

INSPECTION REPORT

BECKBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beckbury, Shifnal

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123460

Headteacher: Mr. Jonathan Brough

Reporting inspector: Mrs Natalie Moss

22685

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th November 2001

Inspection number: 196293

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Badger Road Beckbury Nr. Shifnal Telford Shropshire
Postcode:	TF11 9DQ
Telephone number:	01952 750287
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Elsie Rowley
Date of previous inspection:	17 th March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22685	N. G. Moss	Registered inspector	English Geography History Music Equality of opportunity	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13895	A. Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30144	E. Hastings	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Beckbury Church of England Controlled Primary School is much smaller than most primary schools, catering for boys and girls from four to eleven years old, though there are currently no children of reception age. It is situated in the village of Beckbury, near Shifnal in Shropshire, in a rural farming area. Most pupils come from a wide spread of local villages, though some travel from as far away as Telford or the RAF camp at Cosford. The school building is limited in facilities and space, though it is soon to receive minor additions. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. No pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are 40 pupils on roll, compared with the national average of 243. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. Most pupils join the school in reception, many having attended the local village and other playgroups. The level of attainment on entry to the school is below average. The headteacher is new to the post this term.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Beckbury CE Controlled Primary School is a good school. Pupils make good progress. Most pupils are likely to reach the national average in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average in Year 2. Standards in all other subjects also are average, except in music and information and communication technology, where they are below average. These levels of attainment are the result of good teaching and good management. Teaching is good throughout the school. There are specific strengths in the teaching which help to raise standards. The headteacher provides good leadership, and management of the school is good overall. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The effectiveness of the school and the value for money it provides are good.

What the school does well

- Teaching throughout the school is good, so that pupils learn well and make good progress.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress.
- The school provides well for higher attaining pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes are good. Their behaviour, personal development and relationships are generally good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- The school has effective links with parents.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and are good and governors support the school well.

What could be improved

- The further development of the curriculum for music and information and communication technology.
- The provision of up to date school policies and long term curriculum planning.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures.

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 1997. All the issues identified then have been addressed at least satisfactorily. Although there are no children currently in the reception class, a situation which will change in January 2002, the school has worked hard to provide good resources for structured play activities, indoor and outdoor, and has developed the areas of learning for children under five well, with thorough planning and good facilities. Resources for physical education and provision for sport have improved well, as have resources for geography. Resources for music have been developed but the school has lost its specialist teacher, provided by the local education authority, this year and hopes to restore this specialist teaching. At the moment, there is no adequate long-term plan for the subject. The development and updating of curriculum policies, with the continued involvement of the governors, has moved forward recently, so that policies in major subjects are now in place and National Curriculum schemes of work have been adopted for most non-core subjects. The current

school development plan details the time and order for the review of policies and schemes of work. Standards in science have clearly risen. The school is now using assessment to monitor pupils' progress and to set individual targets. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is now being undertaken by the headteacher. The quality of teaching has improved and is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has been improved. Leadership and management are good. The school has made satisfactory improvement and has the capacity to make further good improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	D	D
mathematics	B	B	C	A
science	C	D	B	A

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

Because the size of year groups in the school is very low, national test results are unreliable in making judgements on standards. Evidence from the inspection is a more reliable indicator of pupils' current standards. In the national tests for 7-year-olds in 2001, standards in reading and mathematics were well below the national average and those in writing were below it, and in teachers' assessments for science they were above average. However, there were only five pupils in this year group, all boys, a significant number of whom had special educational needs. Over the past three years, until 2001, results in reading, writing and mathematics have all at least matched the national average for all schools and those for similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science are all well in line with the national average for the pupils currently in Year 2 and that pupils are making good progress. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001, with only 6 pupils in the year group, English was below the national average, but mathematics was in line with it and science above it. Overall, results were in line with the national average and well above those for similar schools in mathematics and science. Over the last three years, trends in attainment have risen in science. Inspection evidence indicates that standards for the current Year 6 are in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science and that pupils are making good progress overall, in the light of below average levels of attainment on entry to the school. Good teaching and the introduction of the new national developments in literacy and numeracy help to explain the satisfactory standards. No judgement can be made on children up to the age of five at this time. Standards in all other subjects are in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven, except for music and information and communication technology, which are below them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good. Pupils enjoy coming to the school and know they are valued. They work hard and show enthusiasm for all activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, despite occasional immature behaviour in Years 3 to 6. Otherwise, pupils' responsible behaviour is most impressive.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and the relationships between pupils and staff are good. Pupils behave as a family and are considerate towards others.
Attendance	Very good. The level of attendance is well above the national average and the school has put good procedures in place to ensure that it remains so.

Relationships are good overall and this factor contributes greatly to the friendly ethos of the school. The pupils are open and friendly and are usually courteous towards staff, each other and visitors. However, a few older boys respond to teachers in a silly way occasionally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	N/A	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good throughout the school. As a result, pupils learn well. The teaching of reading, writing and the use of number is effective. Teachers know and understand their subjects well and plan well for all pupils. Teachers' expectations of their pupils are high, their teaching is effective and interesting, and the teachers' management of pupils is generally good. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well and plans appropriate work for more able pupils, so that all are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Support staff are used effectively to help teachers to cope efficiently with classes of mixed age and ability. Lessons generally proceed at a good pace and pupils learn with enjoyment and interest.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory. The curriculum is full and balanced, with the exception of music and information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teaching meets the needs of pupils well and this, together with the good quality of support staff, contributes to pupils making good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development, particularly their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. It is fostered throughout the school, through curriculum subjects and through the school's ethos. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to learn about their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. There are good procedures for eliminating antisocial behaviour and the school supports pupils' academic progress well. However, not all subjects of the curriculum are assessed fully enough to help future planning.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Good overall. The school has good relationships with parents and involves parents well in their children's learning. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory.

The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. There are effective links between the school and its parents and the school enjoys good links with the community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The new headteacher provides good leadership and is very well supported by his senior teacher. The school's accommodation and resources are not as good as they might be, but they are put to the best possible use. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and play a very effective part in shaping its future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school monitors its performance closely and takes effective action in all areas of weakness. There is a strong determination to succeed and to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of resources to support and improve the standards attained by the pupils. The school is careful to act wisely when purchasing supplies or services. Learning resources are satisfactory, except for the provision of resources such as a library, an information and technology suite and a gymnasium, which the school cannot currently provide.

The headteacher has been effective in the short time since his appointment and he has a clear vision for the school. Satisfactory use is made of the data the school collects in order to identify where pupils could make better progress. Monitoring of teaching clearly points out to teachers where improvements are required.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • The good progress their children make. • The amount of homework their children receive. • Behaviour is good. • They are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school's high expectations of their children. • The school works closely with parents. • The leadership and management of the school. • The help the school gives pupils to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The information the school gives them on their children's progress.

Inspectors agree wholeheartedly with parents' positive views of the school. Some parents were unhappy with the information they received about their children's progress. Inspectors thought that the opportunities provided by the school for consultation and the availability to parents of the headteacher and other teachers provided good information and evidence of close links between school and parents. Annual written reports to parents, however, could be more informative about levels of attainment. In the inspection team's view, the school provides a good range of out of school activities, especially in the light of the size of school and number of staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievement

1. Because of the very small size of the school's year groups, the results of national tests at the ages of seven and eleven are unreliable indicators of the overall standards being reached by pupils in the school. Inspection evidence is of greater validity in the assessment of standards. Over the last three years, up to 2001, pupils' overall standards in the national tests for seven-year-olds have fallen from well above average to well below average. Attainment in writing has fallen to below average and mathematics to well below average, though reading has remained average. When measured against schools of a similar nature, writing matched the average and reading and mathematics were below it. In teachers' assessments for science, results were above average. However, it is important to recognise that this year group consisted of only five pupils, all boys, several of whom had special educational needs and this, therefore was an atypical year, clearly demonstrating the unreliability of the tests as indicators of attainment for such small groups. For the previous three years, before 2001, results in the national tests were at least matching the national average, and were often above it in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, inspectors judged that improvement since the time of the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be average, is satisfactory.
2. Inspection findings for Year 2 pupils are that, at the age of seven:
 - pupils reach average standards in English, mathematics and science;
 - there is little significant difference between the standards reached by boys and girls;
 - standards at least match those attained in schools of a similar nature.
3. In the national tests taken by eleven-year-olds in 2001, pupils reached standards that were above the national average in science, matched it in mathematics, but were below it in English. However, when compared with similar schools, mathematics and science were well above average, while English was below it. However, again, there were only 6 pupils in the year group, so that national test results cannot be considered to be reliable as indicators of standards. In most of the past few years, boys and girls have reached roughly equal standards.
4. Inspection finding for Year 6 pupils are that, at the age of eleven:
 - attainment in English, mathematics and science is at least in line with the national average;
 - there is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls;
 - there has been a general rise in standards in science since the previous inspection;
 - standards are above those attained in schools of a similar nature in mathematics and science and match them in English.
5. Overall, progress in learning is good by the age of eleven, especially in the light of the below average level of attainment on entry to the school. The adoption of the new curriculum developments and the good teaching in the school are strong contributory factors to this good rate of progress.
6. It should be noted that the school's headteacher and teaching staff have changed since the previous inspection. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to raise standards.
7. Provision for more able pupils is now good and these pupils make good progress because of new initiatives to help them to achieve their full potential. These pupils are

identified early as part of the school's policy on educational inclusion. Their progress is monitored regularly from that time onwards.

8. The school sets targets for pupils' achievements in national tests that are demanding in the sense that they can be attained if pupils work hard, and they are realistic because they are based on pupils' abilities, particularly their average level of attainment on entry to the school. The school is on track to meet its targets in English and mathematics for next year.
9. It is not possible to make a judgement on attainment for children under five, since there were no pupils of reception age at the time of the inspection.
10. Attainment of the present Year 2 pupils matches the national average in English. Attainment in speaking and listening is generally average. Opportunities are made for pupils to listen carefully and there is good encouragement for them to respond. Standards in reading are average. Standards in writing are also average and are improving as the school incorporates more writing practice into its teaching of English. In mathematics, pupils are making good progress and achieving in line with the national average. This is because of the effect of the new national initiative in mathematics' teaching and a greater emphasis on mental mathematics. In science, pupils progress well and reach standards at least in line with the national average. In both mathematics and science, emphasis on practical and investigative skills is making a good contribution to pupils' achievement. In design and technology, geography and history pupils make satisfactory progress and reach the nationally expected standard. In information and communication technology and in music pupils attain below what is expected nationally at this age. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards in art and design or physical education. Overall, pupils make good progress in relation to their earlier levels of attainment.
11. Attainment of the pupils presently in Year 6 is average in speaking and listening and in reading, and often above average in writing. Progress is good, mainly due to the effects in the last three years of the new initiatives, the good teaching and the booster classes the school has put in place. Attainment in mathematics is average, though it is improving, due to good teaching. Attainment in science is at least average and is steadily improving, with the use of clear long-term plans. Progress in design and technology, geography and history is satisfactory and attainment is in line with national expectations, largely because of the efforts made to use coherent schemes of work in these subjects, which enable pupils to learn satisfactorily. In music and information and communication technology attainment is below average. No judgement is possible in art and design or physical education.
12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the way in which the school ensures they have equal access to the curriculum and through the good level of assistance they receive from both teaching and support staff. Teachers know their pupils well, have a clear understanding of their needs and tailor the taught curriculum appropriately for them. Their attainment is often below that of their peers, but they because of the help they receive they are able to make good progress in their learning. They show a positive attitude in class because they are encouraged to play a full part in all lessons. As a result, their confidence grows and this ensures that effective personal development and good progress takes place.
13. A positive contribution to pupils' achievements is made by the effective ways in which personal development and citizenship are integrated into the work in other subjects, particularly in English and history.
14. Since the previous inspection in 1997, standards have generally remained at the national average for pupils of both seven and eleven, though there has been significant improvement in science. However, there is scope for further improvement in the development of information and communication technology and its use across the curriculum and in music, where the raising of standards depends heavily on the provision

made by the local education authority. The school is well aware of this. With its committed staff and good leadership, the school is well placed to raise standards of attainment further.

Pupils' attitudes , values and personal development.

15. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to their work. They show enthusiasm and commitment and respond well to stimulating teaching. This helps their progress and makes an important contribution to the standards achieved by many pupils. Most of the time, pupils work enthusiastically and co-operate well with each other and with adults in the classroom. They work hard, ask questions, are eager to give answers and are interested in the work they are doing. However, on some occasions, especially when the management of pupils' behaviour is weaker, a small number of older boys interrupt lessons by chatting and other immature behaviour. When this happens, lessons are disrupted and the quality of learning for the rest of the class diminishes.
16. Behaviour is generally good. Most pupils display good standards of behaviour both in lessons and around the school. Most pupils respond well to the clear expectations of staff. The school is an orderly and well-mannered community. Pupils are friendly, courteous and willing to talk to visitors to the school. All pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on the impact of their behaviour and actions through assemblies, religious education and the personal, social and health education programme. No bullying was observed during the inspection and there are no recorded incidences of pupils' exclusion from school.
17. Personal development is good. The pupils respond well to the opportunities to take initiative and responsibility. Teachers foster the development of the pupils' personal and social skills. In Class 1, for example, pupils take turns to be the table monitor, whilst in Class 2 pupils take turns at being the class executives and librarians to help staff in classrooms during the school day. Older pupils help younger pupils and befriend new pupils to ensure that no one feels left out. They also help younger ones with reading and using computers. Pupils participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities, such as caring for the environment, school outings, fundraising and sporting events. Pupils take part in services held in the local parish church, for example, at Christmas. They support charities, such as Farm Africa and Christian Aid, learning to take social responsibility for others.
18. Relationships are good and reflect the ethos of a church school. Pupils are friendly and courteous towards staff, each other and visitors. They usually show respect for one another's views and beliefs and are caring towards one another. Many work collaboratively both in the classroom and in other aspects of school life. They co-operate well with one another and are frequently supportive of each other's efforts. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are integrated fully into the life of the school and that none are disadvantaged in any way. The school's building and resources are well cared for by pupils and there is evidence of trust and a willingness to share between pupils.
19. Attendance is much higher than the national average for similar schools. The number of unauthorised absences is lower than the national average for similar schools. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer. Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance. Registration is efficiently carried out at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions and very few pupils arrive late. This judgement is similar to that made at the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Teaching in eight out of every ten lessons visited was good or better. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This is similar to the judgement at the previous inspection, when teaching was also good overall.

Although no teaching could be observed for children under five, it is clear that resources and planning have improved greatly in this area. The quality of teaching enables pupils in Years 1 to 6 to make good progress.

21. Teaching is characterised by the very impressive teamwork between members of staff. Teachers plan together carefully, they constantly address the question of pupils' progress through the years and they share good practice with readiness and enthusiasm. This co-operative attitude is not reserved only for teachers, but spreads from teachers to classroom support staff, so that the whole school works together effectively. In this way, no new member of staff is ever without a high level of support and advice.
22. Teachers have good understanding of the subjects they teach. They plan lessons well, ensuring that pupils of all abilities are given material which matches their needs. Teachers' expectations, especially of more able pupils, are high, so that pupils are helped to achieve their full potential. The methods by which the teachers present activities and tasks are varied and interesting, so keeping pupils' concentration, in the main, and ensuring a high level of effort from the pupils.
23. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is usually good, though there is an element of disruptive behaviour, especially from boys, in Years 3 to 6, which is not always contained well enough to ensure pupils' full concentration. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and constructively, pointing out how pupils' could improve their work further. Homework is appropriately set.
24. In English, teaching is good overall throughout the school. All teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and use lesson time appropriately to ensure that the different areas of literacy are covered well, especially writing, which is given extra emphasis. They are secure enough in the use of the strategy to be able to adapt it sensibly and effectively to the needs of their particular pupils in mixed age classes. They ensure that pupils are challenged enough in the range of writing undertaken through other subjects in the curriculum, taking opportunities for promoting specific styles of writing for different purposes, such as for fiction and non-fiction writing. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and methods, which inspire pupils to learn successfully. Pupils, including boys and girls and pupils of different abilities, are motivated well by the interesting tasks prepared for them. The best lessons proceed briskly. Work is generally well matched to pupils' abilities, so that all make at least good progress. Planning has clear aims and teachers' management of pupils is generally good. .
25. Teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. Lessons are carefully planned, using the National Numeracy Strategy and mathematical skills are taught well. Teachers identify activities well for different ability groups. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good and expectations are high. Teachers manage their time well. Support staff make a very valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning, through the help and support they offer to individuals and to groups. All teachers have good relationships with their classes and manage their pupils well, except when some immature behaviour is displayed by some older pupils. Sufficient challenge is provided for more able pupils and work is made interesting for and matched to the needs of the lower attaining pupils.
26. In science, teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers understand the subject well and ensure that pupils know how to use scientific enquiry processes. They attach importance to the development of experimental work, helping pupils to challenge themselves to think and to solve problems. Teachers ensure that pupils enjoy and are interested in the science lessons. Questions are used well to judge pupils' progress. Management of pupils is generally good, apart from some disruptive behaviour from a minority of pupils.
27. It was not possible during the inspection week to observe any lessons in art and design, geography, music and physical education, so that no judgement can be made on the

quality of teaching. The one lesson observed in design and technology showed good knowledge and grasp of basic skills, as well as the ability to help pupils practically. Pupils were taught to evaluate their work with care and interest.

28. The teaching of history is good overall. Teachers provide a good range of practical activities and resources to support their planning. They use their knowledge and interest in the subject to involve pupils by asking skilful questions and they use resources well to encourage pupils' interest. Pupils enjoy the practical and investigative activities and make satisfactory progress.
29. Information and communication technology is taught through other subjects of the curriculum and no lessons on the subject were observed. Some use was made of computers in the teaching of other subjects, but too little to be able to assess the quality of teaching in the subject.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are taught effectively due to the quality of the provision made for them. Work is thoughtfully planned for them, taking their individual education plans into account. Precise targets are set and reviewed regularly, in order to meet pupils' specific needs. Resources are specially organised to extend and develop their learning. Learning sessions are well organised. The quality of support in class is very good. The learning support assistants make an important and beneficial contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils are fully integrated into activities in the classrooms. The organisation, groupings, general provision and support have a positive impact upon learning. In Years 3 to 6, where there is only one teacher to cover the four-year range of pupils, clearly graded and appropriate work is impressively provided for pupils with special educational needs.
31. The needs of more able pupils are also well provided for. The school takes care to ensure that they are offered work which extends them to their full potential and are given opportunities to work independently on topics, using research skills.

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

32. At the time of the previous inspection in 1997, inspectors judged that there were shortcomings in the provision of large apparatus for outdoor play and facilities for imaginative play for children under five. The school has since addressed these weaknesses and there are now adequate resources to support all areas of learning. The development and updating of policies for the teaching of the subjects of the curriculum is still an issue from the previous inspection, and the newly appointed head teacher, who started at the beginning of the autumn term, has been actively addressing this omission.
33. With only two teachers to co-ordinate subjects, the school does encounter practical difficulties in ensuring that the full range of learning opportunities are provided for pupils, though all statutory requirements are met. Most of the subjects of the National Curriculum are catered for, but some subjects are not fully taught. In music, there are only limited opportunities currently for pupils to develop their performing skills in singing, and few in the aspects of appraising and composing. Until recently, the school was provided with a part-time music specialist by the local education authority, but does not enjoy this service at the moment. Pupils use computers at times to support learning in some areas of the curriculum, but, because of restricted amounts of software, they have only limited opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills. However, the school is in the process of considerable development in this area, and has purchased a number of new computers that are soon to be linked together in a network around the school. They also have plans for a new computer suite to be built in the near future and teaching staff are to receive training information and communication technology in January, 2002. Restricted accommodation limits the opportunities pupils have to develop

their gymnastic skills, but they benefit from games tuition provided by their local secondary school, which has Sports College status.

34. The curriculum meets national requirements, and the school, as a basis for planning, uses the national guidelines for curriculum planning effectively. Some long-term plans are in place, whilst others in process of being linked to these guidelines are not yet fully developed. The time allocated for teaching subjects is appropriate. The school ensures that all pupils have equality of access to the full curriculum.
35. The school is keen to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met, and that all are fully included in school activities, as part of its ethos. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in the same lessons as other pupils, and cover the same range of experiences, but at a level suited to their needs. Pupils are rarely withdrawn from classes, receiving in-class support so that they do not miss any part of the curriculum. The school sees it as vital to identify pupils who may have special educational needs as early as possible. Initially, informal identification is made by the teacher, but later, analysis of needs may result in more formal procedures and may involve the services of other professionals. Individual educational plans are then drawn up so that the arrangements for suitable provision to meet their needs can be established. Monitoring of the progress of pupils with special education needs is regularly carried out, and specific support provided to ensure that this progress is maintained. Reviews of pupils' progress are carried out regularly between staff and parents, and where appropriate with outside agencies. Good provision is made for more able pupils, to ensure that they reach their full potential.
36. Reading and writing are generally well promoted across the curriculum. Pupils' reading skills are developed through literacy lessons and through other subjects. Pupils learn to write in a wide variety of forms and for many different purposes. Teachers also work hard at encouraging pupils to speak in a sustained and coherent manner, with some sense of appropriate audience. Numeracy skills are being developed appropriately, following the nationally recommended format and this is having a positive impact in the school. Teachers use the oral and mental warm-up activities effectively, and check pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding at the end of lessons. There is effective linking of numeracy skills in other lessons. Pupils use data collection in science investigations, for example, and record their findings using tables and graphs. In design and technology, they measure carefully and accurately when designing plans and in the construction of seats and chairs..
37. Within its constraints of size and number of staff, the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities, and the provision for visits and visitors also contributes well to pupils' learning. Parents and staff from the local leisure services provide coaching in football and TOPS Sports. Pupils enjoy two days of outdoor pursuits at a residential centre in the county area each year. The school has good links with the community, including the local church and the village, and the wider community of playgroups in other villages. There are also good links with secondary schools and colleges, from which pupils derive benefit through joining and sharing activities, including musical productions. The school ensures that all pupils eligible by age have an equal opportunity to take part.
38. The school ensures that other aspects of pupils' development are catered for, including personal, social and health education. They have in place policies for sex education and the hazards of alcohol and drug abuse, which are handled in a sensitive manner.
39. There are constructive links with the local nursery, which shares the school site. This allows for the smooth transition of children into school through a series of induction visits. Opportunities are also provided for the preliminary preparation of pupils for the next stage of their schooling by visits from the staff from the local secondary school to meet their prospective pupils.
40. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall. Provision for their spiritual development is good and pupils are given regular

opportunities to reflect, for example, upon the special pleasures of life that come with the gift of sight. They learn to appreciate the natural world of creation that surrounds the school environment that is constantly changing with the seasons. They think about the blind craftsmen in Malaysia and Borneo who produce intricately woven wicker baskets and yet never actually see what they have made. These experiences are provided for them in assemblies by the school staff and the local vicar. Assemblies also provide the school with a useful platform to discuss issues of a moral nature and to promote its behaviour code, as well as fulfilling the requirement for collective worship.

41. The school places a strong emphasis on correct behaviour, and ensures that its anti-bullying policy is clearly understood and adhered to. Both classes have their own set of classroom rules that they have collectively established, with appropriate sanctions for any infringement. Because it is a small school, the quality of relationships is based upon family values and is integral to the social development of all pupils. They take responsibility for their own behaviour and look after one another well. They work and play well together, whatever their ages, sharing and collaborating.
42. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and is aided positively by the school's strong links with the church. The pupils take part in the celebration of the major Christian festivals of harvest, Easter and Christmas, often in the village church. The vicar is a regular visitor to the school and in assemblies he talks about other cultures in a positive way which helps to dispel any prejudices. Through his links with missionary work, opportunities for learning about other cultures abroad are provided. He has introduced pupils to visitors from Borneo who have shown some of their traditional costumes and dance. Currently, the school includes teaching about some of the other major world religions through religious education. During the inspection there was little evidence of opportunities for pupils to explore the wealth of their own culture through, for example, the art and music of the great classical painters and artists and of other cultures, though non-Western art and music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Support for pupils' welfare makes a positive contribution to improving educational standards. The school has a caring ethos, characterised by the provision of a clean, safe and ordered environment in which pupils can learn effectively and in which parents are made welcome. Arrangements to promote pupils' general well being are good and ensure the inclusion of all pupils. Since staff know all their pupils very well, they are able to offer them help and support for personal and academic difficulties. The teachers and learning support assistants look after both the academic and pastoral needs of pupils well, including pupils with learning and other difficulties. Teachers are skilful at meeting the needs of pupils and work hard to maintain positive relationships. This judgment is an improvement on that made at the time of the last inspection.
44. Child protection procedures operate through the headteacher, who is in the process of undertaking the necessary training. Liaison with teaching staff about these issues is good and appropriate, so that staff are always alert to children's welfare. The use of high quality learning support assistants contributes positively to the welfare and progress of all pupils. There are two members of staff with appropriate qualifications in first aid. The arrangements and provision for dealing with first aid, illness, accidents and emergencies are satisfactory and are well understood by pupils and staff. There is an appropriate health and safety policy, although this, along with other policies associated with the care and support of pupils, is being reviewed and updated by the governing body. Although action has been taken to deal with the small health and safety risks identified during the last inspection, risk assessments with regards to issues surrounding fire drills and minor accidents around school have not taken place for some time. Supervision during the dinner breaks is appropriate. There is a good programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education, which is taught through religious education, class assemblies and

lessons. This ensures that pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on the impact of their behaviour and actions.

45. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. These are now under review to ensure that they provide for the current needs of the school. The headteacher encourages the staff to aim at high and clear expectations of standards of behaviour. There is an expectation that pupils will behave well. This is reinforced during lessons, break times and assemblies by the example of the adults working in the school. There is very little bullying and harassment during the school day. Through a policy of taking immediate action, teachers effectively avoid any serious incidents.
46. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory, building on previous learning, and it has a positive influence in raising overall standards in the school. The teachers and support staff use observations of pupils' progress to aid the future planning of lessons. The overall use of assessment is satisfactory, and there are many examples of good practice in marking pupils' work. However, the school is at present improving its analyses of assessment, to strengthen its use of data about pupils' progress and use it to plan and predict the expected level of attainment for individual pupils.
47. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Teachers know and care for their pupils well and teachers are efficient in monitoring pupils' overall personal development. Monitoring depends largely on a daily exchange of verbal information between staff. There are individual educational plans in place for pupils with special educational needs and teachers and learning support assistants have good knowledge of pupils' targets and work well towards helping them achieve their goals.
48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. At present the school has no attendance problems. All staff help with following up unauthorised absence. The school is developing the use of ways of using attendance data to ensure that the present high standard is maintained. Procedures to account for all pupils centrally during the course of the school day were strengthened during inspection to ensure easy access to records in case of emergency.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school enjoys good and effective links and partnerships with parents. These make a positive contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home. The pre-inspection questionnaire and the meeting with parents show that, overall, parents and carers have a very positive view of the school. Parents feel that the school has high expectations for pupils and that teaching is good. Parents are comfortable with asking questions and bringing problems to the notice of the school. This judgment is similar to that made at the time of the last inspection. However, a few parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that the range of extra-curricular activities is limited and noted that they would like more information on their child's progress. The inspectors consider that the range of activities is satisfactory and similar to that found in other comparable small schools. However, inspectors agree that at present the quality of written information provided for parents on their child's progress in annual reports needs some improvement.
50. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents is generally good. Newsletters to parents are frequent and keep them informed about events and issues, whilst also celebrating the school's successes. The parents of new pupils are well informed through the useful school prospectus, meetings and visits to the school. The governors' annual report to parents provides another valuable source of information for parents. However, both these publications have minor omissions at present. Parents' meetings each term provide good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress, attainment and targets and these meetings are very well attended. Almost all parents attend and feel that these evenings are useful. At present, parents receive very

little curriculum information to inform them of the topics their children are studying, although a start has been made to improve this. Annual reports give parents details of their child's progress and attendance at school, but as yet do not suggest targets for pupils' improvement, but the school plans to add this information in reports for the coming year.

51. Parents of children with special educational needs are involved on a regular basis in the process of reviewing their children's progress, so that they can be involved in helping the school in supporting their learning. Parents are very willing to give their time for this level of support, and as a result it has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. Parents of children with individual education plans are kept well informed and are aware of the targets set for their child. The school operates an informal 'open door' policy for parents and carers wishing to discuss their children's problems. A member of staff is always available at the beginning and end of the school day or by appointment. Parents say they feel very welcome in the school and are happy to approach the headteacher or class teacher with problems or difficulties.
52. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. The school welcomes the help of several parents, for example with listening to reading and projects linked with topic work, and the after-school football training is run by a father. Parents are willing to offer help with school trips and other activities, such as making craft items with their children after school for the Christmas Fair. Reading diaries act as links between school and parents to help parents in listening to their children reading and in completing homework. They also act as a means of conveying messages between home and school. The inspection team was satisfied with the quality and consistency of homework, which compares favourably with that in other schools. Many parents have begun to attend the newly introduced Praise Assemblies to see their children receive awards for good behaviour and attendance.
53. Many parents, carers, friends of the school and villagers attend school presentations, such as the Christmas production. Recently, the village public house ran a Bonfire Night for pupils, parents and villagers and the school also benefited from the proceeds of the evening. There is a very active Parent Teacher Association, which arranges social and fund raising functions for the school, with the help of parents, teachers, pupils and friends of the school. Money raised by the Parent Teacher Association has recently funded replacement school dictionaries and will be used shortly in the furnishing, decorating and equipping of the new extension that is soon to be built. The school also enjoys good links with the local church and on-site nursery school. All the many links between the school, the community and parents ensures that parents make a positive contribution to the work of the school and what their children achieve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management of the school are largely characterised by their reflection in the happy, productive and enthusiastic atmosphere of the school. Overall, it is good.
55. The headteacher is highly skilled and committed. Although this is his first term at the school, he provides good, strong and effective leadership and management. Above all, he shows drive and initiative, which have enabled the school to improve significantly since his arrival. He is steering the school carefully towards its goal of higher attainment. Working well with the governing body and the very supportive staff, he is implementing a wide range of improvements that are having a beneficial effect on the quality of education provided by the school, which has had a completely new teaching staff in the last two years. Together, the headteacher and staff form a good team, which puts the needs of the pupils first.

56. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are now well advanced and are good. However, by nature of the composition of the teaching staff, which is comprised of the headteacher, one other teacher and one part-time teacher, the main burden for subject co-ordination falls on the headteacher and the other full-time teachers, herself only in her second year of teaching. This does not prevent the headteacher, as the principal subject co-ordinator, from influencing the quality of teaching and learning successfully. Even though he teaches the Years 3 to 6 class for four-fifths of the week, he is very clear about what needs to be done throughout the school. The school has taken aboard new national initiatives well. The school's decision to plan some subjects in a rolling programme is providing teachers with the opportunity to ensure pupils' steady progress throughout the school, despite the mixed age classes.
57. The headteacher is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching in all subjects and realises the importance that high quality subject leadership plays in further raising standards. In all subjects, the highest quality teaching is being identified and shared and teaching is being carefully observed by the headteacher, so that good practice is now becoming the norm throughout the school. The school's good planning and co-ordination has ensured that new initiatives are being used to best effect, that teaching and planning are monitored effectively and that staff receive appropriate guidance and support to continue to raise standards.
58. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The headteacher, who is also the co-coordinator for special educational needs, is responsible for ensuring that good provision is made for pupils. Jointly with other staff, he ensures that individual educational plans are drawn up, which are then referred to and used by all other adults who work with these pupils. Funding for the meeting of special educational needs is supplemented by additional funds made available through the governing body to provide high quality additional classroom support. The head teacher ensures that individual educational plans and pupils' performance are regularly monitored so that changing needs can be met. As a result of this process, pupils make good progress.
59. The school is now using all available data well to evaluate its own performance and is clear about its educational and other priorities. The good use of data collected and analysed on the results of national tests has contributed to recent improvements in the curriculum, as well as the implementation of measures such as the formation of ability groups in numeracy and reading and writing in Years 3 to 6, additional literacy classes and extension work for the more able pupils.
60. The chairman and the governing body are hardworking and dedicated. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and bring a great deal of professional expertise to bear on solving the school's problems and improving its efficiency. They carefully monitor the school's progress and initiate or support appropriate action. They are effective partners in decision-making and are highly supportive and appreciative of the headteacher and the rest of the staff of the school. Their annual report to parents does not provide all the statutory information that it should, though all requirements for the teaching of the curriculum are met.
61. The school's educational priorities are well supported through careful financial planning. The headteacher and the administrative assistant have a good understanding of school finance, helped greatly by the expertise of the governing body. They work well together to bring their complementary skills to bear on the financial planning and management aspects of the school's work. The school is not yet making good use of information and communication technology in its work and general administration, but the provision of software and training are now planned and imminent. The school's development plan is strong, driven by clear priorities and contains criteria by which to judge the success of spending decisions. All budget decisions are analysed to ensure that they are designed to provide pupils and staff with the means of raising standards further and the budget is dictated by the priorities in the management plan.

62. All funds received for specific purposes, such as those to support pupils with special educational needs, are well and appropriately managed and used. Ongoing expenditure is carefully monitored and spending patterns explored to ensure that money is being used to good effect. The school clearly demonstrates of the ways in which it ensures the best possible value and effectiveness in all spending decisions, whether for equipment, supplies or services.
63. Although the teaching staff is small in number, teachers match the needs of the pupils very well. There are enough teachers to teach the curriculum, apart from music, and all have had appropriate training for this phase of education, but there are only two full-time teachers, including the headteacher, and one part-time teacher. The result of this is that the mixed Reception/Year1/Year 2 class and the Y3/4/5/6 class have to be taught in widely mixed age classes. It is a tribute to the school's ability to match work to the needs of individual pupils and to the very good support staff that this is done successfully.
64. The school's accommodation is adequate to teach the curriculum, but limited in some important ways. The school has no library, no computer suite and nowhere to hold whole school assemblies comfortably or in which to sing or eat lunch. The hall of the old school on site, now occupied in the mornings by the nursery, can only be used in the afternoons for physical education and is not suitable or spacious enough for that purpose. The school is shortly to have some minor extensions which will provide it with space for a library, a small computer suite and some space for the withdrawal of groups of pupils for additional or individual work. The school does have facilities to enable it to cope with physically disabled pupils. Other learning resources are generally satisfactory in quality and number.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to build on the many positive aspects of the school and further improve the standards of work and quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:-
- (1) improve the curriculum in music and in information and communication technology by:-
 - establishing a long term plan for music which can be taught by all teachers;
 - continuing to develop planning and training for information and communication technology;
 (Paragraphs 10, 11, 14, 33, 86, 93, 105, 114, 116)
 - (2) further improve the planning of the curriculum and other aspects of school life by:-
 - ensuring that all school policies are reviewed and up to date;
 - ensuring that all subjects have clear long term plans;
 (Paragraphs 32, 33, 34, 113, 114, 116)
 - (3) Providing pupils with a wider knowledge of their own and other cultures through art, music and literature.
(Paragraphs 42, 117)

In addition, the school and the governors should address the following issue:-

- provision of appropriate facilities for physical education, music, a library and for school assemblies.
(Paragraphs 64, 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	13
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	8	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0.	8	70	22	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	0	40
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	11

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	5	0	5

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	4	4	4
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (83)	80 (100)	80 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	5
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	3	3	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	60 (100)	60 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	5	1	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	4	5
	Girls	1	1	1
	Total	5	5	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (88)	83 (75)	100 (75)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	3	5
	Girls	1	1	1
	Total	5	4	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (88)	67 (88)	100 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	40
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.0
Average class size	20.0

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	23.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
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	£
Total income	122,681
Total expenditure	113,287
Expenditure per pupil	2,221
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,918
Balance carried forward to next year	26,312

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	40
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	61	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	61	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	33	15	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	48	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	48	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	36	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	42	30	0	3

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

66. At the time of the inspection there were no children of reception age, so that it was not possible to make judgements on the attainment of children under five or on the way they are taught. Under the current admission procedures, those children waiting to be admitted will not be eligible for entry until January 2002. There are good links with the Acorns Nursery, who have the use of a room on the school site. Most of the children attend the nursery on a part-time basis before starting school at the age of four. The school does make provision for a series of useful preparatory visits during the term prior to children's entry, in which they participate in a range of appropriate activities. The school has ensured that the current Year 1 pupils, who moved up from the reception class at the start of the term, had made good progress towards achieving the early learning goals.
67. A key issue at the time of the previous inspection was that the school should improve the provision for children in their early years by providing resources for a variety of play activities. The school has addressed this well and there is now a suitable range of resources for outdoor play to aid and improve children's personal and physical development, as well as resources to be used indoors, including role-play and construction equipment. The school shares the use of this equipment with the Acorns Nursery, to ensure that children get the best possible opportunities for their development. This indicates the positive strength of the partnership that exists between the school and the nursery.

ENGLISH

68. The results of the 2001 national tests clearly demonstrate the dangers of judging standards of attainments from these results alone, because the year groups in such a small school vary greatly in ability and numbers from year to year. In 2001, only five pupils, all boys, sat the national tests at the age of seven, a significant number of whom had special educational needs. As a result, standards in reading were well below the national average and those for writing were below it. In comparison with similar schools, reading was below average and writing in line with it. These results were very different from the two previous years, when they had fluctuated between very good and average when measured against national averages. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the current Year 6 are likely to achieve at least in line with the national average in the 2002 tests and that pupils are making progress in both reading and writing. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.
69. In the 2001 tests for eleven-year-olds, results in English show that standards were below the national average for all schools and below average when compared with similar schools. In the two years previously, standards in the tests had matched the national averages. The year group consisted of only 6 pupils, some with learning difficulties, pointing out once more the unreliability of the test results as an indication of overall standards. Inspection evidence indicates that current pupils are well on track to attain average results in English by the end of Year 6. This is similar to the time of the previous inspection for seven-year-olds, but standards were then judged to be above national expectations at the age of eleven. There is no evidence to suggest that there is any significant difference in the levels of attainment of girls and boys. Overall, pupils make good progress in all aspects of English.
70. Pupils' progress is good overall by the age of seven, because of the good teaching they receive and the successful implementation of national initiatives. By the age of 11, progress is also good, though less well developed in speaking and listening than in

reading and writing, partly because opportunities are missed to improve speaking skills throughout the curriculum.

71. Standards in speaking and listening are generally below the expected levels for both seven and eleven-year-olds, though most pupils' listening skills are better developed than their speaking skills. Pupils' reading skills are not well developed. These limitations are addressed by consistently good teaching, with teachers working particularly hard in literacy lessons to improve pupils' oral skills, enabling pupils to learn well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of well-organised and focused teaching and support. More able pupils are beginning to make satisfactory progress because of the recent initiatives put in place to extend them to their full potential. Inspectors found no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
72. Pupils' progress satisfactorily in speaking and listening. For Year 1 pupils, small-group work provides opportunities for adults to act as good language models and to encourage pupils to express themselves clearly. Focusing on sentence structure is a key feature of this work. In later years, the level of language use develops further and pupils become confident and willing to contribute responses to teachers' questioning and to discussions. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' vocabulary is extended further and many begin to use complex and grammatically accurate sentences. Pupils' own reading and the teachers' use of good subject-related vocabulary in class discussions play an important part in this development. Pupils listen well to their teachers' advice and some demonstrate confidence in interacting and making active contributions to class discussions and expressing their opinions. Pupils become aware that the style in which people speak changes to match the appropriate situation.
73. Pupils overall attain good standards in reading. In Years 1 and 2, average and less able pupils develop a good grasp of letter sounds to help them tackle unfamiliar words. Most pupils make good progress in fluency in reading and there is an effective combination of the teaching of phonics and other methods aimed at developing pupils' vocabulary and to develop their spelling. For example, in a good Year 1/2 lesson, pupils read the text of 'The Giant Sandwich' with appreciation and understanding, and also with good concentration on letter groups. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and embark on well-structured literacy programmes, with realistic short-term targets. The range of reading material is extended as pupils move through the school and pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy. Many pupils talk with enthusiasm about favourite authors, but their knowledge of a wide range of books is limited, reflecting the inability of the school to provide a full library until it is extended. While less able pupils still read with limited understanding, a few average and more able pupils show a growing understanding of deeper levels of meaning. Pupils learn to use dictionaries and other reference books, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are developing the skills of reading informative passages and identifying the main points in preparation for writing a playscript, for example, of the 'Time Trouble' text they had studied. Most pupils understand how 'contents' and 'index' can point the way to specific information. Many pupils are able to use non-fiction books for reference. Most pupils make satisfactory use of their reading skills in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. The reading sessions with teachers enhance pupils' progress in reading. Most pupils learn that reading offers both enjoyment and information.
74. The combination of a varied and structured literacy hour and the good teaching have had a beneficial effect on pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are taught the skills of letter formation well and most are beginning to write in joined script with increasing control and accuracy. Throughout Years 1 and 2, letter combinations and common spelling patterns are stressed. Pupils are encouraged to think about the overall structure of their writing, such as the setting, characters and plot when writing stories. Many pupils show imagination, independence and initiative in written work and accomplish a good deal of writing in the allocated time in literacy lessons.

75. In Years 3 and 4, the features of writing are extended well. Pupils write for a range of purposes, including narrative, description, letters, instructions, and other forms of writing. They grow in competence in spelling and punctuation. By the age of 11, pupils are introduced to the main features of writing for different purposes, for example, writing magazine reviews, and this work is extended to include reports, newsletters and autobiographies. The more able pupils, in particular, are able to interpret and comment sensibly on texts that they read. There are examples of extended story writing with good attention to developing characters and plot, and written work is often full. The use of information and communication technology, however, to word process, re-draft and edit is not yet fully developed.
76. The teaching of English is good overall. This promotes consistently good learning. This good teaching is showing beneficial results in the teaching of writing. Teachers in both classes have good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and how this links with what they have learnt previously. Lessons are well planned and organised for the mixed age classes, with a good balance of whole-class, group and individual work. In a very good Years 3 to 6 lesson, for example, the teacher demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the subject and used very good questioning techniques and clear explanations. He actively involved pupils in identifying features of the language used in the text the class were reading. Teachers in both classes use suitable methods to develop good listening and improve pupils' concentration and the pace of work in most sessions. They make use of pupils' interest in the subject, and this makes a good contribution to learning. Most pupils are attentive, eager to answer questions and keen to join in class discussion. The management of pupils' behaviour is good, except when a few older pupils are allowed to disrupt the concentration of others. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and encourage good manners and social skills. In both classes, teachers set appropriate standards for the majority and maintain a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs, as well as providing a good level of challenge for more able pupils. The marking of pupils' work is helpful as most teachers make constructive comments and give suitable guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
77. The new national initiatives have been productively introduced into English lessons. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs, receive intensive support in well-organised groups where specific language skills are practised and reinforced by the classroom staff and teachers. This good quality teaching and support boosts their self-esteem as well as enhancing their skills.
78. The management of the subject is good. There is a systematic programme for monitoring teaching and learning. The literacy co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. There has been good emphasis on planning to address the weaknesses in the subject through effective forward planning. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good, and the results of all tests are effectively used to set targets for individual pupils. Useful additions have been made to resources in classes, so that there are sufficient books of good quality, both fiction and non-fiction, though there is no accommodation for a proper library in which to keep them. Overall, the subject has made good improvement since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

79. At the previous inspection in 1997, inspectors judged standards to be average, with some evidence of high achievement by the age of eleven. Sound progress was being made throughout the school, with a good basis for numeracy being established for the under fives and for children in the reception class.
80. Between 1997 and 2001, standards in the National Curriculum tests for seven years olds have undergone some fluctuations, showing below average results in 1997 to well above average the following year. In the two subsequent years, standards were similar to those

levels found in most primary schools. However, in 2001, Year 2 pupils achieved levels that were well below average in comparison with all schools and when compared with schools of a similar nature. By contrast, Year 6 pupils have consistently attained above average standards, except for 2001, when they matched the national average for all schools and were above average when compared with similar schools. These fluctuations are to be expected in a small school where the size of year groups makes test results unreliable as indicators of pupils' overall attainment. Evidence from pupils' work seen during the inspection indicates that current Year 2 pupils will achieve average standards in 2002 and that Year 6 pupils will reach average standards.

81. Year 2 pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of place value to 100 and are able to add and subtract numbers within that range. They know that subtraction is the inverse of addition and can complete number sentences accurately. They respond enthusiastically to activities involving mental mathematics, and can confidently calculate doubles, adding another digit when the teacher rolls a large dice on the carpet for all to see. They are familiar with the use of a number line and know how to use it to calculate addition and subtraction.
82. Year 6 pupils have covered a wide range of numeracy topics, including using and applying number, shape, space and measures, and handling data. In lessons, inspectors observed pupils collecting, sorting and organising information in simple ways, using tallying, and then extending their recording in line graph form. Most showed good progress in this activity and their understanding was developing well.
83. Work appropriate to pupils' needs is planned for the different ages and abilities of the pupils in each class. Pupils with special educational needs are also well catered for. No obvious differences were seen in the attitudes or abilities of boys and girls during the inspection. Pupils progress well because of the good levels of teaching and support they receive from teachers and support staff.
84. The quality of teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good and, consequently, skills are taught well. Because of the mixed age classes, teachers have to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils and, as a result, they plan very effectively for them. The timing of lessons is well judged and all the elements of the numeracy lesson are taught in a balanced manner. Support staff are used well in lessons and they are particularly effective in the help they provide for those pupils who have special educational needs. Resources are also used well to help develop pupils' understanding and to aid their development. Marking in books is carried out regularly, with supportive comments to help pupils improve. Pupil's progress is being assessed through the use of individual target setting. Homework is used prudently to further extend knowledge and understanding. Management of pupils is generally effective, and good relationships exist, but there are occasions when immature behaviour by some of the older pupils is not quickly checked.
85. As a result of the good teaching in mathematics that pupils receive, their knowledge, skills and understanding are developing well and they are making good progress, including those pupils with special educational needs. They show a keen interest in the subject, with most pupils able to sustain concentration and to work independently, although a minority of older pupils are easily distracted and quickly lose interest. The marking and systems of assessment already in place help pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning.
86. The subject co-ordinator has ensured that the curriculum for mathematics is sufficiently wide. There is an important emphasis on mental mathematics as a means for developing pupils' number skills as well as their knowledge of numeracy. Each area of mathematics is given appropriate coverage, but the use of information and communication technology does not yet play a significant part in helping pupils to improve and to use their mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

87. Standards in science now match the national average for pupils aged both seven and eleven years, which is a similar picture to that reported at the last inspection. The results over the last five years show a fluctuating but improving trend, with the results for 2001 indicating a big improvement over the previous year, though the small cohorts vary greatly in attainment levels.
88. Teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 2001 showed standards to be very high in comparison with the national average. Results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 were also well above average overall. The percentage of higher than expected grades were lower than average for both age groups. Overall, these are heartening results for the school, showing a good level of improvement over the two previous years. There is little significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
89. On the basis of inspection evidence, from the lessons observed and from an analysis of pupils' work, attainment is average for pupils aged seven, rather lower than assessed by teachers. For example, pupils are developing an understanding of aspects of their topic on 'Health and Growth' and can correctly label a diagram of the human body, showing the names of the different body parts. They understand the importance of diet and know that food can come from living or non-living sources and contains differing materials, such as fats, protein and carbohydrates. A visit from the school nurse usefully supports their learning when exploring the question, 'What do we need to stay alive?'. In addition to exercise and food, have learnt from her about the part medicines play in helping to keep the body healthy, as well as the dangers they can present if not taken under proper supervision. In a lesson seen, a first aid box was unpacked, so that they could learn at first-hand about what is used to help with minor accidents and ailments. Opportunities to develop their sense of enquiry are provided and link well with their topic. They have investigated whether the oldest pupils are the tallest and have used the playground to discover which pupils can jump the farthest. They made predictions about the outcome and check the test was carried out fairly to ensure the results are valid. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress, with teachers planning appropriate work for less able pupils and ensuring that more able pupils are given the chance to use their deductive skills to good effect.
90. By Year 6, pupils are developing their investigational skills through well-planned activities. In a lesson seen during the inspection, pupils were discovering that sound can pass through different materials, through the construction of a string telephone. They were able to consider the variable factors in their activity, including the length of the string and whether it needed to be tight or loose. Pupils understand the principles of fair testing and used observation to check for fairness. The more able pupils extended the investigation by substituting wire, and then hose, for the string. Pupils record their results using tables and graphs and can confidently explain their results to the class at the end of the lesson. Their knowledge and understanding are developing at a satisfactory rate, with the more able pupils making good progress.
91. Pupils show a keen interest and enjoy science. Learning was good in the lessons observed and from the work seen in pupils' books, and there were good levels of effort evident. There were some good examples seen of pupils working well together in groups and sharing ideas during their investigations. Concentration was generally good, although a number of older pupils did not apply themselves as well as they could whilst recording their work in the lesson, thus lessening the learning achieved.
92. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have a good knowledge of science and they teach well-planned lessons that move pupils' learning along well. They have high expectations of pupils' achievement. Teachers use skilful and probing questions to judge the level of pupils' knowledge and to develop their thinking skills. Pupils are generally managed well and kept interested and involved, although occasionally there is a

small number of boys who are not kept on task consistently during the lessons, and concentration is lost. Marking of written work is carried out regularly and advice and encouragement given on how work can be improved is given. Where pupils' written conclusions are inaccurate, the misconceptions are well corrected with a statement about the correct solution. Questions are sometimes asked productively, such as 'What do your results tell you?'

93. The curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the mixed age classes in this small school. Through the use of clear planning the co-ordinator has ensured that the four major areas of science are covered and appropriately supported with opportunities to include investigative work. The use of information and communication technology does not figure regularly in science work to support pupils' work.

ART AND DESIGN

94. It was not possible to observe any lessons in this subject during the inspection and evidence of pupils' work available was too limited to make a judgement of their attainment or of teaching. On occasions, the school chooses to combine art with design and technology, so that skills from both these subjects are acquired jointly. This was to be seen in a unit of work on designing and constructing chairs, where pupils had made good sketches of their own designs, fulfilling the aims of art and design and design and technology well.
95. Pupils' sketchbooks provided evidence of instructions on colour mixing, sketches of different subjects for a Christmas card, including Santa Claus, and an angel. There are also designs of borders for Christmas cards. It is clear that art is used across the curriculum, but at this time of the school year there is not enough evidence to judge the standards attained by pupils. Resources are satisfactory and planning is appropriate.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Pupils' attainment in design and technology is average for pupils at the age of seven and eleven. This is similar to the picture reported at the last inspection. Although no teaching of the subject could be seen during the inspection, there was clear evidence of pupils' work in design and technology.
97. In Years 1 and 2, pupils had designed a vehicle for a Martian in response to an imaginary letter from 'Martin Martian'. They made their designs after a good deal of discussion and included the features requested, such as wheels, luggage space, lots of windows, and a large light. They constructed their designs mainly with cardboard materials that had been cut and fastened together with glue and required pupils to demonstrate their skills of cutting, folding and sticking. The results were productive and combined many of the required skills.
98. In Year 3 to 6 classes there was considerable evidence of the designing and making process. The topic was the designing of a chair, which was incorporated into the task of investigating structures. Sketches of a range of chairs were made, including a garden bench, a chaise longue, an armchair and a settee. Carefully measured drawings were made of the chosen seats, with labels of the various parts. The chairs were well made, with strong wooden frames well fastened together, painted and upholstered with a variety of different materials. The models were a testament to skilful use of both tools and materials by the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs took part with enthusiasm and skill.
99. In the only lesson seen, pupils were evaluating their work and discussing with each other ways in which the process could have been refined. They showed a good understanding of the task and were able to express their ideas confidently to the class. For example, one

pupils stated, ' In my opinion I think this would have been an improved method because.....'. Pupils make good progress in the subject, show a lively interest in the process of designing and making, and are prepared to listen to the views of others.

100. The teaching was effective because of the good development of pupils' skills and understanding that took place during the lesson, the quality of the work pupils' produced and their positive attitudes towards the subject. The opportunity to evaluate their work improved their understanding of how to refine and improve their skills, an area that was reported lacking at the last inspection. Long term planning is appropriate and the co-ordinator is enthusiastic and able to provide a good role model for pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

101. It was not possible to observe any lessons in geography during the inspection and therefore no judgement can be made on standards of attainment or on teaching. From analysis of pupils' work, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussion with pupils and teachers, progress is satisfactory by the ages of both seven and eleven. At the time of the previous inspection, it was judged to be satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in the older classes.
102. By the age of seven, pupils explore such topics as the weather and the seasons, look at local architecture and develop basic mapping skills, using their own village environment. By the end of Year 2, they begin to be aware of the different features of the places they study. They realise that the United Kingdom is made up of different countries. Most Year 6 pupils can locate the United Kingdom and some other countries on a world map. They study the major features of the environment, as well as the features of water, rivers and coastlines. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
103. Residential visits provide stimulus for geographical work and promote pupils' social development. Further visits to local places of interest, such as the Black Country Museum, enable pupils to develop their skills and understanding. Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic about their work in the subject.
104. A strong feature of the subject is the good use of displays around the school. These displays also display show good cross-curricular skills. Teachers' planning shows that geographical skills are taught systematically as pupils move through the school. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development.. Displays in all classrooms are used well to promote learning.
105. There is satisfactory leadership of the subject. The co-ordinator has a clear view of what is needed to develop this subject further. Resources are satisfactory and sufficient to support all of the topics, which are taught, though there is a need for a greater supply of reference books. Few information and information technology skills are used in the teaching of the subject as yet.

HISTORY

106. It was only possible to observe two lessons in history during the inspection, but from these lessons, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, as well as examination of displays around the school, it is clear that standards of attainment in history are average for seven-year-olds. By the age of eleven, pupils also reach average standards, whereas standards at the time of the previous inspection were above average. National Curriculum plans have been introduced, ensuring that appropriate skills are developed and that all required areas of subject are covered.

107. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study the history of houses in their village, thereby acquiring a sense of past and present. They look at different kinds of homes in different ages, often with great enjoyment and interest.. They study famous characters in history, such as Florence Nightingale and her work in saving lives, as seen in a good Year1/2 lesson, and look at the local history of their area and the famous events and people associated with it. In Years 3 to 6, pupils study such topics as the Vikings, the Romans in Britain and the Ancient Egyptians. In one lesson, pupils were putting their historical skills to good use by making deductions from evidence on the everyday lives of the Romans. Pupils acquire a good sense of the passing of time, knowledge about past times and an understanding of other cultures and the part they have played in forming pupils' own. Teachers work hard to reinforce historical skills, knowledge and understanding. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall.
108. Teaching in the two lessons seen was good. The good features in teaching show that questions are asked skilfully, learning in lessons is good and the pupils work collaboratively in groups as they research their projects. Resources and artefacts were used very well as pupils developed a satisfactory awareness of Roman mosaics, pottery and coins. Pupils work well together as a class and sustain their concentration. Knowledge of the subject is good. Understanding of the passing of time and the chronology of events is developing satisfactorily for all pupils. Planning for lessons is thorough and activities are exciting. Little assessment is done in the subject as yet.
109. History contributes soundly to the teaching of literacy. Pupils in Year 2, of example, use their improving literacy skills as they write about famous people from the past and labelling diagrams. Satisfactory use is made of time lines throughout the school, promoting links with numeracy. Information and communication technology skills are beginning to be used to promote learning in the subject, within the school's limited facilities.
110. Informative displays in all classrooms demonstrate clearly the topics which the pupils are following and enhance pupils' learning. Good examples were seen of a visit pupils had made to a Roman fort. In Years 3 to 6, books and posters clearly show the major themes which the pupils are following.
111. There is satisfactory leadership the subject and the co-ordinator has a clear view of the future development of the subject. Monitoring of pupils' progress by class teachers takes place regularly. Resources are satisfactory and help to illustrate all topics covered. Educational visits and visitors invited into school greatly enrich this area of the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. It was not possible to judge attainment or teaching in information and communication technology (ICT), since there were no lessons taught during the inspection and only on a few occasions was ICT used to support lessons. Some word processing of writing in a literacy lesson and a place value activity in numeracy were the only examples of use seen in Years 1 and 2. There was little work on display on which to base a judgement, since ICT is so new to the school's curriculum.
113. The school has just purchased some new computers but they are not yet networked to make the software programs available throughout the school. The school also has limited software and is in the process of developing this curriculum area. The staff are due to undergo the nationally funded training programme next term. A long term is being developed, but up to now there has been little opportunity to implement it.

MUSIC

114. No music lessons were observed during the inspection, so that it was not possible to make any judgements on teaching. Attainment in music is below national expectations for seven-year-olds and for eleven-year-olds, except for singing. This is because, until this term, the school has had the services of a part-time specialist music teacher, supplied by the local education authority. This service, however, has now ceased, though the school and the cluster group of schools who also benefited from it, are hoping that it will be resumed. At the time of the previous inspection, music was judged to be average throughout the school.
115. Singing is an important part of the musical experience of all pupils in the school. They sing with confidence in morning assemblies, enhancing their skills as they move through the school. There are regular singing lessons and a school choir. However, there is little evidence of composition or listening appreciation of music at the present time.
116. The school does not have a long-term plan for music at the moment, but is working on its production. There is no co-ordinator for the subject.
117. Pupils have some opportunity to participate in musical productions, such as the production of 'Cats' to be produced by schools in the cluster group this year. Pupils have little opportunity to listen to the music on non-Western cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. Due to the timetabling arrangements during the inspection it was not possible to see any lessons in this subject. It was therefore not possible to make a judgement on pupils' attainment or on teaching. However, from observation of pupils in the playground, it is clear that they are used to games, have average skills in ball handling and are energetic and enthusiastic.
119. The school is fortunate in having links with a local Sports College. Students from the college work with pupils at the school regularly, giving instruction in field games and other sporting areas. There are many extra-curricular sporting activities which support pupils' physical development well and the schools' scheme of work for physical education is appropriate and covers all required areas.