

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ASTWOOD BANK FIRST SCHOOL**

Redditch

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116720

Headteacher: Mr P. M. Williams

Reporting inspector: Mrs N. Moss  
22685

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 196505

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | First   |
| School category:             | Community   |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 to 9  |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| School address:              | Church Road<br>Astwood Bank<br>Redditch<br>Worcestershire |
| Postcode:                    | B96 6EH   |
| Telephone number:            | 01527 892681  |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The Governing Body  |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr M. Bayliss   |
| Date of previous inspection: | 9 <sup>th</sup> December 1996                             |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                |                      | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 22685        | N. G. Moss     | Registered inspector | English<br>Religious education<br>Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                    | Information about the school<br>The school's results and achievements<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>How well is the school led and managed?<br>What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9056         | V. Cain        | Lay inspector        |  | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?                                |
| 29426        | D. R. Grimwood | Team inspector       | Mathematics<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology   | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?   |
| 30144        | J. E. Hastings | Team inspector       | Geography<br>History<br>Music<br>Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage<br>Equality of opportunity               |  |
| 31963        | M. Padmore     | Team inspector       | Science<br>Information and communication technology<br>Physical education<br>Provision for pupils with special educational needs |  |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Astwood Bank First School is of average size compared with other primary schools, catering for boys and girls from four to nine years old. It is situated in the village of Astwood Bank, near the town of Redditch in Worcestershire, in an area of mixed housing, but houses are largely owner-occupied. The school serves the village, though over 60 per cent of pupils come in from Redditch. The school is over-subscribed. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 9.4, well below the national average, but 2.2 per cent have statements of special educational needs, above the national average. There are 267 pupils on roll, compared with the national average of 243. Just over one per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Three pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and speak English as a second language. Pupils enter the school in the reception class, but most have experienced pre-school education. There is a wide range of attainment on entry, but overall it is above that expected for pupils of this age. The headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

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

Astwood Bank First School is a very good school. Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and very good learning takes place in Key Stage 1 and is maintained throughout Key Stage 2. Standards in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are well above average in mathematics and science and they are excellent in English. Standards in nearly all subjects are above average. These high levels of attainment are the result of very good teaching and excellent management. Overall, teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2. There are specific strengths in teaching which help to raise standards, particularly teachers' expectations of their pupils, their planning and methods and their classroom management. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, as do his senior management team and management of the school is very good overall. The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection. Overall, the effectiveness of the school and the value for money it provides are very good.

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

- Standards of attainment are very good in the Foundation Stage and both key stages, and they are excellent in English.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage and both key stages is very good and, as a result, pupils learn very well.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is excellent.
- The quality and range of the curriculum is very good, as is the provision for pupils' personal development.
- The school cares very well for its pupils.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and their personal development and relationships are excellent.
- The provision for and progress of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are very good.

### What could be improved

- Resources in information and communication technology (ICT) for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs, could be improved further.

*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 1996. All key issues identified then have been dealt with. These include the development of the school's planning and assessment procedures to link National Curriculum Programmes of Study to schemes of work in all subjects and to cater for the needs of higher attaining pupils, the initiation of more effective systems for defining priorities for development, links to training needs and finance and their monitoring and evaluation. All these have been very successfully addressed. Staff and governors are now able to carry out their full responsibilities with respect to the management of the curriculum and personnel procedures. Standards have been raised considerably in ICT by the provision of a suite of computers, though there is still a need for more resources in this area.

Standards have risen since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is now very good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has been extended and improved. Leadership and management are excellent. Parents feel that they have better contact with the school and that their children are well prepared for transition to the middle school. The school has made very good improvement and has the capacity to make further very good improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 1998          | 1999 | 2000 | 2000            |
| Reading         | A*            | A    | A*   | A*              |
| writing         | A*            | A*   | A*   | A*              |
| mathematics     | A             | A    | A*   | A               |

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Key</b>         |   |
| well above average | A |
| above average      | B |
| average            | C |
| below average      | D |
| well below average | E |

In the national tests for 7-year-olds in 2000, standards in reading and writing remained very high, in the top 5 per cent nationally, while those in mathematics rose to this level. Inspection evidence indicates that in reading and writing standards are excellent, while in mathematics they are well above average. In 2000, the school exceeded its targets for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, with a higher than national average proportion of

pupils reaching Level 3, above the expected level. Results have improved over the last three years. Based on teachers' assessments, standards in science in 2000 were above the national average for those reaching Level 2 and well above it for those reaching Level 3. This was also borne out by inspection evidence.

Inspection evidence indicates that standards for 9-year-olds area also well above those expected nationally in mathematics and science, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Standards in English are excellent. This shows that very good progress is maintained from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. Reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the time they begin the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1. Standards in all other subjects are above national expectation at the ages of seven and eleven, except for ICT, where they are average. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in all subjects.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

| <b>Aspect</b>                          | <b>Comment</b>   |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | Pupils' attitudes are very good. They enjoy coming to the school, work hard and show enthusiasm for all activities.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. There have been no exclusions.  |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils' personal development is excellent, as are the relationships between pupils and with staff. They show initiative and are responsible and considerate. |
| Attendance                             | Very good. Levels of attendance remain above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality to school and to lessons is very good.   |

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

| <b>Teaching of pupils:</b> | <b>aged up to 5 years</b> | <b>aged 5-7 years</b> | <b>aged 7-9 years</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Lessons seen overall       | Very Good                 | Very Good             | Very Good             |

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

All teaching observed was satisfactory or better, thirty-eight per cent was good, thirty-eight per cent was very good and eleven per cent was excellent. The teaching of literacy is very good in both key stages, as is the teaching of numeracy. As a result, pupils' learning is very effective in the two key stages.

Foundation Stage teaching is very good and children learn well and make good progress through the high expectations and excellent use of assessment by their teachers.

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teachers have very good subject knowledge, teach basic skills very successfully and plan very well for pupils with varying needs. Expectations are high, teaching methods are effective and interesting, the management of pupils is very good and homework is used effectively.

The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language very well and pupils make very good progress. More able pupils progress particularly well across the key stages.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | The curriculum is very good in the Foundation Stage and in both key stages. Resources in ICT could be improved.  |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Very good. Teacher's planning meets the needs of pupils very well and this, together with the very good quality of support staff, results in pupils' making very good progress.  |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Very good. Teachers go to great lengths to ensure that these pupils are provided with appropriate work and encouraged, so that they make very good progress.   |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. It is fostered throughout the school, through curriculum subjects and through the school's ethos. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Very good overall. There are excellent procedures to ensure the protection and welfare of pupils and very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.                      |
| How well the school works in partnership with parents                                       | The school has excellent relationships with parents overall, with parents being very involved in their children's learning. The quality of information provided for parents is very good.                                      |

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Excellent overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management and is very well supported by the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. The school's accommodation is satisfactory, but about to be improved. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Very 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 evaluates its performance closely and takes effective action in all areas of weakness.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Very good use of resources is made to support and improve standards reached by pupils. The school is careful to act wisely when purchasing supplies or services. Learning resources are good, except for ICT.   |

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

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

Inspectors agree wholeheartedly with parents' positive views of the school. A very small percentage felt that the range of extra-curricular activities was too narrow, but inspectors found it to be very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children in the Foundation Stage are attaining above national expectations by the time they leave the reception class, especially in their communication, language and mathematical skills and in their general awareness of the world around them. Although their attainment is generally above average at the time of entry to the school, many achieve well above the standards expected for their age, reflecting the good teaching and curriculum the school offers them. Children are friendly towards each other and towards adults, share their toys and equipment well and are polite and considerate. They listen attentively to their teachers and other staff and are eager to contribute their own answers and ideas in discussion. They learn to count well and to recognise numerals and most have begun to write, some well. Children sing and play musical instruments with pleasure and they use paints, crayon and fabrics, as well as computers, as part of their creative learning. They are physically agile and develop their skills of movement and co-ordination well. These children are achieving very well in the foundation stage.

2. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were in line with the levels expected nationally at the age of seven. They were also in line with national expectations for all other subjects, except for ICT, which was below. Standards at the age of nine were above average in English, mathematics and science, as well as in art and design and design and technology. They were in line with expectations for other subjects, except for ICT, which was below. Now, standards are excellent in English and well above average in mathematics and science at the ages of both seven and nine. Standards in all other subjects are above national expectation at the ages of seven and nine, except in geography and ICT, where they are average.

3. In English, at the time of the previous inspection, standards were above average by the age of seven and by the age of nine. Since then, the National Literacy strategy has been very well implemented and adapted to the specific needs of the school with much thought, resulting in a more focused approach to the teaching of English by many teachers and a greater sharing of knowledge and expertise. The school's planning for the subject is excellent, with focus on all relevant skills. As a result, standards are now very high at the age of seven, among the top 5 per cent in the country. In the Key Stage 1 national tests in 2000. This high level of attainment is maintained through to the age of nine.

4. Speaking and listening are very carefully fostered and pupils are articulate and mature in their communication with others. Reading is fluent and frequently far above the level expected for the age group and writing is full, wide in range and technically accurate. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 are well on target to reach the same very high levels this year.

5. Pupils' standards in mathematics are also very high when compared with the national average, again in the top 5 per cent in the country in the 2000 Key Stage 1 national tests at the age of seven. The percentage of pupils attaining higher than the expected levels in the national tests was very high, showing that the more able pupils are attaining very well. This standard is maintained until the pupils leave school at nine. The National Numeracy Strategy has been very well implemented and the standard of work seen throughout the school confirms that present Year 2 and Year 4 pupils are on track to achieve equally high standards. By the time they are seven, pupils can classify shapes accurately, use fractions and are adept at mental mathematics. By the time they are nine, pupils can handle all the functions of number with ease, as well as calculating areas and using graphs.

6. In science, the standards of work seen demonstrates that pupils make very good progress and are attaining at a very high level by the age of seven. In 2000, teachers' assessment of Year 2 pupils showed them to be in the top 5 per cent nationally. This high level is maintained through to the age of nine. Pupils' work shows that they have a good understanding of scientific processes and that their investigative skills are well developed. At the age of seven, pupils can make surveys and record their results with ease and enthusiasm. They have a good understanding of the growth of plants and animals and are able to carry out a fair test. By the age of nine, they have acquired much physical knowledge about water and electricity, as well as the properties of materials.

7. In art and design, pupils achieve well and reach standards above those of national expectations by the ages of both seven and nine. Pupils make good progress in the acquisition of a wide range of skills, from painting and drawing to sculpture. Pupils of all ages are given opportunities to use many different materials and media, as well as communal projects such as painting murals and learning from professional artists during the popular Arts Week. As well as experimenting for themselves, pupils learn to recognise and to imitate the styles of famous artists. The design element of art is strongly pursued, with older pupils designing and making interesting artefacts, as well as using computers in their work.

8. By the age of seven pupils reach standards in design and technology above those expected nationally. This is also true at of standards at the age of nine. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, so that pupils are now using construction kits, designing their own moving vehicles and, by the age of nine, evaluating their own designs sensibly and with interest. They cover a wide range of technology, from that concerned with food to more mechanical areas, and make good progress.

9. Standards in geography have been maintained as in line with those of national expectation at both key stages. There is a good emphasis on practical study, covering contrasting ways of life and comparison of local areas. Pupils learn to identify countries and natural features on maps by the age of seven. By the age of nine, they reach more sophisticated levels of geographical skills, as they look at weather, tourism and mapping and planning skills.

10. In history, standards have improved at the ages of both seven and eleven to be above national expectation. Teachers' planning is good and uses a wide variety

of methods and strategies to encourage the skills of thought and deduction through direct learning and practical activities. Topics are studied in depth and used to give pupils a sense of chronology, an understanding of social change and an empathy with people in different times. Pupils make good progress through good teaching and their enthusiasm for the subject.

11. Standards in ICT have improved since the previous inspection and are now in line with national expectation by the ages of seven and nine. Despite equipment which is inadequate for the number of pupils and much of which is obsolete and ageing, good co-ordination and the training of teachers have raised standards significantly. By the age of seven, pupils can word process, use the Internet and model information, as well as using graphs to record observations. By the age of nine, they make good use of databases and learn to support their learning in other subjects by the use of technology. Standards are rising well and progress is good.

12. Standards in music have significantly improved since the previous inspection and are now well above national expectations at the ages of both seven and nine. The appointment of a specialist music teacher and the enthusiasm and expertise of the teaching of the subject in the school has meant that pupils are experiencing a wide range of musical activities. They are encouraged to play instruments, to compose, to perform in musical productions and choirs, to listen to and appreciate music by different composers and to understand the nature of music from other cultures. These high standards are supported by many extra-curricular activities and pupils make very good, enthusiastic progress.

13. Pupils are attaining at above national expectation in physical education by the ages of seven and nine and their progress is good in all aspects of the subject. Many pupils are good swimmers, while others are developing well in team games and athletics. Pupils become confident and agile, with good levels of stamina and fitness, encouraged by their participation in gymnastics lessons and outdoor pursuits. They understand what they are doing and why it is important to be involved in physical exercise.

14. Pupils make good progress in religious education and attain standards above those of national expectation at the ages of both seven and nine.

15. The school is very successful in identifying, supporting and developing the achievement of lower attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. They are given detailed individual education plans, which clearly focus on areas for improvement and targets to be achieved. These targets are regularly reviewed. Teachers and classroom assistants provide pupils with very good support, which enables them to make very good progress relative to their individual needs. They progress well in reading and writing and mathematics and improvements in these areas help them to achieve better in other subjects of the curriculum.

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

16. Across the school, all pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. Pupils are keen to come to school and display enjoyment in their learning. They display interest and enthusiasm and are keen to participate. Levels of concentration are high; pupils work hard and are proud of their achievements. Pupils demonstrate their capacity to work independently and decide their priorities in what they should do next. Parents are rightly proud that their children want to work, enjoy doing so and listen well; the inspection team agree with these views. A good example of a high level of concentration was observed in a Year 2 literacy lesson, where the teacher shared extracts from Pepy's Diary on The Great Fire of London. Pupils were totally absorbed and responded with interest and enthusiasm. In a Year 1 science lesson, pupils reminded each other spontaneously of the need to listen in order to learn.

17. The standard of behaviour of all pupils both in classrooms and around the grounds of the school remains very good. There have been no exclusions in the school. Inappropriate behaviour is quickly and consistently dealt with and parents are informed if necessary. Rewards for achievements and high standards of behaviour are keenly sought. The weekly 'Roll of Honour' is celebrated in assembly and parents kept informed about it through the school's newsletter. Movement around the school, even in congested areas, is considerate and safe. No inappropriate behaviour was observed during inspection. Respect for materials, equipment and the fabric of the building is evident. High standards of behaviour were also seen outside the school when Year 3 pupils attended the local swimming baths.

18. Pupils are very aware of the difference between right and wrong and are aware and careful of the impact of their actions on others. They respect adults and each other; everyone is valued and listened to. Through their charity work they learn to help and understand those in need. Older pupils set a good example and help younger ones. Year 4 pupils demonstrated great care and concern in a physical education lesson for a pupil in a wheelchair. Pupils are keen to take initiative. Even in reception, pupils successfully take responsibility for making choices and 'sign in' each day. When given responsibility, for example, ringing the bell, reading with reception pupils and carrying out work in the library, they perform diligently and with pride. All pupils are responsible for their own self-discipline and respond well. 'Special day and week' arrangements effectively encourage self-esteem.

19. Relationships within the school are excellent. Pupils settle quickly to work well in pairs, groups and teams. The level of participation in a wide range of clubs is very high; pupils work enthusiastically and sensibly together. Staff are good role models and pupils clearly respect and value their guidance and support. Reception pupils were observed displaying good co-operative skills in taking turns to speak and each playing a part in an animal story. The high quality of relationships ensures that all pupils learn in a well-structured, friendly and happy environment.

20. The school has, over a good number of years, built up a well-deserved reputation as a school with an active and successful policy of inclusion for pupils with special educational needs. They play a full part in the life of the school and are very positive in the way they approach their studies. Pupils with special educational

needs are capable of working both on their own and co-operatively and there are very good relationships between them and teachers, classroom assistants and the other members of their classes.

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

21. Teaching throughout the school is very good. The quality of teaching is very good in the reception classes, the only classes in the Foundation Stage. It is very good for pupils in Key Stage 1 and very good for pupils in Key Stage 2. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen anywhere in the school. Even though there were, unexpectedly, two temporary teachers in the school during the week of the inspection, eighty-seven per cent of lessons seen were good or better, thirty-eight per cent were very good and eleven per cent were excellent. The quality of teaching in the school significantly improved since the last inspection, when it was sound throughout the school, to become one of its greatest strengths.

22. Teaching is characterised by the very impressive teamwork between members of staff. Teachers plan together across parallel groups, they constantly address the question of progress through the years in all subjects and they share the best practice seen in the school with readiness and enthusiasm. This co-operative attitude is not reserved only for teachers, but spreads from teachers to support staff, so that the whole school works as a united team. In this way, no new or temporary teacher is ever without a high level of support and advice in planning or teaching method is always available in every subject.

23. The teaching of children in the reception classes is very good and children learn well as a result. Lessons are planned very well for each of the areas of learning for children of that age. They are very well organised, with good resources being used very effectively to encourage children's learning. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and lessons proceed at a challenging pace that the children both enjoy and respond to well. Teachers created many opportunities at all times to reinforce basic skills in speaking, listening and counting. There is always a happy and productive buzz of activity in the reception classes, made by children immersed and absorbed in what they are doing, working with co-operation and real interest.

24. In English, teaching is now very good overall in both key stages. All teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and use lesson time appropriately to ensure that the different elements defined in the strategy are well covered, especially reading and writing, which are given extra focus time. They are secure enough in their use of the strategy to be able to adapt it sensibly and effectively to the needs of their particular pupils. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and teaching methods, which inspire pupils to learn successfully. Pupils are well motivated by the interesting tasks carefully prepared for them, with forethought as to what will interest pupils of either gender and all abilities. The best lessons proceed at a very good pace, matched by the pace of learning. Work is especially well matched to pupils' abilities, so that all make at least good progress.

Planning has incisive objectives and teachers' management ensures that pupils are never idle or distracted during lessons.

25. In mathematics, teaching is never less than satisfactory and is often very good, throughout the school. Lessons are carefully planned, using the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers group year groups into attainment sets, so that work is very carefully matched to pupils' abilities and all pupils are challenged at the right level. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning, through the help and support they offer to individuals and to groups. The pace of lessons is often impressive, especially in the opening mental mathematics sessions of classes. All teachers have good relationships with their classes and manage their pupils well. Sufficient challenge is always provided for higher attaining pupils and work is made accessible and interesting for the lower attaining pupils.

26. Little teaching could be observed in science during the week of the inspection, because of the way in which timetable blocks are arranged. However, the very good quality of teaching and learning emerged clearly from the evidence of pupils' work and from discussion. It is clear that teachers plan their lessons well, giving good prominence to investigative skills, which encourage the pupils to use precise and deductive thought in their approach to the subject. Good challenge is offered to pupils in the range and complexity of work offered and pupils clearly enjoy their work, feel stimulated by it and take pride in their finished records and observations of experiments.

27. Although no art and design lessons were observed, evidence from pupils' earlier work indicates that teachers planning is very good and that a very good variety of resources are used well by pupils. All these factors promote good learning. Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm and interest in the subject are clearly evident in pupils' work and in the many displays around the school.

28. In design and technology, although only a few lessons were seen, a considerable array of work produced by pupils was available for scrutiny. Planning is clearly good, with every opportunity taken to incorporate skills and knowledge from other areas of the curriculum. In the lessons seen, teachers' management skills were good, ensuring both safety and structured progress. Good use is made of support staff to help groups of pupils in their learning.

29. The teaching of geography and history is good overall and some very good lessons were observed. Teachers provide a good range of practical activities and resources to support their good level of planning. In history, in particular, teachers use their knowledge and interest in the subject to fire pupils' imaginations and to stimulate their desire to learn for themselves, using research techniques and study skills. In geography, ICT is used well to increase pupils' sense of other countries and natural features. Pupils very much enjoy the practical and investigative activities in both subjects and make good progress in their learning

30. ICT lessons observed during the inspections were satisfactory. Teachers are at present receiving training in the subject and are clearly acquiring enough expertise and understanding of the subject to enable pupils to learn well. Teachers harness pupils' interest well and plan systematically in order to develop pupils' skills.

31. The quality of teaching of music is very good throughout the school. With the help of the specialist teacher, lessons are planned with care and pupils are encouraged to develop their skills and talents in all areas, either singing, instrumental, composition or simply appreciation. Most teachers have some musical experience and interest and this all serves to motivate pupils and ensure their musical development.

32. In physical education, teaching is good. Planning of lessons ensures that pupils progress systematically through a range of skills and are exposed to a range of activities in which all can enjoy participating at some level. Teachers manage pupils safely and with good humour, so that pupils are happy to try new activities and work with interest and concentration.

33. The quality of teaching in religious education throughout the school is good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and convey it to pupils in an interesting and meaningful manner. In most lessons, they create a reflective atmosphere where good learning takes place.

34. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning in all areas of the curriculum. Classroom teachers are fully involved by the special educational needs co-ordinator in writing detailed individual educational plans that outline ways in which the curriculum is to be adapted to meet individual needs. Teachers work very well with classroom assistants both in the planning and in the execution of lessons. The very good support provided by classroom assistants makes an extremely valuable contribution to pupil's learning and progress.

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

35. The school fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and offers its pupils a broad and balanced curriculum. The curricular provision has improved. At the time of the last inspection, full schemes of work were not available for each separate subject. Since then the school has fully and carefully adopted National

Curriculum schemes of work in every subject. Using these schemes, the teachers plan thoroughly and clearly across year groups, taking into account the needs of pupils and the importance of equal access to the whole curriculum for all pupils. The length of the school week for older pupils has been extended to meet national recommendations. The problem of lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils has been vigorously approached. A position of co-ordinator for able pupils has been created and these pupils are receiving extra extension work to ensure that they reach their full potential. Pupils from Year 2 onwards are taught literacy and numeracy in groups based on attainment, rather than in their class groups. Higher attaining pupils are individually tracked throughout the school and have their own educational plans detailing specific learning targets. Pupils with special abilities are given extra tuition, individually or in groups. For example, a young pupil showing particular ability with percussion instruments is given individual tuition and pupils in Year 4 showing high ability in science are invited to join the engineering club, where they are taught by a retired engineer. The success of these measures is confirmed by the large numbers of pupils working at levels above and, in some cases, well above those expected nationally in subjects throughout the curriculum. Virtually all parents believe that the school has high expectations of all of its pupils, a view with which inspectors agree.

36. The curriculum is arranged on a two year rolling programme. Geography, history, art and design, design and technology and religious education are taught in concentrated blocks of two or three weeks during each term. This helps to give the individual subject status, ensures strong focus and also a full coverage of all areas of the National Curriculum. Music is taught in Key Stage 2 by a specialist teacher, which means that pupils have expert tuition in a subject in which teachers often lack confidence and this benefits pupils' learning. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage offers a wide range of learning opportunities and is planned very effectively to national guidance. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school has a very good policy for these pupils which fully meets statutory requirements. The school identifies the needs of pupils at an early stage. Individual education plans contain clear and achievable targets for progress.

37. Since the last inspection, the school has fully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. This has been done very successfully, with the result that standards in both areas have improved and now are consistently well above those that are expected nationally.

38. A minority of parents feel that the school does not provide a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. The findings of the inspection team do not agree with this opinion. They are that the school provides a very good range of activities which widen and extend the provision of the curriculum. These activities are, however, largely confined to pupils in Years 3 and 4. The extra clubs are run by the teaching staff, supervisory assistants and parents who have received training or have special skills, and are designed to provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities. Games clubs in football, cricket and skittleball lead to the formation of school teams which compete successfully against other local schools. The school provides many extra opportunities for music, through membership of the large choir which performs regularly for parents and

wider audiences, through groups which offer tuition in instruments such as the recorder and the ocarina and through opportunities to experience and participate in a range of concerts and festivals. Other clubs extend the normal provision in ICT, art and design and science or offer an introduction to chess and French. Regular school performances involve all the pupils in a year group and are popular with pupils and parents. Clubs are well attended and have a positive effect on the learning and social development of the pupils. Many are run during the lunch period and contribute to this being a very pleasant experience for the pupils.

39. Pupils with special educational needs have equality of access to all parts of the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities. The school is successful in the way it adapts and adds to the curriculum to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Specific educational needs and the strategies to help pupils to tackle them are clearly outlined in the individual educational plans written by the special educational needs co-ordinator, with the help of classroom teachers. The school has successfully devised and carried out various schemes to support both the intellectual, physical and social development of its pupils with special needs. One very good example is the 10.20 club, a daily session for pupils who have been identified as needing support with various areas of need, including both physical and social development. This is well planned and supervised by teaching assistants in consultation with the special educational needs co-ordinator. Generally, the very good planning and effective use of resources help pupils to successfully work towards their targets.

40. Provision for personal, social and health education is integrated effectively within religious education studies, science lessons and discussion periods. There are no policies for sex education or drug misuse, although such matters are addressed informally.

41. Links with the community make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. Pupils develop, and bring a sense of purpose to, their literacy skills by writing for the parish magazine. Visits from the local vicar and visits to the local church enrich the programme for religious education. Local buildings provide first hand sources of information for pupils in Year 1 in their history work. Year 2 pupils extend their science work at a local wildlife centre. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 take part in tree planting activities. Arts Week, when the normal curriculum is abandoned and the pupils are offered a whole range of experiences provided by invited members of the community, including artists, musicians, puppeteers, story tellers, instructors of different types of dance, and players of bagpipes, is remembered by some pupils in Year 4 as the highlight of their time at the school.

42. The school has constructive links with partner institutions. Half day visits by Year 4 pupils to their prospective middle schools and talks by the Year 5 co-ordinators help to make the transfer to the next stage of education as seamless as possible. Pupils from the local high school do their work experience at the school. Student teachers regularly train at the school. This brings benefits to the pupils, because extra adult helpers mean increased individual help for pupils. A mentor visits the reception class to offer help and advice. Pupils in Year 2 meet pupils from

a local special school twice a year and take part in joint ventures, thus having an opportunity to develop their social skills.

43. At the time of the last inspection, the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education was said to be a strength of the school. This is still the case and, indeed, provision has improved. The school is a caring and happy community which has high aspirations for its pupils. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and their behaviour. Parents are convinced that the school is helping their children to develop in a mature and responsible manner.

44. The provision for spiritual development is very good. Good quality acts of collective worship are carefully planned and offer opportunities for reflection and prayer. Care is taken to provide appropriate and tranquil music to create the correct atmosphere when pupils enter the hall. Pupils respond to this with quiet and respectful behaviour throughout the session. Teachers at the school have recently considered spirituality in education and some of the class assemblies achieve a genuine sense of spirituality, helped by the use of water features, scented candles and 'special' objects such as items of sculpture or plants. Pupils reflect on the nature of ideas like 'skin deep beauty' and what it feels like to be the one 'left out'. Year 2 pupils, as part of their study of Armistice Day, sent for the materials used to make the commemorative poppies, made their own wreath and laid it on the War Memorial in the village.

45. The school's efforts to promote the pupils' moral development are very good. All staff, including the lunchtime supervisory assistants, have received training in assertive behaviour. The school has a clear code of behaviour involving a graded series of sanctions and rewards which are clearly displayed and understood by the pupils. Older pupils are expected to sign a code of conduct. There are high expectations of good behaviour of the children in classrooms and in the playground. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are well maintained. Adults in school provide good role models. Teachers encourage pupils to be appreciative of the efforts of others both by urging them to applaud particularly worthy efforts and by organising events like 'Special Day' when a pupil, whose name is chosen from a hat, becomes the subject of the class discussion and pupils point out their good features. Teachers make notes of these comments and they are written up and posted on the classroom door. Correct behaviour is encouraged through the themes of stories in acts of collective worship.

46. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Lessons offer many opportunities for collaborative work in pairs or small groups. Year 3 pupils, working in groups of six, prepared a choral reading of a poem in a literacy lesson. Older pupils are given responsibilities such as organising the school library, being responsible for compiling information and the availability of certificates and awards for the 'celebration' assemblies, tidying the physical education equipment store, litter collection and delivery of the registers and milk. Year 2 pupils are responsible for maintaining the bird feeders situated in the school's environmental area. Older pupils are paired with younger ones for shared reading sessions. The many educational visits, including a residential weekend for pupils in

Year 4, and school sports teams provide useful opportunities for pupils to mix together in the wider community.

47. The frequent theatrical and musical productions provide opportunities for pupils to build confidence in public performance. All pupils in a year group are involved, but plays are organised with two casts so that more pupils may have the opportunity to have major roles. Pupils are encouraged to think about and do something for those less fortunate than themselves through their active support for a charity. A different charity is chosen each year and is usually one which has a significance for individuals or groups of pupils.

48. Cultural provision at the school is very good. The curriculum is enriched by visits from artists and writers who conduct activities like poetry workshops. Pupils have the opportunity to enjoy traditional activities like country dancing and making a float for the village carnival as well as an annual visit to a pantomime. Pupils are given a chance to develop an awareness of the culture of other faiths through their work on Hinduism and Judaism. The parent-led Multicultural Association provides pupils with many opportunities to study facets of other cultures by promoting 'Whole World Days', when each class can visit a series of displays and activities associated with countries throughout the world. It also mounts days of activities associated with a single country, recent examples being Australia and Sweden Days. Pupils are given the opportunity to appreciate the works of famous European artists like Degas and William Morris, as well as art from India. Music lessons provide the opportunity to study works by many composers. The school has a wide range of instruments including those, like the sompoton, from non-European cultures.

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

49. The school cares very well for its pupils. Pupils enjoy school. They are happy, confident and feel safe and secure. Staff are caring, committed and know their pupils well. Parents confirm that staff are always available to discuss any concerns that may arise. Pupils are confident that staff will help them in times of need. All pupils are very well supported by all staff; pupils know they are greatly valued and respond positively.

50. Effective Child Protection procedures are in place to handle issues which might arise. Staff are trained and vigilant. Good use is made of outside agencies for professional advice and support. The school site is clean and well maintained; no health and safety issues were observed. Regular fire drills and checks of electrical equipment are undertaken. There are sufficient trained First Aiders to ensure that pupils' medical needs are well met. Parents are contacted immediately if there are concerns.

51. Attendance is very well monitored and levels remain above the national average. Parents are fully aware of the need to inform of the school of absences and do so; there is no unauthorised absence. Registrations take place twice daily and are both prompt and efficient. Any attendance or punctuality concerns are discussed and the Education Welfare Officer involved in helping, supporting and monitoring to assist improvement.

52. Excellent systems are in place for monitoring behaviour and dealing with inappropriate behaviour. The assertive discipline policy is consistently applied by all staff and pupils respond very positively. High standards are implicit and rewards are keenly sought and success celebrated. Sanctions are known and consistently applied, any inappropriate behaviour is quickly dealt with and parents informed if necessary. There have been no exclusions. Parents are fully aware of the system and are very pleased with the high standard that prevails. Pupils' personal development is effectively monitored through class teachers who know their pupils very well.

53. Personal, social and health education is successfully promoted through planned class discussion sessions, science and religious education. A well-established programme is in place to ensure that pupils feel confident about the move to their next school.

54. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the use of assessment information to guide planning is now very good. Much work has been done to effect considerable improvement since the last inspection. The new pupils' profiles are carefully tailored to record individual progress in key areas of learning and to highlight areas for constructive development. Individual learning targets are set in reading, writing and mathematics. Whole school target setting is of a very high standard and the analysis of data to inform future planning is a clear strength.

55. The school has very effective systems in place to identify, assess, support and monitor pupils with special educational needs. This is so in all cases, whether they be related to physical, behavioural or learning difficulties. Appropriate support is given to all pupils. The school complies with the objectives of its special educational needs policy and fully implements the requirements of the Code of Practice.

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

56. Parents have very positive views about the school and are very pleased with the values taught and the high standards achieved. Responses to questionnaires and to the parents' meeting were high. All parents are very supportive of the school's work and there are no concerns.

57. Communications with parents are very good and fully appreciated. Detailed information is given through the prospectus, the Governors' Annual Report to Parents and fortnightly newsletters; the style is clear, friendly and encouraging. In addition, termly parents' evenings take place where individual learning targets are shared and evaluated. Annual reports to parents are good and comply with requirements. All subjects are covered and teacher comments are evaluative. However, there are insufficient specific comments showing pupils how to improve.

58. Links with parents are excellent and a clear strength. A detailed series of workshop sessions for pre-school parents is greatly valued, together with the loan service of school resources at home and guidance to make the most of the opportunity. Organised parental visits to children's classes in September strengthen home-school liaison and allows parents to see their children's work. Almost all parents have signed the home/school agreement. Parents confirm that they are made to feel welcome and that staff are approachable. Views are sought and acted upon.

59. Many parents are actively involved in the life of the school and this has an excellent impact on pupils' support, enjoyment and development. Parents and helpers assist in class, with reading, in the library, with clubs, cooking, on trips and the making of intriguing story sacks for younger pupils. A very active and successful Parents' and Friends' Association hosts a variety of social and fundraising events. Money raised is carefully used for projects and to enhance learning resources, thus benefiting all pupils. Recently funds have enabled the purchase of equipment for reception classes, books, story sacks, pre-school packs, a theatre workshop, arts week, the environmental area equipment and subsidised trips. The multi-cultural group of parents initiate a wide variety of events that have a great impact on pupils' learning and appreciation of other cultures. Displays promote the knowledge and understanding of other countries around the world, the distance and lifestyle. Pupils are able to see photographs, costumes, artefacts and taste food.

60. Pupils benefit clearly from the help parents give their children at home. Reading books are taken home three times a week; the reading diary is both a useful record of books read and a home-school dialogue. In addition, pupils learn spellings and involve parents in project work. The high quality of parental involvement both at school and at home promotes pupils' confidence and has a significant impact on learning and attainment.

61. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly informed of their children's progress and are fully involved in the review process. The parents of several pupils with special educational needs have chosen to place their children in

the school despite being located outside the catchment area because of its reputation as a school that understands and does what it can to support the needs of both the children and their parents.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The leadership and management of the school is characterised by a range of significant strengths, which make it very good overall.

63. The headteacher is highly skilled and committed. He provides excellent, strong and effective leadership and management. Above all, he shows drive and initiative, which has enabled the school to improve significantly since the last inspection. He has steered the school well towards its goal of higher attainment by all pupils in the four years since his appointment. Working well with the governing body and the innovative senior management team, he has implemented a wide range of improvements that have had a most beneficial effect on the quality of education provided by the school and on the environment in which pupils learn. Together, the headteacher and senior staff form an excellent team, which puts the needs of the pupils first.

64. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are well advanced and very good. Subject co-ordinators influence the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects very successfully. They are very clear about what needs to be done and they have taken aboard new initiatives, such as the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, very well. The school's decision to plan many non-core subject in blocks of teaching is providing them with the opportunity to teach well-planned and focused units of work systematically. The subject co-ordinators are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching in their subjects and realise the importance that high quality subject leadership plays in further raising standards. In all subjects, the highest quality teaching is being identified and shared, so that good practice is now the norm throughout the school. Of particular significance are pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science, at both seven and nine. The school's good planning and co-ordination has ensured that new strategies are being used to best effect, that teaching and planning is monitored effectively and that staff receive appropriate guidance and support to continue to raise standards.

65. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. There is very good liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers, classroom assistants and the various outside specialists who visit the school. The co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable and this ensures clear direction for other staff. Identification, monitoring and review procedures are organised most effectively, as is the in-class support of pupils. These are significant factors in the very good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The needs of the very few pupils for whom English is an additional language are also catered for very well by the co-ordinator.

66. The school is very successful in using all available data to evaluate its own performance and is clear about its educational and other priorities. The very good use of data collected and analysed has contributed to recent improvements in standards in all subjects, as well as the implementation of measures such as the

setting of groups in literacy and numeracy, additional literacy classes and extension work for the more able pupils.

67. The chairman and the governing body are hardworking and dedicated. They have an unusually 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 very effective partners in decision-making and are highly supportive and appreciative of the headteacher and the rest of the staff of the school.

68. The school's educational priorities are very well supported through careful financial planning. The headteacher and administrative staff have a good understanding of school finance, helped greatly by the expertise in 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 makes satisfactory use of ICT in its work and general administration. The management 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 with the means of raising standards further and the budget is driven by the management plan.

69. All funds received for specific purposes, such as those to support pupils with special educational needs, are efficiently and appropriately managed and used. Ongoing expenditure is carefully monitored and spending patterns explored. The school is impressive in its demonstration of the ways in which it ensures the best possible value and effectiveness in all spending decisions, whether for equipment, supplies or services.

70. There are enough teachers to teach the curriculum very well and all have had appropriate training for this phase of education. Very good use is made of teaching and support staff to help pupils make appropriate progress and to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The school's accommodation is at present inadequate to meet all its needs, and, in some areas, such as the mobile classrooms, prevents pupils from learning as well as they might in subjects such as art and design, design and technology and ICT. However, the building of three new classrooms is about to begin and should go a long way towards solving these problems. The school hall, however, is too small for its present use as a gymnasium and can only with difficulty accommodate the whole school for assemblies. It is a tribute to the school that it manages to produce musical productions of a high standard in such a small space. Resources for learning are generally good, apart from those for ICT. All these factors ensure that, most of the time, pupils are working in an environment that motivates them and contributes to their achievements.

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

71. In order to improve further the quality of education, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) seek to improve the quality and quantity of resources for ICT for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, by:
  - increasing the number and quality of computers in the school;
  - improving the quantity of software for pupils' use;
  - enabling pupils to have freer access to computers to carry out their own research.

(Paragraphs 2, 10, 93, 97, 132, 133, 135).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 45 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 45 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 11        | 38        | 38   | 13           | 0              | 0    | 0         |

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

### Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll   | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | 257     |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 9       |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs   | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 5       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 26      |

| English as an additional language                       | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 3            |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year                                       | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 6            |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 5            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 4.4 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

#### 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*

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2000 | 21   | 20    | 41    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       | Reading  | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 20      | 20          |
|   | Girls    | 20      | 20          |
|   | Total    | 40      | 40          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 98 (96) | 98 (95)     |
|   | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       | English  | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 20          | 20      |
|   | Girls    | 20          | 20      |
|   | Total    | 40          | 40      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 98 (95)     | 98 (96) |
|   | National | 84 (82)     | 88 (86) |

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 1            |
| Black – African heritage        | 0            |
| Black – other                   | 2            |
| Indian                          | 0            |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 2            |
| White                           | 207          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 1            |

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

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

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

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

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 10   |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 25.7 |
| Average class size                       | 28.5 |

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 7  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 25 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year                             | 1999/2000 |
|  | £         |
| Total income                               | 390 065   |
| Total expenditure                          | 385 459   |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1 443     |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 4 008     |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 8 614     |

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

### Questionnaire return rate

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 267 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 171 |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 76             | 23            | 1                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 73             | 25            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 68             | 32            | 0                | 0                 | 1          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 51             | 44            | 4                | 1                 | 1          |
| The teaching is good.  | 79             | 21            | 0                | 0                 | 1          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 61             | 32            | 6                | 0                 | 1          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 83             | 16            | 1                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 79             | 21            | 1                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 65             | 31            | 3                | 0                 | 1          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 81             | 18            | 1                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 73             | 25            | 1                | 0                 | 1          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 53             | 31            | 9                | 0                 | 7          |

## **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**

72. The provision for children in the foundation stage is of high quality and children's learning is very skilfully managed. The curriculum is very well planned and provides an extensive range of carefully thought out activities to ensure coverage of all the required areas. Parents are extremely supportive of their children and the school, and involve themselves positively in their learning through engaging in the carefully designed homework activities.

73. The majority of children enter school with above average skills in all areas of learning. This is confirmed by the initial assessments undertaken during their first few weeks in the reception class. Throughout the reception year, assessment is thorough and of a high quality, so that the monitoring of children's development is very good. By the time children are ready to enter Year 1, they have achieved most of their early learning goals in personal social and emotional development, communication, language and learning, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. In many cases, children have exceeded these goals and are making further very good progress.

74. The reception classes are very well organised places of learning. Teaching is very good. The foundation staff team facilitate skilfully the development of learning experiences and skills for all children through the very high standard of their teaching. Resources of good quality are used effectively and creatively to support and aid this development. Children make very good progress, including those with special educational needs, and develop knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate.

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

75. During their time in the reception children learn to work, share and play together well and to have respect and care for those around them through the very positive relationships that exist in the reception classes. This is well illustrated in the regular 'special day' activity, when a child is chosen to be special for a day and the other children take turns to contribute their own feelings, such as, 'Sam is special because he is good, kind and very sensible'. Two other children are then chosen to look after him for the day. Circle time is a regular feature in the reception classes, when a soft toy is passed around. As children hold it they make contributions to the discussion that demonstrates they have a developing respect for the needs, views and feelings of others. Children have the opportunity to show a toy or an object of personal value and talk about it or explain how it works. They are able to speak in front of others and talk about the work done in their group with confidence. They acknowledge the hard work and effort of others by clapping. They will often quite voluntarily go and help other children in tackling activities that they are finding

difficult. Children become very involved in activities, listening to one another, and sharing ideas and resources. They organise themselves independently, because materials and activities are made easily accessible to them. The careful and well-structured planning enables the children to choose to work individually or in a group, and they do this in a mature way. Children contribute confidently when engaged in conversation with teachers during activities, and demonstrate the ability to concentrate well on tasks set for them. As they approach the end of their time in reception they have become independent, confident and mature learners well able to make choices for themselves, as a direct result of the very good quality of teaching they have received. Progress is very good and children generally achieve the learning goals in this area and often exceed them.

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

76. Teachers and support staff recognise that these are vital areas of learning, since they are so inter-related to the many other areas of development needed for the children in school. Consequently, activities to support their development are thoroughly and thoughtfully planned, and resourced appropriately to ensure that children's needs are adequately met. Pupils progress very well and achieve above the goals expected for this age. In both reception classes children enjoy listening to stories and read to their reading partners every day. They read confidently parts of the text together when the teacher is reading to them. They are beginning to use non-fiction texts to learn more about their topic of ladybirds and to write their findings in sentences. One child wrote 'A butterfly is colourful and beautiful'. The majority of children make such good progress that they considerably exceed the expected level in reading and writing and speaking and listening, by the time they leave the reception classes. This is due entirely to the high quality of teaching they receive. Regular opportunities are provided for children to tell and re-tell stories, to engage in role-play in the class garden centre, or Chinese restaurant, or to work with others in a small group to create stories with a beginning, a middle and an end. These stories are shared confidently with the rest of the class. Adults in the class act as good role models for spoken language, and extend children's language through strategic use of questions and through daily spontaneous and planned discussions to talk about their experiences. Children have developed very good listening skills and take it in turns to listen to each other while they talk about why they feel happy, angry or sad.

### **Mathematical development**

77. This area is taught well and by the end of the reception year most children will have well exceeded the early learning goals for mathematics. They make very good progress. All children can count to ten, twenty and beyond without hesitation and recognise those numerals. They can order tens to one hundred, and look for patterns on a hundred square. They can solve mentally the sum of differing sized groups of items, such as three bananas and two Mars bars. Most know the 'o'clock' times and can cut out pictures of clocks showing various times of the day and arrange them in the correct sequence. They can record the time using the correct numeral for the time. They can successfully investigate patterns involving ladybirds, finding ways of colouring them without repeating the pattern. Children understand

what subtraction means when they play a number games involving the removal of a number of items from a tray, and count the number remaining. In data handling they are able to investigate successfully the number of people in the class who have blue eyes, and record their results. In the class hat shop heads are measured so that hats can be fitted accurately. In thinking about time, they estimate how long it takes to brush teeth, or to get dressed. In observing snail races, they develop an understanding of order in number by seeing who is first, second or third.

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

78. A range of well-planned interesting topics helps children to make very good progress in developing knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Having listened to the story of the three little pigs, they investigate the strength of walls, using different building materials such as plastic building blocks, wood blocks, and interlocking materials. They use their senses of sight and hearing when looking for signs of spring in their school environmental area. They investigate the pond and the log pile for signs of new life and examine items they bring from home, including tree bark, leaves, feathers, a bird's nest and shells. In their topic on mini-beasts they examined the habits of worms and snails, made observational drawings of them and wrote sentences about their findings. Other planned activities include hunting for mini-beasts in the outdoor environment and successfully collecting a number of samples of insects that they later examine under magnification. They are able to find out about the habitat of a selection of wild animals by identifying their country of origin on a world map, and discuss their findings with the teaching staff. They begin to understand about the life cycle of plants through the first hand experience gained in planting seeds. At the time of the Chinese New Year they use they use their senses to taste different foodstuffs and record their reactions. Teaching is very good, so that progress is very good and pupils exceed their learning goals in this area.

### **Physical development**

79. Children listen attentively to the teacher at the start of a physical development lesson and understand the need to be aware of others and to behave sensibly. They understand the need for a warm-up before the main activity starts and follow the teacher's action very well. They show good control and co-ordination when engaged in aiming activities such as throwing a beanbag, in preparation for taking part in a beanbag relay race for the school sports day. They run in lanes on the sports field accurately and with confidence. They co-operate and work well together in their teams. They play safely together during activities involving a parachute, showing an awareness of the needs of others in the space around them. Children also learn skills such as cutting and weaving, using a mouse to use a computer program, to help children gain sound control of finer movements. The wide range of experiences is planned systematically through the team approach of teachers and support staff and the outcomes carefully monitored. Children make good progress and generally exceed the levels expected of them by the time they leave the reception classes, through very good teaching.

## **Creative development**

80. The very expansive range of creative activities and experiences provided ensures that the children make very good progress and that they all exceed the early learning goals in this area. Opportunities are provided for children to mix their own colours to use in their paintings of butterflies, frogs and fish. They confidently use chalks, pastels, wax crayons and charcoal to explore texture and are able to choose the most suitable for their subject. Using natural materials from outside, the children are able to produce land art, using sticks, stones and conifer branches. Weaving, aboriginal painting, printing designs onto cloth, making wire shapes and designing Christmas cards, are others areas of experience in which the children are enabled to express their ideas. To celebrate the Chinese New Year they are able to perform appropriate movements to create a special dragon dance, and can compose their own music, using chime bars. They sing songs from memory often connected with differing areas of learning such as, 'Who built the ark?' in mathematics when they are counting in twos. They use imagination well when involved in play in the class garden centre or shop and are able to sustain character. In all, due to the very successful teaching, the children have accomplished all of their early learning goals for creative development.

## ENGLISH

81. By the age of seven, standards in both reading and writing are very high, and an improvement on the previous inspection, at which they were above average. They are maintained at this level of excellence by the age of nine. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 the pupils' standards in reading and writing were very high, among the top five per cent nationally. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was significantly higher than the percentage nationally. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 3 was again very high and in the top five per cent nationally. When compared with schools of a similar nature, standards attained were also very high and in the top five per cent. This is an excellent level of attainment.

82. At Key Stage 1, standards have remained very high over the last three years and are well above rising standards nationally. Standards in reading and writing have been consistently high, though writing has risen steadily over the last three years. It is interesting to note that, in 2000, boys attained slightly better than girls, a situation which is against the national trend and is a tribute to the school's focus on raising the attainment of boys.

83. Inspection evidence indicates that by the age of seven, the majority of pupils in Year 2 are reaching equally high standards in reading and writing and are will surpass the challenging targets the school has set, as they did in 2000. This indicates very good achievement and indicates that most pupils, specially the higher attainers, are doing as well as they should. By the age of nine, standards in English are maintained at the same very high level and are being excellently prepared for the next phase of their education in the subject.

84. The National Literacy Strategy has been very successfully implemented, as well as adapted for the school's specific purposes, and there is a focused approach to the teaching of English by all teachers. Some good quality resources have been purchased to support literacy, and these have helped to improve the quality of class reading. Very effective use is now being made of new initiatives such as additional literacy support for under-achieving pupils, the allocation of specific guided reading times each day and opportunities for extended and sustained writing through regular writing workshops. Very good support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is contributing to rising standards for these groups of pupils. Target setting in literacy is used well by teachers to focus on what needs to be improved. The co-ordinator is confident and extremely well equipped to teach the literacy strategy and provide an example of best practice, as well as good advice and support to colleagues.

85. Planning has been improved as a result of the National Literacy Strategy, which now provides the long-term planning. Evaluation and assessment opportunities are identified in planning and well used. Much analysis of assessment data is undertaken to identify areas of weakness and the information gained is used appropriately to inform priorities for attention, such as the recent thrust on reading.

Standards in writing show much improvement in both key stages. The steady and very good progress made in Key Stage 1 is sustained throughout Key Stage 2 classes, because the expectations of teachers are very high and demanding work is set for average and higher ability pupils.

86. The standards of speaking and listening are well above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and each other, follow instructions without fuss and contribute positively and articulately in discussions. Speaking skills are very well promoted and teachers miss no opportunities to engage pupils in extended conversations and to extend pupils' clarity and use of English when speaking. Teachers and other adult support staff encourage pupils to ask and answer questions thoughtfully in order to develop their ideas. As a result, pupils develop a good level of confidence in speaking aloud and explaining their work. A very good example of speaking skills being well promoted were seen in a Year 2 class where the teacher encouraged pupils to share and express the feelings of people during The Great Fire of London and used questioning effectively to extend their ideas. In a Year 3 class, the teacher made good use of opportunities to extend speaking skills, by encouraging pupils to prepare, present and perform their own versions of a poem to the rest of the class. They were able to do so in an appropriate register and with good expression.

87. Standards in reading are well above average at the end of Key Stage 1. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have very good phonic skills and a good understanding of what they read. Many higher attaining pupils read difficult vocabulary with accuracy and good expression. Teachers work hard to develop oral skills in guided reading and to extend this use of language across other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils understand terms such as 'author', 'illustrator', 'contents page' and 'index' and enjoy sharing texts during guided reading and literacy hour. They have a very wide range of strategies to enable them to decipher words, which are unfamiliar. Higher attaining pupils confidently discuss their reading and predict what might happen, as well as discussing their favourite authors with relish. Lower attaining pupils build common high frequency words but often read with a degree of fluency. Reading diaries are maintained which contain informative comment by teachers and involve parents well in responding to pupils' reading. By the age of nine, standards of reading are also very good, with higher attaining pupils being extended well through the reading of challenging texts. Parents are still encouraged to comment on their child's reading and teachers continue to ensure that pupils' reading is moved on at a good pace. Good emphasis is laid on the systematic development of library skills, helped by the provision of good reference books in the library. This helps the development of research skills for older pupils in Key Stage 2.

88. Standards in writing are well above average by the age of seven. Pupils write enthusiastically for a very wide range of purposes. Tasks set for average and higher attaining pupils are always sufficiently demanding and they are always expected to work at a brisk, productive pace. Handwriting and presentation of work are also good, because expectations are high and marking places sufficient emphasis on the importance of these skills. Teaching of handwriting is systematically developed and most pupils write legibly and with ease. Most pupils use basic punctuation accurately. There is emphasis on early drafting skills and teachers concentrate on

improving the quality of writing by helping pupils to choose more imaginative vocabulary to extend their ideas. Pupils' writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is very good for a significant majority. By the age of nine, the majority of pupils have a good knowledge of basic punctuation, grammar and spelling. Most pupils write at length and much work is achieved in the time allocated. Pupils often show a good sense of urgency in their desire to finish a piece of writing in the allocated time.

89. The expectations of teachers are directly related to the way in which pupils' progress, especially in the planning of lessons to provide work graded in difficulty to suit the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. There is much evidence of the use of different forms of writing, such as letters, instructions, story and playscripts and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to express opinions through persuasive writing and to extend their ideas through purposeful tasks such as newspaper reports and extended writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as religious education and history. Skills, such as note taking, are well developed. Teachers expect good standards of presentation in pupils' written work and this is reflected in other subjects across the curriculum.

90. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and generally make good progress towards their targets in individual education plans in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Much of the support work undertaken by the learning support assistants is of a high quality. Small group support in classes is successfully helping these pupils to extend their literacy skills. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress at both key stages, because of the good support they are offered by teachers and other staff.

91. Most pupils enjoy their work in literacy sessions. They respond positively, are eager to answer questions and keen to learn. Pupils take great pleasure in reading and this improves their learning well.

92. Teaching is very good overall throughout the school. Teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and use the time appropriately to ensure that the different elements are well covered. They use the strategy flexibly, adapting it to the immediate needs of their pupils. In most lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and teaching methods, which inspire pupils to learn successfully. Pupils are well motivated by interesting tasks and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. For example, in an excellent Year 2 class, activities were carefully matched to the differing needs of pupils. The interesting non-fiction text held pupils' interest and the task set by the teacher, to pose questions on factual texts for other groups to research the answers, caused excitement, great effort and resulted in very good learning. The very good help from support staff contributed to pupils' learning and maximised the use of time in this lesson. As a result pupils worked hard and completed a good amount of work. Work set is always matched well to the full range of pupils' ability, leading to good or very good achievement. Class control is significant strength and the pace of the teaching is never allowed to slow because the teacher has to interrupt the flow of the lesson to deal with behaviour issues. Marking is consistently helpful and informative, identifying how pupils can improve their work. This contributes to the good work produced by pupils.

93. The very good co-ordinator for English makes a very strong contribution to the improving standards in the subject. She uses her very good knowledge and expertise well to support teaching and learning and inspires other teachers well to initiate and implement new issues which aid pupils' learning. The monitoring aspect of her role is well developed and shares the best practice in teaching and planning through the school. Assessment strategies are in firmly in place and assessment opportunities within teachers' planning are consistently used. Analysis of data from national tests and other assessment information are used well to plan future work and identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. Target setting is well developed. The use of literacy within other subjects is also very good. There is sound focus on language in most subjects and much attention is given to more extended writing skills in other curriculum subjects. Good resources enhance learning effectively, though the quantity of computers is insufficient to allow pupils to practise their considerable skills in the use of ICT.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in mathematics at the end of both key stages were above average expectations and they have improved since then. The results of the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that the pupils' performance is very high compared with the national average and well above the level reached by pupils in similar schools. These results follow the trend set in 1998, when results rose steeply. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level nationally in 2000 was above the national average but only in line with that achieved by pupils in similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils working at the higher than expected Level 3 was very high compared with the results of schools nationally and with those in a similar context. Boys have performed better than girls over the last three years. The school's assessments, and observations during the inspection, suggest that these high standards will be maintained by the present seven-year-old pupils with few, if any, pupils working below the level of national expectations. Inspection observations indicate that pupils continue to achieve well throughout the school and that, by the time they reach nine years old in Year 4, they are still performing at levels well above those reached nationally, with approximately half the pupils achieving levels expected of eleven-year-olds. Pupils with special educational needs and those who do not speak English as their first language make good progress.

95. By the time they are seven, many pupils use standard metric units, can classify three-dimensional and two-dimensional shapes, recognise equivalent fractions, mentally recall addition, subtraction and multiplication facts and communicate information through bar charts. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to be confident with written methods using all four processes and are tackling problems such as, 'If there are 40,000 fans at an Ipswich Town football match and one fifth are Manchester United fans, how many support Ipswich Town?'

96. By the time they are nine years old, pupils are confident with number, giving answers involving all four processes to questions like, 'The answer is 24. What is the question?'. They readily use terms like prime, factor and multiple. They can

construct three-dimensional shapes. They can calculate the perimeter of shapes and find the area by counting squares. Higher attaining pupils are able to calculate the area of irregular shapes using the formula for finding the area of a rectangle. They are able to construct and say when a line graph is appropriate.

97. Standards in mathematics have risen since the last inspection, when they were judged to be above national expectation at both key stages. This improvement is the result of a number of measures. The National Numeracy Scheme has been successfully introduced, with the result that there has been a considerable increase in the amount of direct teaching. This has meant that the unsatisfactory organisation, as teachers tried to teach a published scheme on an individual basis, with pupils wasting time waiting for help or completing unnecessary practice of basic number work, both features noted at the time of the last inspection, no longer apply to mathematics lessons at the school. The school has recently adopted a new mathematics scheme, one that supports the National Numeracy Scheme, and this is used as a basis for work in mathematics and helps to ensure consistent progress throughout the school. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are taught in groups based on attainment rather than in class groups. This means that the teachers are able to focus and plan more accurately for the needs of the pupils in their groups. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from this approach as do higher attaining pupils. A co-ordinator for able pupils has been appointed and many higher attaining pupils have individual education plans, which set out individual targets for them. The success of this initiative for high attaining pupils is confirmed by the high percentage of pupils working at well above the expected levels throughout the school. Older pupils, particularly, are beginning to use ICT to support their work. For example, Year 4 pupils produce graphs of the growth of runner beans, but there is still scope in this area for future development.

98. The high standards and quality of learning are also the result of good teaching. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in 40 per cent of lessons is very good. Good and very good teaching is spread throughout the school. Using the National Numeracy Scheme as their basis, teachers carefully plan for all pupils. Even in the classes grouped by attainment, work is provided at three different levels. This ensures that all pupils are suitably challenged. Planning extends to the use of the good quality support staff who encourage and question pupils, helping individuals and small groups. Good use of support staff is particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs. Their confidence is also helped by the positive, pleasant manner of teachers, who make liberal use of praise to encourage pupils to greater efforts. Pupils are encouraged to show their appreciation of the efforts of others and this approach is successful to the extent that pupils occasionally break into spontaneous applause. Good planning also ensures that the pace of lessons is mostly brisk and challenging. Teachers often give pupils time limits for completing tasks. Teachers make good use of the mental starter section of lessons to give pupils the opportunity to explore number. They often choose a number of the week and use this as a basis for investigation. Year 4 pupils are asked to give number facts for 32. One pupil correctly answered that it was a quarter of 128. This investigative approach is a feature of many lessons. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are introduced to the thinking skill wheel and have to devise strategies for solving problems rather than finding the answer. Teachers use

questioning well to challenge pupils' learning, 'Why is it impossible that this number is a multiple of five?' a Year 2 pupil was asked. They also question to assess how much pupils have learned. Teachers use resources cleverly to assess how well pupils have learnt. Pupils are asked to hold up their answers using 'banana' fans, allowing the teachers to assess pupils' responses immediately. More formal assessment is thorough. Each pupil has an individual record with records of learning and targets for future learning. Individual records are updated each half term and targets readjusted. Teachers also use homework well; regular assignments are used to extend the work in class through the use of mathematical games and investigative activities.

99. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are generally very positive and this helps their learning. They behave well in lessons, listening carefully and answering enthusiastically. They are usually productive in the independent work section of the lessons. Evidence of this good attitude is provided by the enthusiasm with which they complete homework assignments and the care with which work is presented.

100. Leadership of mathematics at the school is good and this has had a direct influence on the improvement in standards. The co-ordinator has thoroughly and successfully implemented the National Numeracy Scheme, conducting all the relevant staff training. She is able to monitor teaching, giving detailed written feedback to teachers and listing areas for development. She also gives demonstration lessons for other teachers. She has a good overview of the subject throughout the school by monitoring teachers' planning, pupils' profiles for each teaching group and samples of pupils' work. Assessment information is well analysed to monitor progress of pupils and individuals.

101. Resources for mathematics are generally of good quality and quantity and support the curriculum well. Teachers of older pupils make good use of calculators to support and extend pupils' work, but the lack of computers in the classes of older pupils and the restricted opportunities to use those in the computer suite mean that computers are not as much used to aid work in mathematics as might be expected.

102. Mathematics is used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, particularly design and technology, science and history when, for example, Year 2 pupils are introduced to the idea of time lines.

## **SCIENCE**

103. The results of the 2000 teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in science at the age of seven show that the very high standards attained by pupils as assessed by their teachers in 1999, well above national averages, have been maintained and have improved well since the previous inspection. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys. The evidence of the inspection for attainment is largely based on an analysis of pupils' work. This is because the inspection week fell on a week in which science was planned for one class only. Nevertheless, it is clear from the analysis, from discussions with pupils and teachers, from scrutiny of other available evidence such as the assessment

portfolios for science, that standards of attainment are well above national expectations and that standards in the school are being maintained at this high level at ages seven and nine.

104. By the age of seven, pupils are collecting data with their teachers, for example, about the numbers and types of bugs to be found in various habitats around the school. They use their very good literacy and numeracy skills to make very good records of what they find. They make observations that are very perceptive when, for example, they explain their reasoning for the differences in survey results between the number and type of animals found on the field and those found in the garden area. Investigations in science such as this are a great strength of the school's approach to teaching this curriculum area. Pupils in Year 2 followed up their environmental investigations around school with a very well planned and supported study of the canal side and allotments in Worcester. They have a very good understanding of what makes up a fair test, when they investigate the growth rates of plants grown in various planting media. Pupils have a very good understanding of life processes and can, for example, name many of the parts of flowers or birds. They can also offer very good explanations on why humans need various types of food to maintain their health. They understand various changes in states, such as what happens to an egg when it is cooked.

105. By the age of nine, pupils have maintained the very good progress made in Years 1 and 2. They continue to conduct and make very good records of their investigations into, for example, the foods and habitats preferred by snails or the rate at which objects of different shapes sink through water. They make very good progress in areas of knowledge and understanding such as electricity. They know how it is generated and how it is transmitted to the home. They have a very good base of scientific knowledge. They have, for example, a good knowledge of the properties of materials that conduct or inhibit the flow of electricity through them. Their knowledge of the conditions in which plants thrive is very good and they use scientific terminology in this and other areas very well. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school in science.

106. It was only possible to observe one full lesson in science during the inspection. From this, from discussions with the science co-ordinator, from the evidence of books and from planning documents, it is clear that teaching of science in the school is very good. The science curriculum includes very good provision for investigative science, which teachers plan and organise very well. This component of the science curriculum makes a very important contribution to the very good learning that pupils experience, as it is very much a practical experience which the pupils find exciting and enjoyable as well as stimulating. The challenge teachers present to pupils is very good. Tasks are increasingly demanding as pupils move through the school years and build very well on what goes before. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their science lessons. This was clear in the lesson observed and is also evidenced by the work they put into writing about scientific investigations. They take pride too, in the presentation of their folder work. Teachers produce very good worksheets that are designed for pupils of all abilities to fill in. Teachers use and build on the very good standards of literacy and numeracy in the school when they

require pupils to produce very full and informative records of the results of their investigations.

107. The subject is very well co-ordinated. There have been a number of improvements in science since the last inspection. The teaching and learning of the investigational aspects of the science curriculum are now much improved and present a rich set of opportunities. A portfolio of work from each year to help teachers standardise attainment has been developed. The wildlife area is now a very good resource for science and other curriculum areas. The co-ordinator has no time allocated to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in science in order to ensure that good practice is shared across the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. Pupils achieve well during their time in school and by the time they are seven reach standards which are above national expectations for the subject. This good progress is continued and pupils in Year 4 achieve standards which are above national expectations. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were average, so that standards have improved in that time. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

109. The main change in the provision for art and design at the school since the last inspection has been the adoption of a nationally recognised scheme of work for the subject. This has been done well and means that teachers' planning is now consistently linked to the programmes of study and attainment targets of the National Curriculum for art and design. This was an area criticised in the last inspection report. The new scheme also ensures that pupils have a chance to practise and develop a full range of skills and that the design element of the subject is fully covered. Timetable arrangements allow for a topic to be covered intensively for a two week period each term. This allows for a topic to be covered in some depth and ensures that the status and independence of the subject is maintained. Year 1 pupils looking at natural sculpture are able to download material on sand sculpture from the Internet and make their own sand sculptures. They make their own temporary natural site sculptures outside, record their efforts through drawings and photographs, then make and move permanent sculptures, using a range of natural and some manmade objects, such as shells, feathers, cones and loll sticks. Many of the finished products are delicate and very effective. Finally, they use the Internet again to find out about sculptors like Henry Moore. All this is completed within two weeks.

110. This idea of intensive periods of art and design is sometimes extended into the Arts Week, when the normal timetable is abandoned and pupils are exposed to a wide range of art and design activities involving a variety of visiting artists. This event, funded by a combination of money raised by parents of the pupils and specific grants, has a profound effect on the status of art and design in the school. It engages the interest of the pupils, many of the older pupils cite it as the most exciting experience at school, and it has an impact on the environment. One event

in which every child in the school participated was the production of a mural running almost the length of the playground. Opportunities for pupils include working with clay, felt, making collage, printing T-shirts, making jewellery, producing totem poles, weaving and mask making. Weaknesses noted at the time of the last inspection like the constraints on practical activity caused by the size of classrooms and the lack of water in the demountable classrooms have not as yet been addressed, although the imminent building extensions will greatly help to improve the situation.

111. By the time they are seven, pupils have used a range of media. They are able to recognise the work of artists like Mondrian and William Morris. They are able to produce good quality detailed observational drawings and present their ideas in a variety of forms, including work with textiles. They produce collages of good quality as part of their work on the unit entitled Mother Nature – designer. They conduct research, using and developing their information and communication skills, into subjects like the Horta family in their work on masks.

112. By Year 4, pupils are able to make a careful and thorough design of an artefact, considering materials, usage and style. Pupils designing and making a seat consider the design of a variety of seats before embarking on the design and making of a chair for a specific character. Characters chosen range from Goldilocks to Ralf Schumacher. Finished products are all individual and many are of good quality. Pupils are able to evaluate their work, suggesting how it might be improved.

113. Due to the timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to see any art and design lessons. However, through discussions with teachers and pupils, study of teachers' planning and scrutiny of the many displays, pupils' workbooks and extensive photographic evidence, it is possible to draw conclusions about the quality of teaching. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and a majority of the staff are actively interested in art and design, some to a professional level. This means that they have high expectations of their pupils and evidence of this is provided by the quality of the work produced and the sensitivity and care with which this work is displayed. The quality of display is a feature of the school and displays often include examples from all the pupils in a class. Teachers, using the new scheme of work as a basis, plan carefully in year groups, ensuring the progress of skill development and thorough coverage. They also use the expected levels of achievement listed in the scheme to assess the ability of individual pupils and guide their future work. Teachers are making good use of ICT to support their art and design work. Pupils use the Internet to research topics. Year 2 pupils use the digital camera to record stages in their work. Year 4 pupils do traditional exercises like 'taking a line for a walk', using the computer. Teachers also use homework well to extend and prepare for work in the classroom. Art is well used to support work in other areas of the curriculum. Year 2 pupils mount a vivid display as part of their work on the Great Fire of London, while Year 4 pupils produce careful and good quality book cover designs.

114. Although art and design is being co-ordinated on a temporary basis it is nevertheless well led. The temporary co-ordinator has considerable expertise and has a clear overview of the work of the school and although she has not been able to monitor teaching, she is in a position to help staff with planning and preparation.

The programme for art and design is also enriched by the after school art club organised by parents with considerable art and design expertise. Resources for art and design are good in terms of quality and quantity.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. Pupils achieve well and by the time they reach the age of seven they reach standards in design and technology which are above those expected nationally. This progress is maintained and pupils in Year 4 also achieve standards which are above those expected. Pupils with special educational needs and those who do not speak English as their first language also make good progress.

116. By the time they are seven, pupils have received carefully planned tuition in basic techniques in activities such as punching holes, fixing split pins and using construction kits to make models. They are then able to design and make their own moving vehicle with a simple lighting or alarm system. Pupils in Year 4 have a clear understanding of the design, make and evaluate process. They readily use terms such as prototype. Higher attaining pupils are able to incorporate learning about the principle of lens in constructing their own telescopes.

117. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. This has largely been brought about by the introduction of a nationally recognised scheme of work. This has enabled teachers to make progressive demands on pupils and systematically build on skills and learning. It has also gone some way to improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject. The new scheme has been supported by improved resources, the level and quality of which were criticised in the last inspection. These include a good range of construction kits, including those for introducing pneumatics to the older pupils. The timetable is arranged so that design and technology is taught in intensive periods of two weeks each term. This is likely to be beneficial, as it means that pupils have sufficient time to complete a project without long gaps in the process. It also serves to give the subject focus, as for that period of time a lot of the pupils' learning will be concentrated on design and technology.

118. Due to the timetabling arrangements it was only possible to see a limited number of lessons involving younger pupils, but a scrutiny of teachers' planning, discussions with teachers and pupils and photographic and physical evidence of finished products, indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use the new scheme of work to plan thoughtfully, particularly with the intention of supporting other areas of the curriculum by planning opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills. In the same lesson pupils were given the name 'physalis' as well as 'cape gooseberry' and a database of the pupils' favourite fruits was compiled. A map of the world showed from where each fruit had originated. Teachers, importantly in a practical subject like design and technology, prepare thoroughly. For example, in a lesson for Year 1 pupils when they were evaluating fruit tastes prior to designing a fruit salad, not only had the teacher prepared selections of fruit for each pupil but had checked beforehand via a questionnaire to parents whether any pupil had an allergy to particular fruits. She had napkins for each pupil to help them protect their clothes. Occasionally preparation is only partially completed. A teacher who took the trouble to provide a mangostene for her pupils had no experience of what it was like and, although pupils and teacher had the opportunity to discover together, she was not in a position to fully to inform her pupils.

119. Teachers make good use of the good quality support staff to help with groups in practical activities. Staff are often provided with notes and suggested questions to help the learning of the pupils in the group. This is particularly helpful for the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers also show good class management skills, again important in a subject where exciting discoveries or practical activity can sometimes lead to children becoming over-excited and inhibiting their learning.

120. Assessment procedures for design and technology are good. Using the expected outcomes listed for each unit in the scheme of work, teachers assess the ability of each pupil after each unit, helping them to plan further work for that child. They also keep copies of samples of work to help build up a picture of how pupils approach each unit.

121. Design and technology is well led. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject and has a clear idea of how she wants it to develop. She is able to help other staff in the planning, preparation and resourcing of their lessons. She has been able to train parent volunteers to take small groups of pupils for food technology sessions, planning each session carefully with lists of suggested questions and teaching points for each stage of the lesson. The volunteers take small groups of pupils, working systematically throughout the whole school. Pupils respond well to these sessions and the individual help they are given. The helpers complete evaluation sheets, so that teachers know how their pupils have responded in these sessions.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

122. Although only two lessons were seen during the inspection, other evidence, including scrutiny of previous work, discussions with teachers and pupils, and examination of displays, shows that standards are in line with those expected nationally. The school has maintained standards in geography since the time of the last inspection.

123. By the age of seven, pupils have developed their knowledge of their own local environment and begun to understand the contrasting differences of the way of life for people who live in a village in Mexico. They have learned about some of the customs and traditions of family life, something of the jobs people do in the village, the type of diet they eat and the currency they use. Their understanding of the village environment is further developed through drawing the layout of the main buildings. They are able to identify the position of Mexico and the United Kingdom on a world map and distinguish between the areas of land and ocean.

124. By the end of Year 4, pupils have studied a number of different areas and are learning to compare and contrast their characteristics. In pupils' work seen, they have identified how physical features result in different town shapes, and have looked at the reasons why their own village is shaped as it is. They have compared their town of Redditch with Betws-y-coed in the Snowdonia National Park and carried out a job survey to see the effect that location has upon people's occupations. On discovering that Betws-y-coed was without a fish and chip shop, the pupils had a discussion on whether it was important to have one, and the likely effect upon the environment if one were to be opened. They show a good grasp of the issues and the effect on local residents. In a topic on weather around the world, pupils investigate the relationship between weather and tourism. For example, pupils are able to identify a number of ski-ing countries to match the interests of an imaginary person for whom they have to produce a holiday brochure. They develop

good mapping skills through planning a route to that country from the United Kingdom, identify the other countries that are passed through en-route, and calculate the distance travelled, using the scale of the map. They are able to use an atlas to identify climatic features, as well as other features such as areas of jungle.

125. The teaching of geography is good overall, though progress is average, largely because of the limitation of time given to the subject. Teachers provide a good range of interesting and practical activities and resources to support their good level of planning. The subject is well linked to other areas of the curriculum to include the debating of controversial environmental issues, and the development of numeracy skills such as data handling when carrying out traffic surveys, grid references and measuring distances on a map. Pupils use the Internet confidently to support their own investigations in the 'weather around the world' topic. Pupils' knowledge of other countries is usefully extended by the parents Multi-cultural Group who organise special occasions each term. Parents who have specialist or first hand knowledge of other countries, Australia or Sweden, for example, provide interesting artefacts for pupils to handle and examine, and give talks on sports, food, and climate. Homework is used well to increase their level of independent learning and to assist pupils to develop investigational skills. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and enjoy finding out about the world through investigation. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

126. Leadership of the subject is good, and teachers are well supported with a suitably planned curriculum incorporating the National Curriculum. Assessment procedures checking pupils' progress against the results of given tasks are in place and used at regular intervals to assist in future planning. However, the amount of time given to the teaching of geography is limited, and the school is aware of this.

## **HISTORY**

127. They were judged to be in line with national expectation, but are now above average at the end of Year 2 and in Year 4. Enthusiastic and confident teaching is responsible for motivating pupils to learn successfully about history. Since the previous inspection standards in history have improved.

128. By the age of seven, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of what it was like to live in different periods of history through accounts by writers of the time, including Samuel Pepys. They learn very clearly the type of living conditions people endured during the seventeenth century that contributed to the great fire of London in 1666. Their understanding of the proximity of houses to one another at that time, and how easy it was for the fire to spread very quickly, is aided greatly through role-play activities creatively provided for them by good teaching. They build model houses to increase this understanding further. A good range of artefacts, photographs and books provide good sources of information comparing, for example, the technology of fire-fighting equipment of the period with what is used currently. This leads to an interesting discussion, and, following some effective questions from the teacher, pupils are able to consider ways in which people may have escaped from their burning houses. Pupils make good acquisition of historical

skills from evidence made available to them. They can apply these skills and make sensible suggestions upon how water may have been transported for the purpose of fighting the fire.

129. In junior classes, pupils use locally collected evidence about their village to make comparisons with contemporary life and life during the Victorian era. They develop a clear understanding of the different life styles of the rich and the poor. Using original sources from the early days of the school, they carry out research into the organisation of the Victorian school timetable, and produce good quality modelled specimens of copperplate handwriting. They compile considerable pictorial evidence and write their own explanatory captions underneath. Pupils showed good knowledge and understanding of how different life was in Victorian England in terms of school, health, transport, housing and social structure. In addition, pupils use their well-developed research skills to investigate a topic of their own choice, like the development of steam locomotives, or the history of space exploration. Much of this work is done out of school time, with information and knowledge gained from using libraries, reference books, CD-ROMs, and the Internet. This investigational activity produces work of high quality.

130. The quality of teaching is very good overall with teachers showing great enthusiasm and expertise in historical development. Their enthusiasm grips pupils' imagination, bringing history to life and this has a very positive effect upon their learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, use resources of quality to illustrate their teaching and display pupils' work around the classroom. The sequence of planning effectively builds upon pupils' knowledge of the topic week by week.

131. Pupils enjoy the subject and all are making very good progress in acquiring historical skills. They enjoy very good relationships with the teaching staff, concentrate and apply themselves well in lessons. They have extremely positive attitudes to the subject, and work well co-operatively in groups or pairs, or individually.

132. The subject is well managed and an appropriately planned curriculum is in place to support the teaching of history throughout the school. Assessment procedures enable pupil progress to be measured and appropriate changes to be made to the curriculum when necessary. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum and the use of ICT enables pupils to access information for themselves. This increased emphasis on the investigative aspects of history is an improvement on the last inspection, and has enabled the school to provide greater challenge, especially for the more able pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

133. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectation by the ages of seven and nine. This is an improvement on the situation found during the last inspection, when standards were seen to be below national expectations. This is because the school now uses a national scheme as a base for its planning which ensures that all aspects of National Curriculum ICT are taught. Also, the expertise of teachers and particularly teaching assistants has improved considerably. Teachers are in the early stages of a nationally funded training course for ICT skills designed to raise standards in this subject.

134. By Year 7, pupils are using satisfactory word processing and desktop publishing skills to combine graphics and simple messages in their greeting cards for Christmas and Easter. They use the computer in religious education to write short role play statements about what it means to be a leader. Database use is limited mainly to use of the Internet, but they do learn that they have to be careful in framing questions in order to get the answers they want. This is the case when they get information from the Internet about the effects on the heart and lungs of exercise or about Mexico for a geography topic. They model information when they explore the style of Kandinsky using graphics software. They explore colour, texture and symmetry in a textiles topic in art and design. There are good links with numeracy when they record their observations in a traffic project. They communicate their findings well, using charts and graphs. This project also feature good links with literacy when pupils are set the task of generating questions for a survey. They

learn how to control the actions of a robotic vehicle by formulating a simple series of commands.

135. By Year 9, pupils attain sound standards when they design posters to appeal to different audiences. They learn in Year 3 how to send e-mail messages to another school. They learn more about databases when they generate their own about dog ownership. They use charts to communicate the results of the survey they conduct to get information about this topic. There are good links with science when Year 4 pupils generate graphs that record the growth of plants in a scientific experiment. Pupils make satisfactory use of the Internet in a variety of contexts, such as in religious education when they search for information about gods and goddesses or in geography when they find out about weather around the world. They learn about programming language when they discover how to move an object around the computer screen. They have a satisfactory awareness of the impact that ICT has on their lives. They are aware of some of the benefits which ICT brings to people, such as cutting down on the use of paper for some design tasks. At this age pupils have not had much experience of using ICT to model situations or to sense external events, though this may be covered by the curriculum in their next school in the two years remaining before their next national assessment.

136. The teaching of ICT is overall satisfactory. Those who teach pupils ICT have adequate subject knowledge which is currently being enhanced by a training scheme for all teachers in the school. The teaching assistant most involved in teaching of ICT makes a valuable contribution to raising standards in the school. As well as teaching small groups, she runs the lunchtime computer club which provides pupils with the opportunity to develop and consolidate their ICT skills. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils' learning is good. They concentrate very well and ask relevant questions to advance their knowledge and understanding. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and offers pupils a systematic programme which introduces and develops skills well.

137. The co-ordination of ICT is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has successfully introduced a national scheme which forms a strong base for teachers' planning. The progress made by pupils is adversely affected by weakness in the resources for ICT. Though equipment such as a digital camera is well used in a number of contexts around the school, there are several classrooms which do not have computers or which have computers that are now obsolete. The network of computers in the ICT room suffers from breakdown and needs replacing with a more up to date system with the software to extend pupils. The lack of technical support puts an unacceptable burden on teachers, who have to give up much of their time to tackle problems for which they have had no training.

## **MUSIC**

138. Standards in music in both key stages are well above average for what could be expected for pupils at seven and nine years, and progress is very good overall. At the time of the 1996 inspection, standards were judged to be in line with the level expected nationally and progress was satisfactory, so that there has been good

improvement in standards. A predominant feature of the development of pupils' skills in music is to be found in the extra-curricular activities, such as the termly performance of a musical production, currently 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat', the school choir, and the ocarina group. Additionally opportunities are available for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument, such as the flute, violin, clarinet, percussion and brass. Other staff members and voluntary helpers give enthusiastic support to the subject co-ordinator in leading these activities which not only enhance pupils' skills but also their enjoyment of the subject.

139. In infant classes pupils, particularly in Year 1, pupils have good opportunities to sing a range of different songs, sometimes singing in canon, and at others clapping or using percussion instruments to keep time and to add rhythm. They perform accurately, sing in time and pitch the notes correctly. Year 2 pupils work in groups to compose noises to complement a story using a variety of percussion instruments such as wind, rain, animals or birds. In junior classes pupils are exposed to a wide range of musical experiences such as singing songs in other language like the Kenyan warrior's song. In lessons with the subject co-ordinator they listen carefully to the rhythm of three beats to a bar, and confidently conduct emphasising the strong beat. They can add to the rhythm by using high and low drum-beats, when two different rhythms are played simultaneously, and sing at the same time with precision. Pupils show good musical skills by composing ideas they develop in groups by putting percussion rhythms to well-known verses or songs. Each of the groups perform their composition to the class confidently to a good standard, whilst others in the class are able to evaluate objectively their performance. During a rehearsal for the musical 'Joseph' the standard and quality of the singing was very high with good attention being paid to phrasing and pitch.

140. The good range of learning opportunities ensures that pupils make very good progress in music. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support to ensure that they make good contributions to music lessons. This frequently happens since they are provided with tasks well matched to their abilities, and because they work in small groups where they are supported well by other pupils.

141. Attitudes to the subject are very good throughout the school. Pupils work confidently because they are clear about what it is they have to do, and because they enjoy the activities they are expected to undertake. They adopt sensible and mature attitudes to performance, support one another, and are conscientious in all they do. Many pupils show high levels of confidence and are happy to perform in front of other pupils.

142. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. Lessons are planned with care and resources provided to support the teaching. Teachers join in the music making, whether its singing or playing instruments, and the good work they are doing is motivating pupils and building up their experiences and knowledge systematically year on year.

143. The leadership by the subject co-ordinator has had a substantial impact upon standards of music since he took on the post. The very well managed and resourced scheme of work has impacted very positively on standards achieved. It is entirely due to his expertise and enthusiasm, as well as the support of his colleagues, that music is now becoming a strength of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

144. Standards attained by all pupils including those with special educational needs are above average by age seven and by age nine. There was no evidence available on which to judge standards at the time of the previous inspection.

145. By the age of seven the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, have good control and co-ordination which they demonstrate in a range of physical activities. These include running, jumping and throwing. They exercise safely, for example, during warm up exercises which feature running around in a set area and respond very well to the instructions given to them by their teachers. When the teacher asks them about their performance, they are able to offer well thought out ideas about ways in which they could improve. They are aware of some of the effects of exercise on their bodies, such as increased heart rate. They have a good knowledge of what the body needs to keep it healthy.

146. By the age of nine, the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are attaining standards that are above the national expectations. A strength in physical education is in the provision for swimming. All pupils enjoy an intensive course in swimming. Pupils work in small well taught groups which are based on ability. This means that they can make progress at the rate of which they are capable. At this time in Year 3, over half the year can swim a minimum of 50 metres unaided and a good number can swim up to 200 metres. The majority of pupils can use a variety of strokes and are able to retrieve objects from the bottom of the swimming pool. In their athletics they are making good progress and attaining good standards in developing control and co-ordination of their actions. The majority of pupils have a good awareness of how aspects of running can affect performance, such as the way in which someone starts to run and the need to vary pace over different distances. They make good suggestions for improvement in running skills, such as looking straight ahead or leaning forward.

147. The teaching of physical education is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Planning is based on a national scheme that makes sure that pupils make systematic progress across a range of skills and that lessons have suitable challenge. Teachers plan well and lessons feature good pace and a good variety of activity. They begin with good warm ups that are fun to be involved in. These not only prepare pupils physically for more sustained activity but also help to put them in the mood for it. This contributes to the good learning that takes place as do the very good attitudes of pupils. The control and management of pupils is good. They follow instruction well which keeps the pace of a lesson going and helps to ensure safe practice in working together. Teachers give clear explanations and enhance these by giving good demonstrations of the type of performance expected. Teachers know

their pupils well and make sure that there is a good match of task to ability. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in activities where appropriate.

148. The co-ordination of the subject by the headteacher is good. He is a specialist and has introduced a number of improvements since the last inspection. He has built up the extra-curricular activities in physical education which are now good. One important development has been the residential weekend. This has introduced the full range of pupils in the school to outward bound activities, such as abseiling. The various teams achieve a good level of success in local competitions. These have been very well supported by parents. Playtimes now feature more purposeful physical activity, such as skipping and various other games.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

149. Pupils at the end of both key stages reach standards that are at least in line with, and generally above, the requirements and demands of the agreed syllabus used by the school. Whilst it was only possible to observe a limited number of religious education lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with teachers show that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the subject at by the ages of both seven and nine, through good teaching and careful planning.

150. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 display a good knowledge of the concept of the importance of the community, with a specific focus on the family. They also become accustomed to exploring their feelings and those of others. They begin to acquire some understanding of respect for Christianity and other faiths, as observed in a scrutiny of pupils' work on accounts of the Christmas story and the life of the Hindu god, Sita. In Year 2 pupils had clearly been excited and interested by a visit from a Hindu visitor. Pupils had understood the implications to modern life of the parable of the Prodigal Son. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of basic religious stories and religious festivals.

151. The idea of community is explored in greater depth in Years 3 and 4, where pupils study specific religious communities, particularly Hinduism, and Judaism, as well as Christianity. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to consider and discuss the ways in which these religious communities pray and celebrate their festivals. Pupils in this key stage also explore the importance of artefacts in religious practices, such as the Seder plate, as well as learning about different places of worship, such as churches and temples.

152. Some links are made between religious education and assemblies, with the one reinforcing the other. A good example of this occurred during the week of the inspection, with an assembly in which the theme of friendship was explored through a story, complementing the work of some of the classes on drawing up a 'recipe for a friend'. Assemblies always include an act of collective worship and an opportunity for pupils to reflect for themselves. One particularly impressive class assembly cast a spell upon children as they reflected with sensitivity and much response on what it meant to be 'real' and loved.

153. The quality of teaching throughout the school is generally good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, well supported by the scheme of work in their planning and have sound behaviour management skills, so that they are able to convey concepts to pupils in a meaningful manner. They create and promote a reflective atmosphere where good learning can take place. Good planning by teachers enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers use religious education lessons to promote literacy skills, by encouraging pupils to produce good quality written work.

154. Examinations of teachers' plans and pupils' work indicates that over time pupils are provided with the opportunity to explore and extend their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths, including Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils learn about the gods, religious writings, festivals and stories of each of these faiths, and come to an understanding of shared beliefs and how they come to impact upon and influence our daily lives. The co-ordinator, who is a part-time teacher, provides effective management for the subject, and is reviewing the schemes of work and adapting some interesting new units of work. She is aware that there is too little opportunity at present for pupils to strengthen their understanding of other faiths through visits to places of worship, though the school does invite visitors of different faiths to come to the school.

155. With its focus on different religions and cultures and the opportunity to discuss a range of spiritual and factual issues, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The subject is monitored against the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the success of each topic covered is evaluated.