliefs through stories and assemblies. They are introduced to scientific ideas through studying materials, observing and identifying features of the natural world, growing bulbs and seeds to study new growth. They use information and communication technology to support their work. They build and construct with an increasingly wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources and adapting their work where necessary.

## **Physical development**

86. Children's attainment in physical development at the end of the Foundation Stage is in line with national expectations for their age. Children in the nursery progressively develop their ability to move with confidence, control, co-ordination, imagination and in safety. They become increasingly aware of space, of themselves and others and use the wheeled vehicles in their outdoor play area with skill and control and an awareness of others. In a physical education lesson observed in one of the reception classes, pupils moved with confidence on the spot and jogged in time to the beat of a wood block.

## **Creative development**

87. Children's attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage is in line with national expectations for their age in creative development. Their creativity is developed within a supportive learning environment in which children are given time to explore and experiment with ideas, materials and activities. Adults work alongside them, talking to them about their work and introducing appropriate vocabulary. Pupils in the nursery explored texture and colour as they painted daffodils and made Valentine cards. They make puppets with plates and sticks. In one of the reception classes, they drew round a child, painted the shape to look like Mrs Wishy Washy, and cut it out. They discussed the parts of the body and labelled them. Children experiment with different media to draw themselves and others.

88. Displays in the nursery include children's work on the Chinese New Year in religious education. They have drawn leaves and objects found on a recent woodland walk and print with different shapes and materials, talking about similarities, differences and patterns. They experiment with dough. Children in the reception classes explore what happens when they mix colours, understanding the terms, darker/lighter; thicker/thinner and shade. They explore

form and shape in two and three dimensions as they contribute to collages. One of the nursery nurses takes music in the reception classes, as well as in the nursery to help pupils develop their listening and attention skills. Children respond well to what they see and hear. They sing familiar nursery rhymes and songs with enthusiasm.

89. Children make a positive start to their education in all areas of learning. They are engaged in activities which, as a result of on-going assessment, are carefully matched to their individual needs. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good and they teach the basic skills well. Their planning is good and is informed by ongoing assessment. Their management of pupils is very good and they use time, support staff and resources very well. Resources are of good quality. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are high. They use homework to consolidate and extend learning in the classroom. Pupils' acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills is good as a result of good teaching, and they put intellectual and creative effort into their work. They show interest, concentration and developing independence. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive.

90. The Foundation Stage is led by a temporary co-ordinator who is sensitive to the needs of the children and the need to introduce them to a wide range of experiences. She works closely with all the staff in the Foundation Stage. They work as a team to provide a broad, balanced, relevant and enriched curriculum and to plan and assess children's progress in the early learning goals. They work together very effectively for the benefit of all the children in their care.

## **ENGLISH**

91. In the national tests for seven year olds, standards in reading and writing were well below the national average and the average of similar schools between 1996 and 1998. Standards fell in 1999 and were very low in the tests in 2000. The performance of girls was particularly weak in writing, and this remains the case for girls presently in Year 2, where they are less confident than boys in both speaking and writing. Inspection evidence indicates that standards continue to be very low in writing, and well below average in reading, speaking and listening.

92. Standards for 11 year olds are well below the national average, as they have been since 1997. There was an improvement after a low point in 1998, but results in the national tests in 2000 were still well below the national average and the average of similar schools. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Results in 2000 were lower in English than in mathematics and science.

93. The English results, however, were pulled down by very low standards in writing. By contrast, test results in reading were close to the national average, which represents a good improvement on the standards achieved by this group when they were seven. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in writing of pupils presently in Year 6 are very low. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in writing through the school, and this is a significant weakness that limits their achievement in other subjects. Standards in reading of the present Year 6 are below the national average, but much better than standards in writing. This is because additional time is given

to reading, provision is better structured, lower attaining pupils are given extra help, and the literacy hour is leading to more closely focused teaching of reading skills. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in listening and speaking are below average, though pupils make good progress given their low standards on entry to the school.

94. Many pupils in Key Stage 1 lack confidence in speaking in class discussions. Their listening skills improve considerably as they learn the school's expectations for behaviour and the routines of the literacy hour. By the age of seven, most pupils pay attention to instruction and willingly join in class discussions, but very few extend their answers and develop their ideas. The gap between their speech and the conventions of standard English leads to inaccurate spelling and grammar, which continues to affect standards in writing through the school. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to take turns in discussion and generally listen politely to the views of others.

95. In some lessons in other subjects, boys tend to dominate and girls play a less active role. Use of formal language in class discussions is underdeveloped and pupils need prompting to use technical terms. Many pupils in Year 6 do not speak clearly enough, and most need more coaching and planned experiences to reach the expected standard. Nevertheless, pupils with higher attainment across Key Stage 2 responded very well to the challenge of speaking formally to the large audience of a school assembly attended by parents. They used a microphone confidently to explain class projects and clearly describe their results. Video evidence of a school music and drama production shows that higher attaining older pupils confidently take leading parts, developing a suitable voice and style for their role, and captivating an adult audience.

96. Progress in the early stages of reading is guided by a well structured scheme. By the age of seven, those with average attainment and above are able to read independently from books matched to their level of attainment, though the level of language difficulty is below that expected for their age. The effort needed to sound out words means that they do not read aloud confidently with expression. They have a sound understanding of what they read, though they do not talk fluently about books, which reflects their limited speaking skills.

97. A significant number have very low attainment. They are not confident in sounding out words to find their meaning and do not recognise key words on sight. This means that they depend on adult help when they meet unfamiliar words, and they make slow progress in private reading sessions when not supported. They enjoy browsing independently through picture books in class collections at these times, but they need more precise guidance on practising their skills. Pupils with special needs and those with lower attainment are withdrawn for intensive instruction in reading skills, and make good progress in these sessions because teaching is well focused, has high expectations for learning, and builds on success.

98. Interest in books develops well, so that most pupils aged eleven read longer texts silently with good concentration. Many have favourite books and can talk about them. They have sound understanding of what they have read, though they are not confident in reading aloud with dramatic expression. Few pupils reach the higher level in the national tests and more able pupils tend to read modern fiction that does not challenge them at the higher level. Pupils are generally confident in using non-fiction books to find information, which helps

them to learn in all subjects. However, their knowledge of how to find books in a library is not well developed, reflecting the limited stock in the school library for borrowing and research. Pupils with special needs and low attainment make good progress when they are withdrawn for well structured programmes to develop their literacy skills.

99. Standards of presentation are low in Key Stage 1 and many pupils have poorly formed handwriting. As a result, some cannot read back their own work or see their spelling and punctuation mistakes. By the age of seven, the range of attainment is very wide. Pupils with higher attainment write stories based on traditional tales, showing sound understanding of story structures. They express their ideas clearly but they write slowly and their stories are brief. They do not write independently at length often enough to develop confidence, and very few reach the higher level in national tests. Pupils with average attainment are confident only in exercises that require single sentence answers. Those with special needs and lower attainment need significant guidance and adult help to write whole sentences, and their letter formation is very weak.

100. The range of different kinds of writing practised in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and includes letters, descriptions and poetry. Nevertheless, the lack of confidence in writing independently at length continues through Key Stage 2. Most pieces of work are brief, though the quality of language and standards of accuracy and presentation are better when tasks are well focused. Pupils make less confident progress in the formal style and structures of factual writing, which affects their achievement in other subjects.

101. The most significant weakness in writing through the school is the high level of inaccuracy in spelling and punctuation in daily work in all subjects. Key technical terms in all subjects are frequently mis-spelt, even when copied. Dictionaries are not used often enough during drafting. Pupils do not learn to take responsibility for the standard of their own work and proofreading does not become a habit. Standards of presentation are often unsatisfactory in exercise books, though higher standards in displays suggest that the new policy for handwriting is beginning to have an effect.

102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in Key Stage 1 was good in one lesson observed and satisfactory in the remainder. In Key Stage 2, a third of lessons were good and one lesson was very good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen and the remainder were satisfactory.

103. The national literacy strategy is in place, though inconsistencies in practice lessen its effectiveness throughout the school. Lesson plans are guided by the official targets of the strategy and shared with pupils at the start of most lessons to give a clear sense of purpose. The recommended timing of the literacy hour is followed closely so that pupils' attention is held through a variety of activities. In both key stages, texts for close study are well chosen for their interest and their quality of language.

104. Teachers generally read aloud well, catching pupils' interest so that they are keen to respond. Teachers make good use of the board to focus attention on language features, though pupils are not always involved actively enough in repeating these features and building on their experience through further examples. As a result, in the weaker lessons pupils cover the planned targets but do not

necessarily learn them, as shown in their later work. By contrast, the strengths of teaching in withdrawal sessions for pupils with special needs are their intense focus and high expectations for active involvement. In these sessions, the teacher's vigorous pace holds pupils' attention as they learn, for instance, to recognise key words on sight and to sound out words to find their meaning. Frequent repetition and a variety of approaches to reinforce a specific target ensure that learning is successful. Similar strengths are found in the booster class for lower attaining pupils in Year 6, and such practices need to be shared.

105. Guided group reading sessions contribute well to the good progress pupils make, because instruction responds to individual needs. Writing activities are less successful because teachers' expectations are too low for the quantity and quality of work produced by independent groups. Pupils are generally set brief tasks with a limited focus, so they do not need to write quickly or learn to plan longer tasks. In some lessons, there is too much talk and too little achieved.

106. Pupils with special needs and lower attainment make good progress in writing because of the close guidance given by learning support assistants. Instances were observed where teachers circulated the class rather than following the literacy strategy of helping one or two groups intensively, with the result that pupils did not work independently.

107. Teachers generally use the final review session of the literacy hour to give encouragement and review what has been covered. Only in the better lessons, however, do teachers use examples of the work of chosen pupils to focus on significant details of what has been done well and what needs development. Similarly, teachers' marking is strongest in giving encouragement but loses its impact because pupils are not routinely required to do corrections or follow-up work. This weakness was noted in the previous report. Information from marking is not used to set specific tasks in the lessons that follow to correct the weaknesses of individuals and groups, which means that pupils do not learn enough from their mistakes. Marking in other subjects generally ignores literacy errors, and so pupils are not given enough rigorous guidance in most of the writing they do.

108. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The newly appointed co-ordinators for each key stage have made good progress in monitoring teaching, although inconsistencies remain in approaches to the literacy hour. They have improved procedures for the assessment of writing, and drafted a new policy to raise standards in handwriting and presentation. Assessment procedures are used well to identify pupils who would benefit from a booster programme or additional literacy support.

109. Resources for reading have been improved. The library is being extended, but the present stock is very limited. The writing programme is not as well structured as that for reading, and more detail is needed on how major forms of writing are to be developed year on year. Classrooms have writing corners to raise interest in writing, though there is a lack of on-going tasks to stimulate use of these areas. Opportunities to develop reading and writing skills through other subjects need to be more closely co-ordinated with provision in English. There are good examples where classroom displays and anthologies are used to celebrate pupils' achievements and motivate higher standards.



## MATHEMATICS

110. The attainment of pupils in the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests at the age of seven, was well below the national average for children of their age, and was well below the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 3 was below the national average. On the basis of teacher assessment, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was very low in comparison with the national average. Teacher assessments were below the test results. Over the last five years, standards in mathematics rose from 1996 to 1998, and then declined. In 1998, standards were in line with the national average. Girls did better than boys.

111. The attainment of pupils in last year's national tests for 11 year olds was below the national average. It was in line with the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieved Level 5 was in line with the national average. On the basis of teacher assessment, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was below the national average. Teacher assessments were well above the test results. Over the last five years, standards in mathematics have risen steadily. Girls did significantly better than boys.

112. Inspection findings show that standards remain well below the national average at Key Stage 1 and below the national average at Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Girls continue to perform better than boys at both key stages. A key Issue at the last inspection in 1999 was to continue to raise standards of pupils' attainment and improve their progress across both key stages in mental mathematics and in using and applying mathematics. This issue has not yet been addressed. The weakest areas are in mental mathematics, in using and applying mathematics and in pupils' ability to apply their knowledge to problem solving activities. The mental warm-up lacks rigour in most classes and, although the numeracy strategy is closely followed, teachers' expectations are not high enough.

113. Pupils' work is assessed well during lessons but assessment is seldom used well enough to plan for the needs of individual pupils. Marking is inconsistent and rarely tells pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve further. Pupils are formally tested twice a year, but the data obtained is not used effectively to plan for individual needs. The practice of setting in mathematics by ability rather than in classes at Key Stage 2 is having a positive effect in raising standards, particularly in the higher ability groups. It is enabling pupils to progress at a faster rate and to consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills. There is, nevertheless, scope for greater differentiation of work within each set to address the range of abilities.

114. The raising of standards in mathematics is a focus of the school development plan and a number of initiatives have been put in place. The current booster class is proving very successful in raising attainment from Level 3 towards Level 4 for a group of pupils in Year 6. A particularly gifted pupil is provided with challenging work at his own level. He is making good progress. Teaching has been monitored and additional support provided where needed. The provision for the large numbers of pupils with special educational needs is very good and they are making good progress within lessons as a result of additional support. Their attainment, however, is lower than that of their peers and this factor has a significant effect on the overall results in the national tests.

115. By the time they are seven, 75 per cent of pupils have consolidated Level 2 work. They can sequence numbers and count forwards and backwards in ones and tens from any 2 digit number and know the place value of digits to 100. They are able to place numbers in the correct order and can recall addition and subtraction facts to 10 and know the 2 and 10 times table. About 25 per cent of these pupils are proficient in Level 3 work and can count forwards and backwards in 10s and 100s from any 3 digit number and know the place value of digits to 1000. They recall addition and subtraction facts to 20 and know the 5 times table.

116. By the time they are 11, average and more able pupils understand place value, solve number problems, using a variety of mental and written computations with the 4 operations, and add and subtract decimals to two places. Pupils recognise approximate proportions, using fractions and decimals to describe them. They understand the terms multiple, factor and square, using words to express simple formulae, and use and interpret first quadrant co-ordinates.

117. They make three dimensional mathematical models, by linking given faces or edges and draw two dimensional shapes, variously orientated, on grids and can identify congruent shapes and orders of rotational symmetry and draw minor reflections of simple shapes. Pupils find the perimeters of simple shapes and areas and volumes. They collect data and use a frequency table to record it. They understand mode and median and construct and interpret simple line graphs. They use words such as *fair*, *certain* and *likely* to demonstrate their understanding of probability. About 25 per cent of more able pupils are able to apply and use their knowledge more proficiently than others and one pupil is particularly gifted in this.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at both key stages. It was satisfactory in the three lessons observed at Key Stage 1. It was satisfactory in three lessons observed at Key Stage 2, good in two lessons and very good in two lessons in Year 5/6. The work sample shows that over time it is satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is satisfactory, but the teaching of basic skills is unsatisfactory and lacks rigour. Teachers' planning and the methods used are satisfactory, but their expectations are not high enough. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are satisfactory in most lessons and they show interest and involvement in activities. The management of pupils is generally good. Time, support staff and resources are used well in Key Stage 1 and satisfactorily in Key Stage 2. The use of assessment during lesson time is satisfactory, but the use of on-going assessment to inform planning to meet pupils' needs is unsatisfactory. The use of homework to support learning is satisfactory, but is not always sufficiently challenging.

119. Where teachers' expectations are high and their approach rigorous, as in the booster class and in the top set in Year 5/6, pupils are motivated. In these lessons, pupils are productive, work at a good pace, showing a keen desire to succeed, and understand how well they have done and how they can improve. Pupils are attentive and respond to questions, and their attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good. They respect the contribution of others and have higher self-esteem than their peers. They are supported in their work by regular homework, and the support of their parents in their learning has been achieved.

120. The statutory curriculum is in place. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum is satisfactory. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress as a result of the

high level of support they receive. The strategies for teaching numeracy skills are not yet proving effective in raising standards, particularly at Key Stage 1. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and traveller children. Relationships with partner institutions are good. Secondary schools send projects to the pupils in the summer term, to be completed at home and in school. The results enable the schools to place pupils in appropriate groups for mathematics. Mathematical displays in all classrooms support pupils' learning.

121. The subject is led by an experienced co-ordinator, supported by a teacher in Key Stage 1. They are keen to raise standards in mathematics. They provide in-service training on a regular basis according to perceived needs in, for example, improving mental strategies. Teaching and learning are monitored twice a year. Standards remain low partly because the information gathered on what pupils know and can do is not used fully to plan for individual needs.

## **SCIENCE**

122. In the Year 2000 teachers assessed pupils' attainment in science at the age of seven as well below that expected nationally for children of their age. Over the years 1997 to 1999, standards attained by 11 year olds in science have also been well below the national average. There was a marked improvement in the 2000 test results for eleven-year-olds, and pupils attained standards in line with those expected nationally. When compared with schools of similar intake, pupils attained good standards in science. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in science was, however, below the national average. In last year's tests, girls' attainment was significantly higher than that of boys.

123. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in science was satisfactory. The analysis of pupils' work, however, shows that overall, standards in science are below nationally expected levels. The progress that pupils make in their scientific understanding and the development of skills is unsatisfactory. Work provided is the same for all pupils and does not build well on their previous knowledge and understanding. Many of the pupils do not have well developed literacy skills and this makes it difficult for them to record their work.

124. In Year 2, pupils understand that some materials are magnetic and others are not, but their predictions as to which materials will attract magnets are random and not based on previous observations. Pupils were fascinated to discover the properties of magnets for themselves. In Year 1, pupils choosing an appropriate material to "mend teddy's umbrella" could guess which materials might be suitable but do not all have the necessary vocabulary to express their thoughts. For example, they could say that the water did not go through plastic sheeting but described the material as not being waterproof.

125. The analysis of pupils' work in Key Stage 2, and lesson observations, shows that the attainment of the current Year 6 is below nationally expected levels. Work in pupils' books does not take account of pupils' differing levels of attainment. There is little evidence that pupils are being encouraged to predict and explore scientific concepts for themselves. The similarity of pupils' written work suggests that they are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills of enquiry

and research. Pupils are not given the opportunity to set up their own experiments. There is very little evidence of progression in scientific skills, knowledge and understanding across the key stage. In all the lessons observed, pupils' attainment was below expected levels. In many cases pupils have poorly developed literacy skills, which have a significant impact on their attainment in science. They have difficulty in recording their findings and do not have an appropriate scientific vocabulary, for example when attempting to describe electrical circuits. In one lesson on circuits pupils showed good understanding of the topic but found difficulty in recording their work.

126. Teaching in science was satisfactory or better in the majority of lessons observed. It was good in one lesson and unsatisfactory in another. Most teachers have secure knowledge of the subject but are not as secure in teaching the investigative and experimental aspects. In many cases teachers do not make enough use of open ended questions to challenge pupils thinking and stimulate enquiry. In the unsatisfactory lesson, questions only allowed for the expected response and did not develop pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and exploration. The pace was slow and the majority of pupils were passive and not engaged in the lesson. This particularly affected the learning of pupils with special educational needs, who were not engaged with the lesson and made no progress. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well but tend to concentrate on imparting content rather than developing pupils' scientific skills and encouraging them to experiment.

127. Co-ordination of the subject is developing. The school has recently introduced a scheme of work for science but this needs adapting to ensure that all aspects of the programmes of study are covered in sufficient depth. There is a particular need to strengthen the investigative and experimental aspects of the subject. Pupils are assessed at the end of units of work but as yet teachers do not record the development of pupils' investigative skills. As a result, lessons are not planned to extend work in this area. This reduces the progress made by all groups of pupils and has a particular impact on the progress of higher attaining pupils. The school recognises that the experimental and investigative aspect of science is an area for development and plans to address this.

128. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in science showed some improvement but the experimental and investigative aspects of the subject were in need of development. This continues to be the case. There is now a policy and scheme of work which needs to be carefully monitored to ensure continuity and progression for the mixed age classes. The curriculum is enriched by visits from a theatre company and the support of a link scientist from a local company. Teachers have more confidence in teaching science but still need to develop the experimental and investigative aspects of the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

129. At the time of the previous inspection standards in information and communication technology were below average and this formed a key issue for development. The school has made considerable efforts to improve this area of its work. In each classroom there is now an up-to-date computer with internet access. There are also three computers available in the library, and computers are available in group teaching rooms.

130. Teachers have recently begun to receive professional development through the New Opportunities funding, and the school has employed a technician for information technology. She maintains the network and gives effective support to groups of pupils in the classroom. The school is also able to use the computer suite at the local community centre on a regular basis, and groups of pupils are timetabled to visit this weekly.

131. Owing to time-tabling arrangements, no direct teaching of information technology was observed during the inspection. There is little evidence of work on the subject in display or in pupils' files. Pupils are beginning to use computers in different curriculum areas. For example, in a Year 3/4 class pupils entered data about types of transport into a graph. Pupils also use the computer in literacy programmes, though attainment is well below average. Some pupils use the computer in mathematics to work on co-ordinates.

132. There is some evidence in displays that pupils use the computers for word processing. They are able to change the size and colour of text and to use different fonts. In a design and technology lesson, pupils had used the computer to produce a text for their pop-up books. Pupils of all ages enjoy using the computer but as yet their skills are underdeveloped and attainment is below expected levels at both key stages. Pupils do not save and then use data in different subjects. They are not yet skilled in control and modelling technology and do not yet use information technology across the curriculum.

133. As no teaching was observed during the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. Teachers are, however, developing their own knowledge and skills and are becoming more adept at using the school's new resources. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and is well placed to secure the improvements necessary to ensure pupils' continuing progress.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

134. Pupils at the end of both key stages attain standards that are in line with those indicated in the locally Agreed Syllabus, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 have a broad knowledge of different religions and beliefs. They understand the importance of the Passover feast and its different elements. Pupils know what Seder bread is and the Seder plate that is used. Higher attaining pupils recall the journey of Moses accurately. Past work indicates that they have a sound knowledge of parables and Biblical events.

135. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment matches that required by the locally Agreed Syllabus. The pupils generally have sufficient knowledge of several other faiths and beliefs and recall the main features of several. This half term, the Muslim faith was being studied by several classes. In Year 4, for example, pupils know about the Muslim faith, and the importance placed upon new born children. In a Year 5 lesson, the pupils studied the key features of the life of Saint Paul. They recalled events such as his conversion on the road to Damascus. Their moral and social understanding is developed appropriately through the experiences planned for them in religious education lessons. They hear stories from the Old and New Testaments which highlight friendship,

loyalty, obedience and trust. This knowledge is enriched by visits, for example to the local church. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages.

136. Teaching overall is satisfactory in both key stages, but one unsatisfactory lesson was seen at Key Stage 1, where pupils were not effectively managed and became too excited with the range of activities taking place. Role play was used to very good effect in a Year 1 lesson recalling Moses escape from Egypt. Dressing up as some of the characters motivated pupils to learn more. In Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use a range of activities to enhance the subject. Artefacts such as a Muslim prayer mat and pictures of Mecca are used well to motivate, although the range of resource materials is limited. The management of the pupils is secure, although in some lessons the boys tend to dominate question and answer sessions. Overall, the teachers' planning is thorough and makes suitable provision for pupils of different abilities.

137. Religious education is given an appropriate status as a core subject of the curriculum. The subject is well co-ordinated, with a recently revised scheme of work. Along with supporting guidance, which is clear and helpful, this is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching in the subject. The teachers organise some interesting activities to promote learning, but this could be extended with a greater range of artefacts, pictures, or video resources.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

138. Attainment at the end of both key stages is satisfactory, which represents an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was below national expectations at both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Time-tabling arrangements during the inspection meant that it was possible to see only two lessons, one in each key stage. Judgements are based on these lessons, a scrutiny of work, teachers' planning, the scheme of work, current displays and discussion with the co-ordinator.

139. In the Key Stage 1 lesson, attainment was satisfactory. Pupils investigated repetitive patterns, comparing the work of William Morris to other patterns. They gained experience in designing and making patterns, and in drawing, painting, weaving and sewing. They built on the good foundations laid in the nursery and reception classes, by investigating the use of colour and texture, and developing skills to express their feelings and ideas and record observations. By studying the work of great artists, pupils continued to develop an appreciation of our diverse cultural heritage, using a variety of materials, tools and techniques. They responded well to the ideas and methods used in a different style and tradition and have made links with literacy through work based on their Big Books. They have dyed cotton material, using natural food dyes, such as coffee, tea, curry powder and red cabbage, and have woven strips through wooden sticks. Good links are made with other subjects, such as mathematics, science and history.

140. In the Key Stage 2 lesson attainment was good. Pupils used their skills in drawing and painting birds, which they have developed over the past five weeks from close observation of real and stuffed birds. They know that William Morris was a Victorian, who lived in their home county of Kent, and that he was artist, designer, architect, and designer of stained glass

windows. Year 6 pupils were fascinated by a book of his designs for wallpaper and upholstery, lent by a local firm. They studied the form and shape of his flower, plant and bird designs, using his techniques to emulate his designs, and practising the use of pattern and texture. Pupils reviewed and adapted their work to achieve the planned result.

141. Displays show that pupils in Year 3/4 have made links with history. They made Anglo-Saxon houses and shields, sprayed with bronze paint. Some of their paintings have been inspired by music and from their studies of electricity in science. Pupils in Year 5 have made links with history through their art work on the Victorians and made links with literature, designing scenes of various fables. They paid particular attention to texture, line, tone and shading as they sketched out of doors and made close observational drawings.

142. On the evidence of the inspection, teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Teaching was satisfactory in the Key Stage 1 lesson, and very good in the Key Stage 2 lesson. Teachers' planning, knowledge and understanding of art is sound and they teach the basic skills satisfactorily, enabling pupils to make good gains in their learning. The use of time, support staff and resources is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress is assessed informally but there are no procedures in place to use assessment constructively to plan for the needs of individual pupils. Homework is sometimes used to consolidate and extend the work in the lesson, but opportunities to build on pupils' enthusiasm are often lost. Where teaching has been consistently very good, as in Year 6, pupils have set themselves high standards. They are not content with their first efforts, but continually refine their work until they are satisfied with the result.

143. Pupils are generally interested in art and apply creative effort to their work. Their acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills is satisfactory. Most pupils are productive and work at a satisfactory pace. They want to learn and would respond to more rigorous teaching. The scheme of work takes into account the guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and is supported by satisfactory resources which are accessible and used well. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and traveller children. All teachers are keen to celebrate pupils' achievements through display. A very good display of coal mining artefacts celebrates the history of Aylesham as a mining village and provides inspiration for work in art, as well as in history and other subjects.

144. The co-ordinator has recently been appointed to the post. She has made a positive start, writing a new policy and revising the scheme of work. She has built up resource boxes to support a range of different techniques. She monitors planning to ensure continuity and progression, and plans to monitor the quality of pupils' work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

145. Standards are currently below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Timetabling arrangements meant that only one lesson in design and technology was observed during the inspection. In this Key Stage 2 lesson the teaching was satisfactory. Pupils'

attainment, however, was below national expectations because they have not previously been taught the basic skills required to make progress in the subject. There is very little evidence in teachers' planning, displays and samples of pupils' work that the subject is covered in sufficient depth.

146. In the lesson observed, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were designing and making a book for younger children. They were able to choose different methods to make moving parts for their books, such as paper sliders and levers. They worked in groups to design their books and evaluate their designs. Pupils' evaluations indicate that they lack confidence in their work. The teacher assesses work well and encourages pupils to experiment with a range of techniques but does not give them enough guidance to support them in this process. Pupils enjoy their work but are not yet given enough opportunities to develop a good range of skills.

147. The subject has not recently been a high priority in the school and is an area for development. The co-ordinator is developing her skills in the role and is working with colleagues on identifying their professional development needs.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

148. In the case of Key Stage 1 there was no work planned for the half term in which the inspection took place, and only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 2. In the last inspection, pupils' attainment overall was in line with national expectations. The indications are that the oldest pupils have maintained these standards. A secure judgement about pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 is not possible, but past work indicates that they attain standards which are average by the time they are seven. Pupils have sufficient knowledge of their immediate location, can record their route to school accurately, know about local shops and can make simple maps to plot their location.

149. In the one lesson seen in Key Stage 2, pupils could talk about their local village and knew the different types of jobs available locally. Pupils also have sufficient knowledge of the types of transport serving the community, though they find it difficult to explain why these have developed. A scrutiny of past work and discussion with pupils indicates that they know about different types of weather, and the features of rivers and mountains, and know the reasons why railways developed as they did. They can also describe the different features of a contrasting location such as Kenya.

150. In the one lesson seen, teaching was satisfactory but did not encourage pupils to contribute their own thoughts. The behaviour of pupils was satisfactory overall, but there was some low level disruption. Pupils' standards of presentation vary and work is not always well laid out. The pupils' lack of writing skills also restricts their learning and their progress in recording their work well and in some depth. Pupils with special educational needs made sound progress in the lesson observed.

**151.** The co-ordination of the subject is sound, though the member of staff has another responsibility for English, which restricts the ability to develop this subject more fully. There is a scheme of work and a policy, both of which are being reviewed. The resources are used appropriately and are of sufficient quantity. There are several displays around the school, which highlight pupils' work to good effect.



## HISTORY

152. Attainment at the end of both key stages continues to be satisfactory. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. During the inspection, one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 and three in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on these lessons, a scrutiny of work, teachers' planning, the scheme of work, current displays and discussion with the co-ordinator.

153. In the lesson observed in Key Stage 1, in Year 1/2, attainment was satisfactory. Pupils examined what homes were like in the past, comparing a stone hot water bottle with its modern counterpart. They drew up a number of questions which they could ask to find out about the hot water bottle based on earlier lessons. Pupils are developing the ability to ask historical questions, are able to identify changes and similarities between the past and the present and are developing a sense of chronology.

154. In the three lessons observed in Key Stage 2, attainment was satisfactory. Pupils in Year 3/4, have a sound knowledge of archaeological discoveries. In the lesson observed, they drew on their knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon way of life and their research skills to compare the exterior and interior of Anglo-Saxon houses with houses of today. Traveller children made interesting comparisons with their trailer homes. In art and design, they completed models of an Anglo-Saxon house. Pupils in Year 5/6 identified the distinctive features of a Victorian school and compared schooling at the end of the nineteenth century with that at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Pupils found a similar lesson in Year 6 particularly interesting as the teacher was dressed as a Victorian schoolmistress, conducting the lesson as it would have been in Victorian times. The pupils played their part well. They stood up when the monitor (a student) entered the room and they addressed the teacher as 'ma'am'. She called the register and led the class in a Victorian prayer. Pupils sang 'All things bright and beautiful', accompanied by the piano. The first lesson was arithmetic. They recited their tables and did three sums in pounds, shillings and pence. Pupils grasped this very well. This was followed by a lesson on the uses of coal, taught by repetition methods. Pupils then practised their handwriting, using pens and inkwells similar to those used in Victorian times. This first-hand experience enabled all pupils to learn effectively.

155. On the evidence of the inspection, teaching is satisfactory overall at both key stages. Teaching in the Key Stage 1 lesson was good. In Key Stage 2 teaching was very good in one lesson, good in one and satisfactory in one. The quality of learning in lessons matched the quality of teaching. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of history is sound and they teach historical skills satisfactorily. Their planning is satisfactory but not enough attention is given to the completion of work, presentation, and the use of literacy skills in different forms of writing, such as imaginative writing and chronological writing. Pupils carry out research from a limited number of sources. The use of time, support staff and resources is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress is assessed informally during lessons, but the information is not used to plan for the needs of individual pupils. Marking does not help pupils to know how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve further. Homework is sometimes used to consolidate and extend the work in the lesson, but opportunities to involve pupils in independent research are missed.

156. The statutory curriculum is in place, and the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. The scheme of work takes into account the guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and is supported by satisfactory resources, which are accessible and are well used. However, not enough attention is given to strategies for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in history. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and traveller children. The curriculum is enriched through visits to places of historical interest and visitors to the school.

157. The co-ordinator has been recently appointed to the post. She has made a positive start, checking resources, and has begun to organise them into topic boxes. She has drawn up a new scheme of work and has set targets for herself. She plans to monitor planning to ensure continuity and progression and to monitor the quality of pupils' work.

## MUSIC

158. Because only limited evidence was available during the inspection, secure judgements cannot be made on standards in composition or appreciation at ages seven and eleven. However, evidence from school assemblies, singing practice and observation of one music lesson in Key Stage 2 indicates that standards in singing are below the nationally expected levels at the end of both key stages, and are lower than reported at the last inspection.

159. Pupils are not confident in singing. Pupils in the Year 1/2 class sing songs at the end of a lesson, including one in French, but they need a strong lead from their teacher to keep going. In a Key Stage 2 singing assembly, pupils responded to the energy and commitment of the subject co-ordinator and sang several songs accurately, including rounds, with satisfactory recall of memorised words. Many, however, do not attempt to reach high notes, and the volume noticeably falls away at such times. Pupils in Year 6 do not join in with enough commitment, in spite of the greater enthusiasm of younger pupils, so their ensemble performance is inconsistent and lacks expression.

160. In a Year 5 music lesson, pupils showed a good understanding of the duration of different notes in standard notation. They accurately clapped a variety of rhythms by reading from given examples of notation. However, those who played percussion instruments did not perform with sensitive enough control, and needed close guidance from the teacher to reach a satisfactory standard in the exercise.

161. Two lessons were seen in Key Stage 2. Teaching was satisfactory in one and unsatisfactory in the other. In the satisfactory lesson, a good range of activities was planned so that pupils' attention was held throughout, and the sequence increased the level of challenge to develop their skills. Pupils responded well to the teacher's expectations and used technical terms correctly. The element of competition in reading from notation to clap a rhythm made all concentrate hard. They were keen to do well and tried to improve the quality of their performance when given a second chance. The teacher used the occasion well to promote good listening by asking the class whether the interpretation of the notation was correct or not. In the unsatisfactory lesson, there was an inadequate range of different activities and pupils became bored and uninterested, making very little gain in their learning.

162. In leading the Key Stage 2 singing practices, the subject co-ordinator sets a good example of musicianship in her piano playing and in singing with energy and commitment. Without the support of other staff, she shows considerable skill in the dual role of playing and conducting when pupils need such a high level of encouragement to take a full part.

163. Management of the subject is satisfactory under a temporary arrangement. However, the acting co-ordinator has many other duties and is not able fully to monitor standards of teaching and achievement. There is a scheme of work for the subject, and planning is partly based on recent official guidelines, though this is not fully in place. There is no assessment procedure. Not enough use is made of daily assemblies as an opportunity for appreciating and making music. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator and headteacher set a very good example with their own musicianship in leading singing practices and weekly 'sharing' assemblies.

164. A school choir is formed at certain times of the year, for instance for Christmas performances. A videotape of last summer's music and drama production shows that pupils reach a good standard in singing for special occasions. Based on a blend of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, the production showed a high level of skilful commitment by the staff in charge, strong support from the community, and responsive performances by a large number of pupils. The production raised the profile of the subject in the school and made a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

165. Only indoor gymnastics and dance lessons were seen in both key stages. No outside games activities were observed. In dance and gymnastic activities, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations by the time they are seven and eleven. This is broadly the same as reported in the last inspection.

166. The pupils attain average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils in Year 1 move around the hall quickly and bounce a small ball with control. In Year 2, they develop appropriate levels in moving, changing direction quickly and making the best use of space. Many are developing a good awareness of their own bodies and how they can move in different ways. They also improve their ability to make different shapes with their body, using different parts to create a balance. The higher attaining pupils improve their range of movements and balances by trying different ways of attempting them. Pupils in the same class also throw and catch small balls with developing accuracy, although a small number find it difficult to do this consistently well.

167. Older pupils build upon these skills and gain sufficient ability in dance and gymnastic activities. They attain average standards by the time they reach 11. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can perform a range of movements and simple sequences, combined with a range of more difficult balances. The pupils then apply these skills appropriately when moving along a balance beam or bench. Higher attaining pupils perform these skills well but rarely extend their sequences or refine them. Year 5 pupils build upon their skills and work well with fellow pupils to produce paired shapes and movements. Pupils also use these movements

when moving along apparatus, though the originality of their movements is limited. In Year 6 the pupils develop sound levels of dance skills when linking a range of shapes and movements to some dramatic classical music. They perform good sequences of movements, using different levels and intensities of actions to match the mood of the music.

168. The pupils' learning is sound at both key stages; they gain and develop their skills in a systematic way. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in line with their abilities. The teaching was good in the two lessons seen at Key Stage 1, and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils were given good opportunities to experiment with their movements, and direction in how to move safely around and along apparatus. Teachers' relationships with pupils were particularly strong, which gave them confidence to experiment. In Year 6 some good teaching inspired pupils to match their movements to dramatic music without feeling self-conscious.

169. The headteacher is temporarily the co-ordinator for the subject. There is a suitable policy and scheme of work for the development of the subject and the co-ordinator scrutinises other teachers' plans have been scrutinised. There are some extra-curricular activities, such as netball and football, and the school enters into sporting activities with other schools. The level and use of resources are good overall, with three playgrounds, an outdoor swimming pool, playing fields, and two halls which are used for gymnastic activities.