

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY AND ST BENEDICT CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124317

Headteacher: Mrs P Lewis

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Öyen
7167

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 July 2001

Inspection number: 196839

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Abbey Lane Abbey Hulton Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Father P Blundell
Date of previous inspection:	09/06/97

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9884	Mrs Maureen Roscoe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school in Abbey Hulton, a few miles north east of the centre of Stoke-on-Trent. Numbers on roll have increased in the last few years but with 139 children, the school is smaller than most. The year groups vary in size and two junior classes have mixed age groups. For mathematics and English, all the children are taught in classes of less than 26, and less than 20 in all the Infant classes. All 26 full-time nursery places are taken and there is a waiting list. On starting the nursery, the children's attainment varies and is generally close to that expected for their age. When they enter the reception year, it is at or above average. Most of the children come from homes close to the school but a number travel some distance from other areas within the parish including Milton, Baddeley Green, Werrington, Endon and Stockton Brook. Forty four children (27 per cent) are eligible for free school meals - higher than the national average. Six children are from ethnic minorities and four have English as an additional language. None needs support in learning to speak English. Seventeen children are identified as having special educational needs; one has a Statement of Special Educational Need and five other children receive support from external agencies.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in valuing each child and ensuring all children feel part of a caring family. The headteacher sets the tone in encouraging and expecting the children to be mature and responsible. The school is successful in helping the youngest children to make an early start in reading, writing and number. Continued good teaching ensures that by seven, all children do well. The school is not as effective in what it provides for children in the junior years. Achievement could be higher for many children. Not enough has been done to identify why standards are so low. The school gives satisfactory value for money overall with good value in the provision for nursery and reception year children.

What the school does well

- Good teaching and an interesting curriculum ensure that children in the nursery and reception class get off to a flying start.
- Standards are very good in English, mathematics and science for the seven year olds.
- Swimming standards are good; many children learn to dive and to swim long distances.
- The children really like school; they rise to the occasion, are well behaved, polite, helpful and all take their responsibilities seriously and sensibly.
- It is a happy, caring family. Consideration and care for others are uppermost.

What could be improved

- Standards in the junior classes in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- The development of the children's skills, such as using and applying their

knowledge and organising their own learning.

- The work of the governing body, headteacher and staff in deciding what the school needs to do to improve and how to make it happen.
- The consistency of procedures to deal with the children's welfare and personal development.
- The children's attendance.

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 identified as having serious weaknesses in June 1997. Since then it has sustained its strength in creating a supportive ethos and carried out most of the agreed actions to deal with the seven key issues. This has not always meant the school has been successful in resolving the underlying problems. Remaining weaknesses in how the school checks and scrutinises what it does are jeopardising the school's potential to improve. For example, not enough is done to identify why standards remain low at Key Stage 2. Standards have risen slightly year on year since 1998 but are not rising fast enough. Continuing weaknesses in what, how and when things are taught are holding back the children's learning especially in science and ICT. The teaching is stronger than in 1997, especially in the foundation stage and for the infant children, and has had a beneficial effect on the children's achievement. The very good standards this year for the seven year olds reflect good teaching as well as the children's ability. Much has been done recently but the school still has some way to go to catch up with others in having rigorous systems to guide what it does and to inform what it needs to do.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	D	D	C	well above A average above B average C below average D well below E average
Mathematics	D	E	D	C	
Science	D	E	E	D	

The results in last year's national tests for Year 6 children were below those of most schools in English and mathematics and well below in science. The school did as well as similar schools in English and mathematics but not in science. A similar picture emerges from inspection evidence and this year's results. Standards remain low but most Year 6 children have achieved well. The school has done best in English, where it has exceeded its target for Level 4 attainment, and worst in science. In mathematics and science, just over half of the Year 6 children have reached Level 4 as expected for their age. In English and mathematics a few have reached the higher Level 5 but none has done so in science. The more able children are not achieving as well as they should as the teaching is not stretching them enough and there are gaps in the curriculum.

Standards are very good at the end of Year 2. Nearly all the children have reached the level expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Almost half have done better in English and mathematics, and teacher assessment indicates that just over half have done so in science. This is a marked improvement on last year's standards and a very good achievement for the school and class.

The children in the nursery and reception class make good progress. By the end of the reception year, most have attained or exceeded the standard expected nationally, especially in reading and number.

Standards are satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. They are good in swimming. In ICT standards are below but close to those expected at the end of Year 2 but they are unsatisfactory at the end of Year 6. The junior children have poorly developed skills in word processing and the use of computer software. Gaps in skills and knowledge also explain why standards are unsatisfactory in geography and history in the junior years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; most children show a keen interest in learning especially when engaged in practical activities. Many children are slow to finish their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; the children generally behave well although a few are quick to fidget. When out of school, the older children's behaviour is exemplary and sets a good example to others.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall; relationships between children and with adults are excellent. All get on with each other.
Attendance	Well below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons. This is a marked improvement compared with the previous inspection. The two per cent of unsatisfactory teaching is not typical of any one class or subject. In 44 per cent of

lessons the teaching is good and it is very good in a further 11 per cent. In 1997, there was no very good teaching. While there is good teaching in each class, all of the very good teaching and three fifths of the good teaching is in the foundation stage and the infant classes. This is ensuring that the children develop a positive attitude to learning and do well across the curriculum, but most especially in reading, writing and number. In the junior classes, the teaching is sound overall with strengths more often in English and mathematics. All the teachers have good relationships with the children but the lively teaching and good pace that typify the foundation and infant classes is less evident in the junior classes. This partly accounts for the children's slower learning. In all classes, the higher attaining children are not always challenged enough. Too often all the children, even those with special educational needs, do the same. While some cope well, others struggle and make little progress in learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Although the curriculum is good for the younger children, it is not planned well enough to ensure that the junior children learn all they should in every subject. Visits enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; the children take part in all the activities and often receive support from teachers and assistants. The work does not always take full account of their needs and targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; the teachers are sensitive to the children's needs and support them, especially in reading and writing.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; high emphasis is placed on getting on with others and doing the right thing. All members of staff show and expect in return good manners. Although the children learn about their local heritage and culture, not enough is done to prepare the children for life in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory; there are gaps in the systems and procedures to ensure consistency in the high level of care the school seeks.

The parents are very supportive of the school. Many help at home by hearing their children read and most attend social and fund-raising events. The information for parents omits several required items such as absence rates. The school does not meet fully statutory requirements in teaching ICT to the junior children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory; the headteacher supports the teachers and has a clear vision for the school. She and other key staff are not as effective in making things happen and driving the school forward.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Not all responsibilities are met; the governors are supportive but rely heavily on the headteacher. They are not critical enough in ensuring that the school makes progress.
The school's	In its early stages; the school compares itself with others

evaluation of its performance	and is developing systems to track and analyse how it is doing. Targets are set but not enough is done to pinpoint where and how things need to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; prudent use of funds has provided an ICT suite but the school has few support staff. Time, space and resources are not always used to best effect.

The school is fortunate in having a large field and playground areas. Although the refurbishment of the room and toilets has improved the facilities for the nursery children, the awkward position of the door to the outside limits the children's use of outdoor facilities. The school has a good number of teachers and classes are small. Attractive displays celebrate the children's work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children are expected to work hard and to be mature and sensible. • The good teaching helps their children to make progress. • The children behave well in and out of school. • The headteacher leads and manages the school well and all staff are friendly and welcoming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities provided outside lessons. • Ways to keep them even better informed about how well their child is doing.

The inspection team agree in large part with the parents. The headteacher sets a friendly tone with parents and children. The children enjoy school and thrive in the care given. For a small school, the programme of activities is satisfactory as the school offers trips to places of interest as well as some sporting and musical activities. The headteacher is looking at ways to improve communication with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When the children start in the nursery, their attainment varies but it is generally below that expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development as well as in language and number skills. In both the nursery and the reception class, the children make good progress because of the good teaching. The reception class teacher and the two nursery nurses who run the nursery have high expectations of the children. The children achieve well and their achievement is reinforced by the encouragement and challenge set by the adults.
2. Most of the reception class children are well on track to reach the standard expected nationally (known as early learning goals), by the end of the year in reading, writing and mathematics and also in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Many, including those with English as an additional language, have already attained and exceeded the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, language for communication and in number. Several are reading independently and beginning to record their own stories and number sums. Higher attaining pupils are already working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. This sets a good standard as the children move into Key Stage 1 and is an improvement on the standards judged in the 1997 inspection.
3. At Key Stage 1, the pupils make varied, but good progress overall. A scrutiny of Year 1 pupils' work over the year shows that many have not made enough progress given their attainment last September. Weaknesses in the teaching meant pupils made limited progress earlier in the year. They now show better progress in writing and even more noticeable good progress in number work due to the temporary teacher's clear expectations of the pupils' learning.
4. Year 2 pupils have made good progress over the year and key stage. They are the first year group to have attended the school's nursery and have also benefited from having the same teacher in Years 1 and 2. The school is aware that this is a strong year group and has been tracking their progress. The high expectations of the pupils' attainment have been well founded as the high targets for English and mathematics have been exceeded.
5. Inspection evidence, and the results from this year's national end of Key Stage 1 tests show that standards are very good in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In these subjects, nearly all pupils in Year 2 have reached Level 2, as expected for their age, and a significant percentage have reached the higher Level 3. In reading, writing and mathematics just under half of the pupils have reached Level 3, and in science, it is just over half. Although far outnumbered by the girls, the boys have outstripped them in all

subjects but most noticeably in mathematics and science where two thirds of the boys have attained Level 3.

6. This is an impressive achievement for the school - it is the first year that the school has gained such high results in Level 2, but more importantly, such good Level 3 attainment. Key Stage 1 standards are far higher than they were last year and considerably higher than at the time of the last inspection. When compared with all schools nationally and those in similar contexts, the school is set to achieve a much higher grading than last year. In the 2000 tests, the school's results were well below average in reading, writing and number. Teacher assessment also placed the pupils' attainment in science well below average. Girls and boys did badly compared with others nationally but the boys did especially poorly in writing and mathematics.
7. This year, Year 2 pupils have made good progress in spelling, punctuation, handwriting and in writing imaginative pieces that frequently draw on the language and structure of stories they have read. The class teacher's enthusiasm for reading and story writing is mirrored in the pupils' confidence, enthusiasm and fluency as readers and writers. Many set out their work well using paragraphs, chapters, compound sentences and speech for effect. As in their reading, they are more at ease with fiction than non-fiction. They cope well with literacy across the curriculum. This is much enhanced by the way the teacher mixes subjects such as using a book about Florence Nightingale in a literacy hour to help pupils see the relevance of what they know, such as using an index and subheadings to find information.
8. Inspection evidence shows that the Year 2 pupils have not always been challenged enough during the year. As in Year 1, the higher attaining and average attaining pupils have often completed the same work. In mathematics, the fact that several higher attaining pupils have nearly always achieved correct work indicates the work was well within their capability. Nevertheless, in lessons seen, the oral work suitably stretched the pupils. This has ensured that all pupils' have made good progress in acquiring knowledge about number procedures and number facts. Most handle number competently and tackle number problems confidently not only in mathematics lessons but also in other situations such as science where pupils know how to compile charts and tables. The Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of scientific facts and how to carry out simple tests. They suggest their own ideas on how things might be done but are not as skilled in carrying out their own investigations as much is led and directed by the teacher.
9. The very good standards of the Year 2 pupils set a useful precedent. The school is aware of the need to set higher targets for these pupils as they move through Key Stage 2 and to track their progress in each year group to ensure their progress is maintained. These procedures have not been rigorous enough in the recent past to enable the school to pinpoint why standards at Key Stage 2 remain low and why pupils are not achieving more highly. Standards are not rising fast enough at Key Stage 2 to bring the school in line with at least the average of similar schools in all subjects or up

to the national average. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in lessons, and often good progress in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have much to make up from gaps in previous years when there were no agreed schemes of work and assessment was not used to set targets for attainment. Nevertheless the teaching is not consistently strong enough in all year groups to boost overall standards or to raise pupils' achievement.

10. Since the last inspection in 1997 overall standards have risen broadly in line with the national upward trend. Although the 1997 inspection judged pupils' attainment to be "*broadly in line with national norms in English, mathematics and science*", the school's overall results in the national tests were well below the 1997 national average. Standards rose the following year in all three subjects but fluctuated in subsequent years. In 2000, the school's overall results were below the national average in English and mathematics, and well below in science. When compared with similar schools, the results were average in English and mathematics and below average in science.
11. The pattern has been repeated this year. Pupils have again done worst in science where, although the school met its target for Level 4 attainment, standards have dropped considerably compared with last year. Only six in every ten pupils have attained Level 4 as expected for their age, and no pupil has attained the higher Level 5. Pupils have done best in English where the realistic Level 4 target has been exceeded and a few pupils have attained the higher Level 5. Even so, standards are not as good as last year. Standards have also fallen in mathematics where a smaller percentage of pupils reached Level 4. The school just failed to meet its target. The fact that very few pupils reached the higher Level 5 also lowers the school's overall result compared with last year.
12. These results are set to lower the school's grading when compared with all and similar schools but they mask the school's success in ensuring that most pupils have achieved well. An analysis of the pupils' results in the Key Stage 1 tests in 1997 shows that relatively few were on course to attain Level 4 this year in reading, writing or mathematics. Only in science was the majority expected to do so. This has not been fully borne out in practice due to several factors:
 - the three-year-cycle of science topics leads to gaps in the pupils' knowledge and skills. The booster classes re-introduce topics but do not ensure that pupils develop a deep enough understanding of concepts, principles and procedures;
 - the higher attaining pupils underachieve in science as they are not challenged enough;
 - good, focused teaching in reading, writing and number boosts Year 5 and 6 pupils' achievement. As a consequence, the pupils develop a sound awareness of how to organise their writing and how to carry out different procedures in dealing with numbers;
 - the pupils complete practice tests in mathematics and know what to expect in the layout and type of question in the national tests;

- an analysis of weaknesses in pupils' attainment in mathematics led to a higher emphasis on pupils' skills in mental mathematics.
13. Inspection evidence shows that many pupils show a higher level of attainment when the work is oral. Their good listening and speaking skills are often evident in other subjects. The small class sizes, and the teachers' willingness for pupils to "take the floor" contributes to the pupils' confidence in expressing their views. This starts in the nursery and in each year group, pupils are competent in stating their opinions, justifying their thoughts and offering suggestions to others.
 14. When writing, too many Year 6 pupils make careless mistakes and do not set their work out tidily. Many find writing hard and struggle to spell and use punctuation correctly and consistently. Only the better readers understand the nuances of what they read. They have poorly developed skills in drafting their ideas or carrying out their own research. This limits the quality of their learning in other subjects such as geography and history. In mathematics, too many are similarly unsure of how to apply what they know. They cope well with number problems in books and worksheets but are less able to use the same skills in solving practical problems in everyday situations as they do not always see the relevance of what they know. There is little significant difference in the attainment of the boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets because of the support they get in some lessons. This has also enabled pupils with English as an additional language to do as well as others especially in English.
 15. The satisfactory standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in art and design, and in music have been sustained since the 1997 inspection. Standards in physical education and in design and technology have improved and are now satisfactory. Standards are good in swimming and the school also does well in athletics and sporting competitions against larger schools. In ICT, standards are below but close to those expected at the end of Key Stage 1. They are unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. As in 1997, the only area where the pupils do as well as others nationally is in control technology. Key Stage 2 pupils have poorly developed skills in word processing and in using different computer software. This is because the school has not used what equipment it had to develop pupils' skills and knowledge both in ICT lessons and as part of work in other subjects.
 16. The weakness in pupils' skills is also evident in geography and history at Key Stage 2. Year 6 pupils' attainment is lower than expected for their age. Standards have not risen since the 1997 inspection and in history, have fallen. It is only this year that a more practical approach has been adopted and it is too soon to see the impact of this on standards. In both subjects, pupils have limited knowledge because of the gaps in what they have been taught in previous years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils' very good attitudes to school help them to apply themselves well in lessons, to behave well in and out of class and to show care and consideration for others. This improved picture compared to the last inspection, is marred by poor attendance levels and many instances of unauthorised absence. In 1997, attendance was judged to be sound but the large number of unauthorised absences was highlighted.
18. Nearly all of the parents who returned a questionnaire agreed that their children like school. This positive attitude begins in the nursery and reception class where the children settle quickly, are happy, confident and eager to please. They enjoy their learning and also take delight in that of others. A good example was when nursery children opted to select items to pass to a blindfolded person to 'feel'. The children learn to work cooperatively and to take turns during play. In the reception class, the children readily made room for others to have a go at operating the pump to move water to a higher level in the 'canal lock'.
19. The positive attitude and good behaviour of the nursery and reception class children also typify that of pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is very successful in fostering pupils' willingness to learn and to offer their own ideas. In many lessons, the pupils were highly engaged, often asking questions and making relevant suggestions. Year 2 pupils were totally engrossed in their imaginary visit to the Amazon Rain Forest and followed the teacher's lead in tiptoeing through the foliage looking for birds and animals. Similar high levels of involvement and concentration were evident whenever pupils took part in practical activities, such as artwork or discussion of the impact of book illustrations.
20. Ninety three per cent of parents agreed that pupils' behaviour was good especially at school functions and on trips out. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school and outside. Year 5 and 6 pupils' behaviour was exemplary when they visited the local swimming baths. They were calm, responsible and obeyed instructions immediately. They showed a high level of consideration for others in their spontaneous applause for their swimming achievements.
21. A small number of pupils are quick to become restless and are slow to begin work. The others tolerate their fidgeting and show a good level of self-discipline. This also extends to times when the pupils are not directly supervised. The pupils know what is expected of them and they generally conform. Most walked sensibly at all times down the very long corridor and older pupils often controlled the younger ones to ensure they followed the rules. No bullying or unkindness were seen during the inspection and there have been no exclusions during this school year.
22. Relationships are excellent. The pupils enjoy one another's company at work and play. In day-to-day interactions with each other and with adults, pupils are courteous, thoughtful and polite. They enquire about things that have

happened and take a genuine interest in others. Boys and girls generally play well together and they socialise with pupils in other classes. The vast majority of pupils are good humoured and respect each other's space and property. They politely ask for permission to use another's rubber despite it being very close at hand. The pupils respect and like their teachers and this helps to create a family atmosphere where learning and affection go hand-in-hand.

23. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils develop an understanding about their own welfare such as the need to eat 'healthy tuck'. They learn that their actions have consequences. A good example was when Year 1 pupils discussed what it felt like to feel sorry, and when it was appropriate to say "Sorry". Many pupils contribute responsibly to class and school life. Older pupils, waiting for transport to take them home, help to put away the nursery toys and other pupils volunteer help at lunchtimes. All develop in self-esteem and self-worth. They also acquire an understanding of, and respect for, others' feelings. This was seen at its best when Year 2 pupils became practical peacemakers to two classmates. They gently persevered and persuaded until harmony and friendship were restored.
24. School council members and school monitors willingly take on responsibilities and carry them out cheerfully and efficiently. They make a very important, but often unseen and incidental contribution to the smooth running of the school especially in helping to supervise others and maintain school rules. Too few opportunities exist for all pupils to develop initiative, independence and responsibility in their learning. Not all pupils are told the purpose of a lesson or are given chances to evaluate how well they have done. Their skills in organising their own research and work are not put to best effect.
25. At just over 93 per cent, attendance levels last year were well below the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence was four times higher than average. This is partly explained by inconsistencies in categorising absences and by the fact that the school has not made parents sufficiently aware of the procedures to deal with absence and attendance issues. Figures for the current year are slightly higher but there is still some way to go before attendance reaches the national average. During the inspection the school did not meet statutory requirements in categorising absence and registration practice was unsatisfactory. The registers did not always provide an accurate record of pupils on site. Most pupils arrive punctually and lessons get off to a good start. The irregular attendance of a few pupils adversely affects their progress and attainment especially in literacy and numeracy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In 98 per cent of lessons seen, the teaching was at least satisfactory. It was good in 44 per cent and very good in a further 11 per cent. This is a significant improvement since the

1997 inspection when one lesson in three was judged to be unsatisfactory and no teaching was judged to be very good. Teaching is no longer a serious weakness for the school.

27. As in the last inspection, the quality of teaching is at its best for children in the foundation stage (nursery and reception class). Here the high quality of teaching has a marked, positive impact on the children's learning and achievement. Teaching is good for pupils at Key Stage 1 where changes in personnel have strengthened the teaching. The teaching is predominantly good and for Year 2 pupils, occasionally very good. All of the very good teaching occurred in the foundation stage and in Year 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. There is much good teaching with strength in English and mathematics, especially for pupils in Years 5 and 6, but it is not consistent across the year groups or subjects. This weakens the impact of teaching on raising standards especially in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
28. The headteacher provides a good lead in her teaching of mathematics to pupils in Years 5 and 6. They make good strides in their learning of procedures to handle number and aspects of mathematics because of the good pace in many lessons, the probing questions that help the pupils to explain their thinking and the good interaction between teacher and pupils that develops their confidence and enthusiasm for mathematics. She is sensitive to the pupils' differing abilities and provides support as needed. In one lesson, her questioning ensured that higher attaining pupils learnt how to reproduce a walk on the computer screen through applying their knowledge and also through trial and error. The pupils realised where they had made a mistake in their instructions because the headteacher encouraged and nudged them to retrace their steps and think about cause and effect. She prepares them well for the national tests through the use of practice papers and, as lessons are held in the ICT suite, makes use of computer programs as appropriate.
29. Several key strengths characterise the effectiveness of the teaching in the school:
 - all the teachers and support staff get on well with the pupils. They have time for the pupils; they encourage and praise their efforts and work hard to establish and maintain good working relationships between them. As a result, the pupils are interested in learning and listen well to each other's ideas and views.
 - the teachers generally manage the pupils firmly and fairly. They make their expectations clear and let the pupils know when they do not meet them. Only when the pace is slow, or when question-and-answer sessions are overlong, do the pupils show natural restlessness and begin to fidget and, for some, more often boys, to behave inappropriately. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, Year 3 pupils had to be called to order

many times during a too long period sitting on the carpet working out number problems.

- the teachers usually prepare their lessons well and identify specific objectives that they share with the pupils. In many cases, the teachers prepare support materials to guide the pupils' learning. The teacher's use of photographs of famous sculptures inspired Year 3 pupils to think of their own designs and to discuss aesthetic features and how to achieve them. Several lesson plans included teachers' comments from previous days but the teachers' awareness of their own effectiveness varies. Not enough has been done to ensure that all know what they need to do to improve the pupils' learning, such as building on the pupils' enthusiasm for practical experiences.
30. The teaching for children in the foundation stage is of a high quality as the team has not only a good awareness of how young children learn through experience and talk, especially with adults, but also of the recommended stepping stones in the progression of children's learning. Their good subject knowledge and skills in interacting with young children underpin very thorough planning and purposeful sessions. This is a prime factor in why the children learn quickly and achieve well. In the nursery and reception class, early reading, writing and number skills are taught effectively and the children are often learning incidentally. In nursery class sessions when the day board is changed, the adults coax the children into naming letters, counting, reciting the days of the week and finding numbers. The adults' constant comments and questions such as, "*How did you know that that was number 19?*" help the children to connect what they know with new information.
31. The reception teacher and nursery nurses are very effective in providing adult led challenging activities alongside familiar activities for the children to choose. These allow the children to rehearse and repeat things as well as acquire new skills, new vocabulary and understandings. New activities are very well planned and prepared. The adults show flair and creativeness in their ideas which catch the children's interest and engender excitement in learning. Good examples were when the nursery nurse used plasticine and plates to create a counting task, and when the reception teacher produced a hat with attachable items to retell the story of "Miss Honey's hat".
32. Enthusiasm and an awareness of how to foster pupils' curiosity also typify much of the teaching at Key Stage 1. The children are keen and make good progress as they find learning fun. Parents of Year 2 pupils commented on how their children want to follow up school-work at home. In a good session, Year 2 pupils made marked progress in reading a new text as the teacher reminded them of relevant strategies, such as reading on and then returning to a word, and looking for words within a word. The teacher's brisk pace, the use of small wipe boards for the pupils to write down their thoughts, and the teacher's questions to get the pupils to explain their thinking, kept all the pupils engaged and using what they had learnt.

33. The help given by the Year 2 teacher and others to a newly qualified teacher who took over the Year 1 class part way through the year, has ensured a high degree of consistency in the teaching at Key Stage 1 and accelerated the Year 1 pupils' learning. It has also ensured the efficient organisation of the classrooms to support the pupils' learning. The classrooms are attractive and conducive to learning as they have welcoming book corners and bright, eye catching displays of pupils' work as well as accessible support materials and prominent information to help the pupils in their writing and number work. This is not as evident or as consistent at Key Stage 2 and is partly explained by the specialist teaching and use of classrooms by several classes. The last inspection commented on the learning time lost as pupils moved from room to room. Current routines are fairly slick but a concern now is the lack of resources to support the pupils' learning. In two lessons seen, the pupils were not able to extend their learning as relevant books were in their own neighbouring classroom. The teachers have not decided whether their classrooms reflect the subjects they teach or are a support base for the pupils in their class.
34. Similarly, although the teachers draw on their own areas of interest and expertise, such as baking bread and sharing poetry and literature with pupils, the gaps in what they provide slow the pupils' progress. A prime example is in ICT. Although the computers and other equipment, such as a tape recorder, are part of the activities available daily in the foundation stage, the Key Stage 2 teachers have been slow to improve the range and quality of their own subject knowledge and to make best use of available ICT equipment. Over time this has had a disastrous effect in that Year 6 pupils have only limited skills and knowledge especially in how to use computer software as part of their learning. They are learning quickly now that they have access to the new ICT suite but they have much ground to make up. This is most noticeable in English and mathematics where the pupils have learnt little about word processing, desk-top publishing and use of data handling.
35. The teaching of English and mathematics is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2 although there are many good lessons, especially for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The teachers are drawing on the teaching guidance in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to plan and structure their lessons. The pupils are learning key skills such as letter-sound relationships, handwriting and number bonds, but are not making enough progress at Key Stage 2 to raise standards significantly. This is due to three prime reasons related to the teaching.
36. Firstly, the teachers' expectations are not high enough of what pupils can achieve. The higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently as they often do the same work as others when the extension materials would be more suitable. When preparing worksheets, the teachers tend to include all necessary labels and key information so that the pupils merely complete what has been started rather than think through how it should be done. Adult support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs

enables them to cope with the task, but they could achieve more on their own if the task was adapted to suit their needs or to reflect the targets and content of their individual learning plans.

37. Secondly, not all the teachers place enough emphasis on showing the pupils what they need to do. The lack of systematic teaching in spelling and in the skills of planning and revising work are reflected in the low level of accuracy in pupils' work. The pupils have not learnt how to self correct and evaluate their own achievements as too few teachers reinforce, or remind the pupils of, the skills and knowledge they have gained in daily literacy hours and mathematics lessons. Too many plenary sessions are rushed or treated only as a time to share what pupils have done rather than to evaluate what the pupils have learnt.
38. Thirdly, the teachers are not using marking as a tool to tell the pupils how they might improve or where they have met their targets. There are some good examples of marking which tell the pupil exactly why their work is "good", how they have improved and what to do next time. Nevertheless, too much, especially in mathematics, is just ticked and no comment given.

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

39. The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. Although the school teaches all National Curriculum subjects as well as religious education at Key Stages 1 and 2, it does not meet all the statutory requirements for ICT at Key Stage 2. Gaps in curriculum coverage affect the pupils' learning and their attainment especially in science, geography and history. Weaknesses in the Key Stage 2 curriculum continue from the last inspection.
40. In contrast, the curriculum for children in the foundation stage is good and is planned thoroughly to ensure full coverage of the six areas of learning. The teacher and nursery nurses know exactly what they want the children to learn. The curriculum provides the children with relevant, meaningful experiences and forms a good foundation for Key Stage 1. In the reception class, the teacher has blended aspects of Level 1 National Curriculum work with the six areas of learning to ensure the higher attaining children continue to make good progress in the summer term.
41. In planning the foundation stage curriculum, the teacher and nursery nurses rightly place highest emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics. They use national guidance to structure their planning as well as their own ideas to provide rich, challenging experiences for the children. The principles of learning through play and experience indoors and out underlie the curriculum and the adults take care to increase the challenge, particularly in mathematics. Themes are used effectively to link ideas but while many experiences are exciting and well structured, opportunities are missed to help

the children make even stronger connections through ongoing classroom activities, displays and the use of the outdoors.

42. The Key Stage 1 curriculum covers all statutory requirements. The curriculum is well planned and presented with flair especially for Year 2 pupils. Themes are used very effectively and carefully to develop natural links between subjects. A good example is the pupils' imaginary hot air balloon trip around the world that has combined work in drama, reading, writing, geography, history, art and design and music. This stimulated the pupils' curiosity and time was created to study the ancient Egyptians when pupils realised they were 'flying' over the pyramids.
43. The quality and range of learning experiences at Key Stage 2 are more limited. The three-year programme in science and other subjects is not ensuring that pupils acquire the skills and knowledge they need. Units of work covered in Year 4 are not revisited in Years 5 and 6. This means that pupils study key aspects, such as forces in science, at the level appropriate for their age but do not acquire additional knowledge or develop a fuller understanding of concepts and principles in later years. This weakness continues from the last inspection but the school is changing the programme from September.
44. Subject schemes of work, although recently revised and often based on national guidance, do not all identify clearly enough how units of work develop pupils' skills in a sequential way or how pupils' progress is to be assessed. Pupils have not had a systematic grounding in the skills of geography, history, design and technology and science and there is much ground to make up at Key Stage 2. It is at its worst in ICT where the oldest Key Stage 2 pupils are unable to use ICT profitably as a tool for learning in other subjects or make sufficient progress when introduced to new ways of using the computer, for example, to create multi-media presentations.
45. A good example of where skills are being taught systematically is in music. Effective use is made of a specialist music teacher to plan and deliver the music curriculum throughout the school. This ensures that all National Curriculum requirements are met and there is increasing challenge for pupils.
46. The governors, parents and staff have agreed that sex education is included as part of "Family and Life Education" in the religious education curriculum. Pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs as part of work in personal, social and health education. The school places high store on promoting the pupils' physical development and provides a good range of sporting activities across the year. All Key Stage 2 pupils take swimming lessons and this helps to promote good standards. The school also participates in competitions and sports events with local schools.
47. Since the last inspection the school has introduced daily literacy hours and mathematics lessons in accordance with national guidelines. The impact on pupils' learning is inconsistent across the school and is less evident at Key

Stage 2. The systematic approach and clear expectations of what pupils are expected to achieve as outlined in the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks, are reflected in the greatly improved mathematics and English results at Year 2, and in the satisfactory progress made in most year groups. Taken overall, there is too heavy a reliance on oral work, especially in English. Independent work and group work are not providing pupils with the opportunities to practise and apply their skills. In both English and mathematics, there are underdeveloped aspects that account for gaps in the pupils' skills and knowledge. Key elements are the lack of development of pupils' facility with, and skills in applying and investigating number, and the development of research skills, drafting and the use of computer as a communication tool in literacy.

48. All pupils have access to the curriculum but not all make the progress they should. The higher attaining pupils are not always stretched enough. Although there are several pupils who have English as an additional language, none need support in learning to speak it. The teachers are sensitive to the pupils' needs and provide help as appropriate in reading and writing.
49. Curriculum provision is satisfactory for pupils who have special educational needs. The school fully meets statutory requirements and complies with the recommendations of the Code of Practice. There are effective procedures for the early identification of need. The nursery nurses keep detailed records of any nursery children that give cause for concern. The limited amount of additional support is used effectively within the classroom to enable pupils with special educational needs to be fully involved in lessons. However, not all the teachers take full account of each pupil's targets and identified needs in planning the curriculum. Too often, these pupils are seen as a group of lower attaining pupils rather than as individuals.
50. Parents raised some concerns about the range of activities outside lessons but for a small school, the provision is satisfactory. Year 6 pupils benefit from 'booster classes' in English, mathematics and science for much of the year. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder and all participate in the two Christmas productions. Key Stage 2 pupils also take part in different sporting activities including athletics and cricket. A small number of pupils use time after lunch to continue with artwork to use the computer suite. The school is seeking funding to extend both the sporting and ICT activities. In addition to the clubs and events, the school provides a varied programme of visits to places of interest that enrich subject work, especially in geography and history. Good use is also made of visitors who talk and work with the pupils.
51. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. This is reflected in the fact that 99 per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. The provision is good for spiritual and social development and satisfactory for

cultural development. As in the last inspection, the weakness is the lack of provision to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

52. In keeping with its Catholic foundation, the school places high emphasis on developing Christian principles. This underlies the provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness. School assemblies provide a time for all to reflect on different issues in a caring, supportive atmosphere and to show an appreciation of others' talents and achievements. A good example was the theme of Year 6 pupils growing up as they move on to secondary school. Opportunities are overlooked to strengthen pupils' spiritual awareness in lessons although a good example of where this did happen was when Year 3 pupils looked at the work of sculptors and then their own designs for sculptures to place in the school. Pupils are developing some self-knowledge through considering their learning and their own personal targets for development.
53. All the children are very aware of the school's motto "The 6 Cs". The headteacher takes the lead in showing care, consideration, cooperation, concern, concentration and carefulness in what she does. All the staff act as good models for the pupils and take time to listen to the pupils and to act fairly. The pupils respond in kind. They decide class rules and suggest ways to deal with wider concerns such as pupils not lining up when asked. Pupils are encouraged to consider moral issues. Year 2 pupils have looked at endangered animals and one pupil, writing as a crocodile, lamented, "*I am an animal not a handbag!*" Visits and talks by speakers from organisations such as UNICEF help the pupils to consider the difference between their wants and needs.
54. Much of the provision for social development is a natural part of how the school works. Pupils are expected to get on with others and to be polite and well mannered. Parents of children in the nursery and reception class praised the high degree of independence fostered by the staff who expect the children to tidy away their own things. The caring family atmosphere, where older pupils look after the younger ones, reflects the interest shown in the pupils by the adults. As a result, all the pupils develop a good sense of community responsibility. The pupils also become aware of those less fortunate than themselves, and raise money regularly for charity through non-uniform days and other events.
55. The school is effective in helping pupils to become increasingly aware of their local culture, traditions and heritage. In the autumn term, the whole-school topic on the local area provided good opportunities for older pupils to realise the links between the high number of potteries and the work of artists such as Clarice Cliff. Pupils are introduced to different lifestyles as part of work in geography and design and technology but this is superficial and the school does not tackle issues such as life in a culturally diverse society or the problems associated with racism and stereotyping. The school recognises this and there are plans to develop this aspect of its work in the new school year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. As reported in the last inspection, the school provides a friendly, supportive environment where the staff are dedicated to the pupils. Much of this is achieved through good relationships rather than through agreed practices. Although there are strengths in the way the school promotes good behaviour, there are continuing weaknesses in policy content and inconsistencies in practice, due to a lack of training and awareness of statutory requirements especially concerning health and safety and registration procedures. The governing body does not fulfil its obligations to ensure that all is in place.
57. Parents value the care shown in the hand-over of their children to them at the end of the day, and the increased security to protect all in the school. All members of staff are alert to the pupils' needs. They comfort them when they are upset and deal with any concerns. Although first aid treatments are provided, the procedures to record the incident, injury and treatment are barely satisfactory. This typifies the school's high reliance on the goodwill of others rather than on agreed practices that are rigorously monitored to ensure consistency in quality. At lunchtimes, it is only the presence of teaching staff that maintains an adequate level of supervision. The two nursery nurses give of their own time to supervise the nursery children having lunch and then at play. This masks the low number of midday supervisory staff employed by the school. The governors are seeking to appoint additional supervisors.
58. The governors and staff place too little importance on assessing the hazards and risks associated with activities such as the installation of a computer suite. Details of concerns raised during the inspection have been reported to and discussed with the governing body. Procedures for child protection are untested and currently do not comply fully with local requirements. The school has a designated member of staff to coordinate action but the policy does not include all the required elements to ensure that other members of staff understand and follow agreed procedures. Omissions include how parents are to be involved, the recording of information and its safe storage. Training in such matters is a necessity to update all members of staff in current procedures.
59. The procedures to monitor and promote behaviour are good and effective. The behaviour policy is well implemented. It includes a balanced system of rewards, praise and sanctions and pupils are well used to receiving recognition for good work or improved effort. Parents and pupils are aware of sanctions and most feel they are fair. They also like the way that pupils' good behaviour and conduct are rewarded in being named 'Star of the Week' in award assemblies. Opportunities are missed to extend the reward system to the lunchtime period. The supervisors provide a good point of contact with the pupils and enjoy an easy relationship with them.

60. Steps have recently been taken to monitor levels of attendance and they have had a positive impact on lowering the high levels of unauthorised absence. Overall, the procedures and systems to improve levels of attendance are weak. They are not recognised by parents, pupils, staff and governors as an important part of raising standards overall. The monitoring procedures lack rigour. Not enough is done to show the impact of absence on pupils' progress or to identify trends. Absence is not always followed up as it occurs. This is aggravated by inefficiencies in categorising absence, as regulations demand, by the end of the registration period. Overlong periods of holiday absence are often sanctioned inappropriately. The very high levels of unauthorised absence indicate that parents have a casual approach to school attendance. This is at odds with inspection evidence that pupils want to be in school. The requirement to publish attendance and absence levels in the school prospectus is not met.
61. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. All members of staff are interested in the pupils and how they get on. Lessons in personal, health and social education, such as that in the nursery on healthy teeth, contribute to pupils' development, but this provision has not yet been agreed to ensure consistency and quality of content. Membership of the school council, and the positions of monitor, head boy and girl, all provide very good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and leadership.
62. The teachers give pupils a good sense of their progress but little is done to record and celebrate it. The foundation stage staff lead the way in keeping track of the children's personal, social and emotional development and sharing their progress with parents. They work hard and successfully to help the children develop as individuals and regular observations of the children help the staff to identify concerns as well as progress made. Since the last inspection, improvements have occurred in recognising Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils' achievements through special assemblies and a good start has been made in Year 3 where pupils are keeping Records of Achievement. It is intended that this will be implemented across the school.
63. The procedures to assess pupils' attainment are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the 1997 inspection when they were judged to be unsatisfactory and reflects action taken to keep better records of pupils' progress and to set targets. All statutory requirements are met although there are gaps especially in assessing pupils' skills. This is a particular concern in ICT where standards are so low. The school has taken too long to agree and implement an assessment system. Much is still on trial.
64. The systems to assess and record the progress of children in the foundation stage are good. The reception teacher has developed a comprehensive system to record how well each child does in relation to key learning objectives in all six areas of learning. This gives a comprehensive overview of each child's attainment. As in the nursery, this is supported by observational comments progress over time and samples of work although chances are missed to develop a record that can be shared with parents and

to indicate the rate of progress through the stepping stones to the early learning goals.

65. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the teachers keep samples of the pupils' work and some records of their progress in English, mathematics and science. For example, all keep records of the books the pupils have read but few have detailed assessments of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading or of their progress in acquiring key skills such as finding and retrieving information. This partly accounts for many pupils' slow progress in reading especially at lower Key Stage 2.
66. Much has been done to set up a system to record the pupils' attainment from the nursery to Year 6. This is a valuable step in helping to identify pupils who are doing as well, better than, or not as well as expected, and to set realistic targets for their attainment at the end of the next school year. The school is now in a better position to compare itself with other schools and to identify groups of pupils for additional support. An analysis of the pupils' answers in last year's national tests also helped to pinpoint areas for curriculum focus in English, mathematics and science but not enough is done to look for common areas of difficulty or to analyse precisely why standards are low.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

67. This area of the school's work has improved since the last inspection. The parents' views of the school are very good. Just over half returned the questionnaire and 85 per cent agreed that the school works closely with parents. Those who attended the meeting confirmed that they feel comfortable approaching the school with suggestions or concerns. They find the headteacher and other staff welcoming and like the way that concerns are dealt with and they are informed of the outcomes.
68. A small percentage of parents voiced some disagreement about several aspects, predominantly about the range of extra-curricular activities and being kept well informed of their children's progress. These are not fully justified as the school offers a sound, if limited, range of activities over the year and the open-door policy allows parents to consult the teachers at any time. The concerns do indicate an underlying problem of communication with parents. This is not entirely the fault of the school. Satisfactory efforts have been made in the past to inform parents about new curriculum initiatives. The school reports that few parents attend meetings and this was reflected in the turnout of 13 parents at the meeting with inspectors prior to the inspection.
69. The school's links with parents are good. The parents are loyal and supportive. They attend fund-raising activities and social occasions. Good relationships start in the nursery where the nursery nurses form close bonds with parents and carers. Much is discussed at the start and end of sessions about what is happening in the nursery and how the children are getting on.

Notices on the nursery door keep parents up to date with the current themes, dinners and requests. Several parents help in the nursery and more help by sending in items or developing ideas at home. Parents commented that these easy relationships are part of the reason why they choose to send their child to the nursery and then to the school.

70. Pupils benefit from the active involvement of a small group of parents and carers who help pupils in and out of the classroom. The school is justifiably proud of its helpers and benefits greatly from the strong daily commitment of those who drive the school minibus to bring pupils from outlying villages, or who manage the healthy tuck shop and nursery library.
71. Regular newsletters help to maintain good links between home and school and contain information on general matters of interest. The school is not making best use of its desk-top publishing programs to heighten the quality of the presentation and the content of the newsletters occasionally lacks impact. This is compounded by errors in spelling and grammar. Opportunities are missed to help parents understand what they can do to support their child's learning. This is also evident in the home-school reading diary. Few diaries show a true dialogue between teacher and parents to support the child's progress in reading.
72. Most parents are confident that their children make good progress and value the times set aside for them to meet the teachers and discuss achievement and progress. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress are satisfactory. A range of different styles is used but an improvement since the last inspection is the inclusion of the level of attainment in English, mathematics and science although no interpretation of these levels is given to help parents. In other subjects, the teachers tend to describe the work the pupils have done. This makes it difficult for parents to see how their children have progressed and what they need to do to improve.
73. Satisfactory procedures are in place to inform parents when their child is identified as having special educational needs and they are invited to meetings to review their child's progress towards their targets. Not enough information is given to all parents in the prospectus and governors' annual report about the school's provision for special educational needs and how it follows the recommendations of the Code of Practice. Both documents omit other required items including parents' right to withdraw their children from aspects of the curriculum.
74. Many parents support their children at home especially in learning spellings, key words and multiplication tables. At the meeting, parents talked of visits to the library and places of interest prompted by their children. Much is dependent on parents' initiative. While the nursery staff provide parents with news sheets about topics and ideas, the school gives little information on current topics at Key Stages 1 and 2 to inform parents of what their children are to learn, how it is to be taught and how parents might help. A good initiative is the encouragement for parents to contract to agree to help their

children with specific targets. The take-up has not been as successful as it could be, and the school has no means to assess the impact this is having on pupils' progress.

75. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. A parents' group raises significant sums of money to buy learning resources. Parents also volunteer their services unstintingly on a regular basis. Parents have expressed confidence in the headteacher and staff. The school has begun to capitalise on this by consulting parents on the curriculum and the home-school agreement. Less is done to enlist the parents' help in reducing casual absences, term-time holidays and late arrivals.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

76. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Strengths in the pastoral leadership and direction of the headteacher are offset by weaknesses in the work of the headteacher, key staff and governors to monitor and evaluate how well the school is doing and to make things happen. All have worked hard to follow the action plan from the 1997 inspection but several aspects remain a concern and jeopardise the school's potential to improve.
77. The headteacher provides a very strong lead in working to meet the school's mission statement. Parents rightly praised the headteacher's warm, friendly relationship with them and their children and commented on how she sets a good example in valuing the work of all in the school. She knows all the pupils and families and is a key player in the school's success in meeting its aim of establishing "*a caring interaction among home, parish and school*". The school is not as effective in ensuring that each pupil achieves his/her full potential. This was also reported in the 1997 inspection.
78. The school has made satisfactory progress in carrying out the actions in its plan to deal with the seven key issues from the 1997 inspection. In some areas the progress has been good, such as improving the quality of teaching, developing schemes of work and improving the quality of the nursery provision. The school has been less effective in dealing with the substance of several key issues. Standards remain low at Key Stage 2. The headteacher, coordinators and governors have not done enough to analyse why standards are not rising. Useful first steps in this process are the school self-review process and the very recent training for several governors in applying best value principles. The improvement plan for 2001/2 identifies relevant priorities but targets are more often expressed in terms of what is to be provided rather than in a change in standards. Similarly, the headteacher's and subject coordinators' reports to the governing body give a full account of what has been done but do not evaluate its effect on pupils' attainment.

79. The governors are supportive and many are long serving; newly appointed governors are taking advantage of training. All rely heavily on the headteacher for information. They have too few systems to provide their own checks on whether the school's systems, such as those to promote and monitor pupils' welfare, are efficient and effective. Not all statutory requirements are met in the information to parents. These matters have been discussed with the governors.
80. The governors and headteacher are conscious that the school underwent a period of slow progress after the 1997 inspection. The headteacher, newly appointed and inexperienced in school management, coped with staffing difficulties at a time when the local education authority was being reorganised and the school had to rely heavily on its own expertise. Governors did not take the lead in driving the school forward. As a result, innovation has been slight and the school has retained several practices that were judged ineffective in the previous inspection, such as pupils moving to different rooms for lessons at Key Stage 2. Just as in 1997, pupils do not always have access to relevant resources as displays are set up in pupils' classroom rather than where they are taught. In a couple of lessons seen, this limited pupils' learning.
81. The school has a generous number of qualified teachers and most classes have fewer than 20 pupils. The nursery has no qualified teacher. The governors continue to rely on two qualified nursery nurses under the sound management of the reception class teacher. This arrangement is effective as the nursery nurses show a very high level of commitment and application; they evaluate their work and the children's progress and are keen to make improvements. The good quality of their work, and the positive effect of having a teacher and support assistant in the reception class, has heightened standards in the foundation stage.
82. Low class sizes coupled with good teaching at Key Stage 1 have boosted pupils' progress and attainment. This is less evident in the Key Stage 2 classes. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has reduced but retained a significant teaching commitment in mathematics to enable the Year 5 and 6 pupils to be taught as separate year groups. This makes good use of her and other teachers' subject expertise and enthusiasms and has helped Year 6 pupils to achieve well this year. When looking at the key stage as a whole, however, the high number of teachers is not having a marked impact on standards.
83. To provide teaching time in the mornings, the headteacher has rightly delegated many of the day-to-day administrative and financial procedures to the efficient school secretary. The school runs smoothly.
84. Subject coordinators have compiled policies and schemes of work and increased the range and number of resources. Some schemes are relatively fresh and are not yet backed by assessment and evaluation systems. For example, in ICT, the coordinator and governors have not agreed what

information is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the recently organised suite and its impact on standards and pupils' progress.

85. The school is in the early stages of evaluating and analysing its own performance. Although a full programme of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning was implemented in 1998, much less has been done in recent years. As a result, key coordinators have only a hazy understanding of standards throughout the school and are not pushing change forward fast enough. Chances have been missed to use test data even more rigorously to indicate possible trends and reasons why standards are low.
86. During the inspection, the newspapers published possible amalgamation plans for the school. This provides governors with a useful opportunity to consult the parents and pupils about their views of what the school offers and how it might improve. The governors took into account the need to compete with other schools in deciding to use reserve funds to upgrade ICT equipment but they have not taken enough account of how the school compares with others when setting priorities and evaluating the effectiveness of the action they take.
87. The management of special educational needs is satisfactory. The coordinator ensures that the school follows national guidance in identifying pupils' needs. Documentation is up to date and pupils' progress is regularly reviewed. The targets in pupils' individual plans are realistic and generally specific to their needs. The school uses allocated funding to provide support assistants who work alongside pupils in class. This ensures that requirements are met for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs but opportunities are missed for closer working between teacher and assistant to prepare support materials and to observe and record pupils' responses. This weakens the effectiveness of the support.
88. The range of accommodation is good. Classrooms vary in size but most are large for the number of pupils and all classes have access to a large hall with a library area. Although the library is well organised and has attractive displays, it is rarely used as a learning area and pupils are unused to borrowing books or looking for information. Older pupils commented that they thought it was only for the younger pupils. The ICT suite has been a good initiative and provides opportunities for whole and part class lessons but the use of the equipment is unsatisfactory. The room is used to teach mathematics in the mornings and there are several afternoon periods when the room is unused. In addition, classroom and library computers are idle too much of the time.
89. Since the last inspection, the nursery room and toilets have been refurbished. This has provided a suitable area for three and four year olds but the nursery room has less easy access to the secure outdoor area compared with the reception classroom. This restricts the use of the outdoors by the nursery children. The fact that the two classes are adjacent has not been utilised to

best advantage to develop shared practice and to work even more effectively as a team.

90. The school benefits from being on a large site with extensive playing fields and playground areas. During the inspection, these were used well for sports, science investigations and play at lunchtimes. This adds much to the school's ethos and the pupils' satisfaction with what the school offers.
91. Given the pupils' average attainment on entry to Key Stage 1, the overall satisfactory quality of teaching and pupils' progress, the school gives just satisfactory value for money. The nursery and reception class give good value.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

92. In order to raise standards throughout the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Raise standards at Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics, science and ICT by:
 - ensuring the teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve;
 - using assessment information to track the pupils' progress more rigorously in order to decide what the pupils should learn next;
 - reviewing and revisiting topics more regularly, especially in science.(paragraphs 9, 12, 14, 36-8, 43, 47, 63, 65-6, 118, 133, 137, 143, 146, 176, 179)
 - (2) Increase pupils' skills in all subjects and in organising their own learning by:
 - providing more practical experiences for pupils to acquire, practise and apply skills in all subjects;
 - identifying clearly in schemes the range and progression of subject specific skills.(paragraphs 14, 16, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44, 124, 129, 139, 140, 160, 175)
 - (3) Ensure that governors, headteacher and all staff have a clear and informed view of what needs to be done and how to make it happen by:
 - improving the quality and regularity of monitoring and critical evaluation of the work of the school;
 - agreeing specific targets for improvement.(paragraphs 29, 78-9, 84-6, 134, 143, 150, 172, 180)
 - (4) Raise levels of attendance by:
 - tightening up procedures to monitor and promote attendance;
 - following up absences as soon as they occur;
 - increasing parents' and pupils' awareness and support.

(paragraphs 25, 60)

- (5) Improve the quality of provision for pupils' welfare and care by:
- agreeing and implementing fully procedures and systems to deal with issues of child protection, assessment of hazard and risk and the welfare of all pupils;
 - ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

(paragraphs 56-9, 73)

93. In drawing up the action plan, the governors may wish to consider the following minor points:

- the quality of the information to parents (paragraphs 71-3, 123)
- the provision to develop the pupils' awareness of living in a multi-cultural society (paragraphs 56-9, 73)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	44	43	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	139
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	2.3
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	8	10	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	4	7
	Girls	7	8	9
	Total	12	12	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (91)	67 (91)	89 (91)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	7	6
	Girls	7	9	8
	Total	11	16	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (91)	89 (91)	78 (82)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10	13	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	8
	Girls	9	6	11
	Total	15	14	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (58)	61 (62)	83 (54)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	7
	Girls	8	7	7
	Total	13	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (65)	61 (54)	61 (58)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	113
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	19.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63

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

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	332,971
Total expenditure	327,081
Expenditure per pupil	1,995
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,740
Balance carried forward to next year	26,630

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	164
Number of questionnaires returned	93

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	29	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	58	33	2	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	33	3	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	35	9	5	5
The teaching is good.	65	30	4	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	23	13	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	31	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	29	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	44	41	12	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	30	4	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	35	0	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	34	19	7	12

Figures may not add up to 100 due to rounding up/down of percentages.

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

94. Standards are good and have improved since the 1997 inspection. Although a key factor has been the refurbishment of the nursery, much is due to the high commitment and good quality of the work of the two nursery nurses who run the nursery, and to the good teaching of the reception class teacher. All have a clear sense of purpose and are using national guidance very effectively to plan and steer their work. They have high expectations of the children and work hard to achieve them. The children are stimulated by the changing and challenging activities. As a consequence, the children make good progress in both the nursery and the reception class.
95. The nursery records show that when the children start, their low attainment is marked in personal skills. The nursery nurses comment that many children initially find it hard to sit still even for a very short period. By the end of the reception year, most children have reached the standard expected for their age in all six areas of learning. In personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and in mathematics, many have exceeded it. A significant number are already working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum particularly in reading and number. The high emphasis placed on these aspects in adult led sessions ensures the children get off to a flying start.

Personal, social and emotional development

96. The children make very good progress in both the nursery and reception classes because of the very good teaching and the good routines including 'Helper of the day' and 'Star of the week'. A strong element is the visits to museums and the celebration of festivals that give the children a developing awareness of their own and others' culture and beliefs. By the end of the nursery, and certainly well before the end of the reception year, the children have met all the early learning goals in this area of learning. Many of the nursery children are already mature and self-reliant. They confidently choose either to work with an adult or to select their own activity and take care of their own needs.
97. Several parents commented on how much their children had developed in self-confidence and maturity over the year. The children are happy and at ease because of the adults' warm relationships with them. They are treated as individuals; the adults know the children's quirks and foibles but are firm in expecting them to follow the rules, to be polite and to be aware of the needs of others. Comments like *"Please wait your turn. I am now talking to ..."* help to keep group sessions enjoyable for all.
98. Observations of the children enable the nursery nurses to identify those who rarely help to tidy away and gentle reminders are now sufficient to ensure that

the children do as they are asked. In both the nursery and the reception class, all runs like clockwork as the children are very independent, help one another and want to do their best. In the reception class, the children's eagerness and natural ebullience often overtake their ability to wait their turn or to let others have a try. When this is pointed out, they realise what they have done and often apologise spontaneously.

99. All the children are keen to learn and most concentrate for long periods when their interest is caught. Many nursery children were busily and happily engaged in activities for at least half an hour and the reception class children were well used to the format of the literacy and numeracy hours and kept a high level of attention throughout.

Communication, language and literacy

100. The children make good progress in listening, talking, reading and writing because of the good quality of the teaching in the nursery and reception class. The children do well in the nursery but their progress accelerates in the reception class as the teacher is skilled in helping young readers and writers and has high expectations of what the children can do. By the end of the reception year, most children have reached the standard expected and are reading and having a go at writing on their own. The higher attaining readers' skill and knowledge are more typical of children a year older.
101. In the nursery, the adults are very effective in developing the children's speech and encouraging them to talk about what they are doing. They ask lots of questions but also pose alternatives such as *"Did it feel sticky or was it smooth? Tell us what you think"*. The children respond positively and often ask each other similar type questions. They pick up and use new words rapidly and use language expressively – having listened attentively to an unusual noise, one child described it as being *"like a man with five Hoovers"*. Regular sessions are helping the children to recognise their own names and the letters and sounds of the alphabet. The children knew that July began with "Jumping Jim". They have a go at copying their name cards and a few write their names without help.
102. The reception class children have made significant progress in reading and writing. They like books, are keen to share new stories and have a good knowledge of letters, sounds and spelling patterns. In a very effective lesson, when reading "Mr Marvel and the cake" the children showed a good ability to predict events and to identify rhymes. The teacher's use of questions such as *"Anything else it might be?"* prompted the children to suggest missing words and to look at details such as initial letters and word length. When they used small whiteboards to list "-ake" words, most of the higher attaining children used joined script to write a long list and were well able to explain their choices.
103. In both the nursery and the reception class, the children have easy access to writing materials but the adults miss chances to create and use different

reasons and purposes for writing. The signing up list for the computer is one way this is done successfully.

Mathematical development

104. The nursery staff use every opportunity to talk about number with the children, to count and to recognise numbers to ten. A good example is when giving out milk, the adults encourage the children to estimate whether there is enough to fill the cups and to count as they are filled. Such daily routines ensure the children develop confidence and ease in counting to 20 and beyond. By the end of the nursery year, most are competent in number to five and the higher attaining children to ten. A group of six children made very good progress in totalling numbers because of the nursery nurse's well structured step-by-step approach and effective use of plasticine 'cakes'. The children really enjoyed the activity and showed their learning when they gave her similar tasks and told her *"You need to put three and then count on another two and then you get a total"*.
105. The reception children build on this good start and by the end of the reception year, many have exceeded the standard expected for their age. Most are familiar with the order of numbers at least to 20 and are confident in counting, adding, taking away and also writing numbers. The higher attaining children use their intuitive knowledge to estimate. The teacher makes very good use of practical experiences to provide challenging and meaningful problems. The children were very keen that all the seven dwarfs should have a straw, mug and plate at their picnic but the teacher insisted that they explained how they knew how many more were needed. This also gave a good context for the children to use location words, such as 'opposite', highlighted the previous day.
106. A strength of the teaching is the systematic development of the children's knowledge from the nursery to the reception class. A good example is the way the children learn to identify basic shapes and to talk about their characteristics. One nursery child knew it was a rectangle as it had *"two sides short and two sides long"*. By the end of the reception year, the children identify and name correctly irregular shapes including hexagons. The pigeon holes in the class 'Post Office' provided an excellent way for the children to sort the envelopes according to the shape on them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

107. The children make good progress over time because of good teaching and an interesting and well-planned range of topics. While there are some common themes, chances are missed to share and extend ideas between the nursery and reception class. Although there is little to stimulate the children's curiosity in the classroom, the activities, questions and problems set by the adults promote the children's steady progress in finding out, investigating and using different tools and materials. By the end of the reception year, most of the children have achieved many of the early learning goals in this area and

have had a good introduction to science, ICT, geography, history and design and technology.

108. The nursery team provide a good balance of adult led and child chosen activities to introduce new items and ideas. A walk around the school grounds to collect litter or to listen to different sounds echoed work done earlier in the year to map the different parts of the school. The adults are skilled in asking questions, drawing out responses from the children and helping them to remember key information. In a good session, the children quickly learnt that too much sugar would rot Harry Horse's teeth and as they sorted out the healthier foods and drinks, one commented that milk "*makes your bones grow*".
109. The reception class teacher has made good use of the book "The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch" to set the children problems such as designing a boat to carry the lunch from the mainland to the lighthouse. Four children industriously used tape and different containers to make a boat but their choice of materials was limited to those selected by the teacher and they made little progress in testing different ways to join materials.
110. In both the nursery and the reception class, the children develop a sound understanding of time and place. Routines such as the day board help to track the days of the week, months of the year and different weather patterns. The reception children have looked at events in the news and where they are happening in the world. All the children remember their trip to Macclesfield Museum and looking at old toys.

Physical development

111. By the end of the reception year, the children have generally reached the standard expected. The teaching is good and the children in the nursery and reception class benefit from a wide range of experiences in and out of the classroom. Over the year, the children have been taught how to use particular tools, including hammers and saws, and to talk about what they have done.
112. The adults make good use of the hall for short sessions in physical education. Although the nursery children have periods outdoors using the wheeled toys and the reception children join the Key Stage 1 classes at breaktimes, not enough has been done to make the most of the available time, resources and secure outdoor area to develop the children's skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement.
113. In a well-organised and quick moving session, the nursery children made very good progress in learning to find their own space, jog, skip and to stand on one leg without falling over. The four adults worked very effectively as a team to support the children who found it hard to coordinate their movements and to demonstrate what to do. The children realised their hearts were beating faster afterwards. Having come in from a hot playground, the

reception year children knew that if they sat still for a while they would cool down. All generally move around the classroom with care and step over items on the carpet. Few showed any difficulty in handling fiddly pieces of equipment or in handling the computer mouse.

Creative development

114. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and the children make at least satisfactory progress. By the end of the reception year, most have met the standard expected for their age. This area of learning is not as strong as the others in both the nursery and the reception class. Opportunities are missed to develop the children's own creativity as the adults usually get out what they want the children to use and also supervise the activities. The reception children took great care when overlapping foil, tissue and cellophane pieces to create their own fish. The teacher made good use of information books to stimulate the children's ideas but missed the chance to allow the children to mix different media, to try other materials and to return to techniques introduced earlier. This typifies the work in both the nursery and the reception class.
115. Although neither classroom has a well stocked area to encourage the children to explore different colours, textures, shapes and forms, the adults provide a sound range of art experiences over time. They introduce the children to different skills such as colour mixing, printing and weaving. The nursery nurse's comments about what she liked about a child's choice of materials in making a model prompted other children to also comment as they worked.
116. Many children, more especially girls, become engrossed in imaginative play for long periods. The quality of the play of four girls in the nursery 'Travel Agent's' was much improved and prolonged by the nursery nurse acting as a customer. A reception year girl maintained her interest in writing letters and making items in the Post Office for almost an hour. In both cases, the quality of the play was enhanced by the good quality of props such as a suitcase, cheque-book, credit card and stamps.

ENGLISH

117. Standards in English are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. They have improved significantly this year. In the 2000 national tests, results were well below average. This year nearly all Year 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs, have reached the expected standard for their age and half have attained a higher level. Pupils' achievement is slightly higher in reading than in writing. The few boys have done particularly well.
118. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well below average. Two out of three pupils have reached Level 4 as expected for their age and a few have reached the higher Level 5 due to their better reading standards. In writing, spelling is a weakness.

119. Throughout the school, the pupils make at least satisfactory progress in talking confidently about their ideas; they learn to think carefully about what they want to say, to choose words and to organise their comments to present and justify an argument. Standards are at least equal to those expected for their age and far outstrip standards in writing. When encouraged to recall their visit to a museum, Year 1 pupils chatted about what they had seen. This enabled them to use a non-fiction text much more effectively.
120. Year 2 pupils have become fascinated by Beatrix Potter stories and, with teacher encouragement, relish interesting words, such as 'soporific'. Year 4 pupils easily build on each other's ideas as the teacher has helped them to listen carefully to each other. For example, while discussing an advertisement, one child suggested that if the class used the idea from pupil A and combined it with the suggestion from pupil B, it would produce an effective statement. She was then confident enough to try several ways of doing this, accepting ideas from others. Similarly, Year 6 pupils confidently and appropriately use technical words such as 'emotive language' to explain why they feel an author is particularly successful in creating an atmosphere.
121. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the influence of stronger teaching is clearly evident in the work of pupils in Years 2, 5 and 6. These pupils have made good progress over the year. In other year groups, the pupils' progress is less evident although the guidance of the National Literacy Strategy is evident in the range of books that the pupils experience and in the systematic way that they learn to appreciate different types of text, and to analyse words and sentences.
122. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in spelling and using letter sounds to work out new words. Year 2 pupils are confident in using letter strings to spell and identify words and know that combinations of letters may be pronounced differently. Most use this knowledge as well as context, punctuation and picture cues to support their reading. The pupils enjoy reading and have favourite stories. This is helped by the good choice of books available, including simple novels. The pupils read fluently and with expression and many benefit from reading regularly at home.
123. These good reading standards are not evident at lower Key Stage 2. The Year 3 pupils' performance in the 2000 national tests was low and they have not made up ground this year. Similarly, Year 4 pupils have not sustained the average standards attained two years ago. In both year groups, the weaker readers struggle to read texts that are often too difficult for them. The potential of a two-way dialogue between home and school about the pupils' reading progress is not exploited fully through the reading diaries. The general policy of classifying books as easy or hard, does not provide sufficient structure to ensure all pupils make steady and systematic progress. This is aggravated by the fact that Year 3 pupils tend to show little interest in reading.

124. Year 3 and 4 pupils are not receiving the systematic teaching they need to develop their skills in identifying new words and making sense of what they read, especially in non-fiction. Pupils have poorly developed skills such as using an index or scanning to find a word. This weakens their work in other subjects. This gap in knowledge is also evident in Years 5 and 6 and was identified in the previous report. Pupils have had little experience of finding books in a library or of finding information in books. Discussion with individual pupils indicated that the limited skills they do have are a result of what they do at home rather than of systematic teaching in school. Year 6 pupils commented that they prefer to type a word into a computer search program rather than look through a book.
125. In all year groups at Key Stage 2, the higher attaining pupils are reading at a level expected for their age but their experience is largely limited to fiction. There is a marked difference between the few better readers in each class and the rest. The higher attaining readers enjoy books, discuss characters and appreciate the style of different authors and types of text. Through imaginative teaching, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have been introduced to parts of novels and well-chosen poetry that has widened their awareness and enjoyment of literature. Most Year 6 pupils, including those with special educational needs, read fairly competently and accurately although not all understand fully what they read.
126. Standards in writing are above average at Key Stage 1. The pupils develop in confidence as writers and settle quickly to their tasks. Year 1 pupils learn to use their knowledge of letter sounds to make sensible attempts in their spelling. By the end of Year 2, nearly all pupils write fluently and at length. They produce books such as 'Alien Stories', 'The Bad Giant' or their version of the 'Pied Piper'. These stories show a confident command of language and the influence of the many stories that they have read and heard. For example, one book began, "*About 600 years ago, but not so far away, there lived...*". The pupils are stronger in writing stories than accounts, reports and letters. Spelling, punctuation and general presentation are good and many pupils are using speech correctly and beginning to use paragraphs and chapters.
127. In contrast to the findings of the previous inspection, progress is unsatisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. In all year groups, pupils often find it hard to settle to write and lack confidence in organising their ideas. While Year 3 pupils had clear ideas of how to lay out a letter and knew how the style of writing could be altered to suit the purpose and audience, only a few managed to get much written during the lesson. Three factors contribute to this. Firstly, test results show that pupils are starting from a low base; secondly, a significant number of pupils need props to support their writing and thirdly, the time is often too short for pupils to complete, revise and improve their work. This also typifies the work of Year 4 pupils. Much of their writing takes the form of entering responses on work sheets. The range of expression and vitality of language is low when compared with how pupils talk. Only very occasionally, a striking phrase leaps out, such as the use of,

'Bone shivering jaws' to start a short animal poem. Pupils make many errors in spelling, handwriting and punctuation.

128. At upper Key Stage 2, pupils' writing shows the influence of what they have read. The pupils' diaries of 'Mr Tom' clearly illustrate the impact of the book and how well the children can write from a particular point of view. The higher attaining writers have a feel for words and phrasing. For example, *"And I thought who would want all these rooms..."* occurred in a Year 5 pupil's work. While pupils in Years 5 and 6 have explored story openings, read and composed a range of poetry and considered how to marshal facts to present an argument, their work across the curriculum shows that writing is hard for the majority. Most write in a legible, joined script but accuracy in spelling and punctuation is a continuing weakness.
129. There is very little evidence of the pupils learning to draft and re-draft their writing. Very little work shows how pupils have added or re-ordered ideas. The computer is rarely used for this purpose. On many occasions, the computer is merely used as typewriter to copy a prepared final version. Opportunities are missed to combine the use, practice and application of basic word-processing skills across the whole English curriculum.
130. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1. Changes in Key Stage 1 teaching personnel have lifted the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2 although there are weaknesses that slow pupils' learning especially at lower Key Stage 2. Good teaching for the older Key Stage 2 pupils boosts their progress but is not consistently strong enough to raise standards markedly and make up all lost ground. In all year groups, common weaknesses lie in the teaching of spelling strategies and information retrieval skills – also highlighted in the 1997 inspection. Slow pace in some lessons and a lack of challenge are still causes for concern.
131. In the literacy hours, all the teachers are confident in teaching the class. At both key stages there are examples of flair and imagination in the way the teachers use well-selected, interesting material, which together with the use of white boards and the overhead projector by some teachers, keeps the pupils fully involved and motivated. In the more effective lessons, the teachers ensure that the pupils are clear about what it is they are going to learn and how the various parts of the lesson will help them. In most of the plenary sessions, the teachers encourage the pupils to compare the outcomes of the lesson with these objectives. Some do it better than others. At its best, the plenary is used to help pupils explore and correct misconceptions, and to enable the pupils to suggest, organise and reflect on their efforts.
132. The teachers are less successful in challenging the higher attaining pupils, or in providing tasks that the pupils can easily complete in the time available. The use of ICT is rarely included. Too often the initial oral part of the lesson is over long and pupils do not have enough time to complete their written

work. While some support is provided, for example, in the form of a storyboard, there is often too little modification of the task to meet the needs of the different attainment groups. On many occasions, pupils struggled with spelling, particularly high frequency words, and there was little for them to refer to on the walls or at hand.

133. The quality of the teachers' marking is variable. Not all are using marking as a tool to help the pupils improve their work. Although there are good examples of constructive comments that help pupils move forward in their work, few identify which words or phrases are the ones that produce the good quality. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment and the tracking of progress, although improving, still have a long way to go.
134. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. Although the quality of teaching and learning is being monitored, not enough has been done to identify why standards remain low at Key Stage 2. Additions to the library have been limited but the library continues to be grossly underused.

MATHEMATICS

135. Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 but well below average at the end of Key Stage 2.
136. The improvement at Key Stage 1 is considerable given the fact that last year, the school's results in the tests for seven year olds were well below the national average. Year 2 pupils have made good progress. Nearly all have attained Level 2 as expected for their age and just below 50 per cent have reached the higher Level 3. This means many are working at a similar level to the older pupils at Key Stage 2. The Year 6 pupils have made satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2 having started from a low level of mathematical knowledge and skill. Just over half of the Year 6 pupils have reached Level 4 as expected for their age. One pupil reached the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence shows that Year 5 pupils' attainment is much closer to that expected for their age and the school is right to set a higher target for Level 4 attainment in 2002.
137. The work in Year 2 pupils' books does not reflect fully the high attainment of many pupils. The tasks are sometimes undemanding for the higher attaining pupils and there has been some underachievement over the year. The tasks for the average and lower attaining pupils are usually more appropriate and enable them to make good progress. This also characterises work in other year groups. Teachers' expectations are not high enough for some pupils. Higher attaining pupils are often given more of the same to do rather than a more complex initial task. Year 5 pupils spent time needlessly classifying angles before moving on to a more appropriate task to use their secure knowledge of angles.
138. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy ensures a high degree of consistency in how mathematics is taught and the amount of time allocated to it. The very limited time given to mathematics in Year 6, as

criticised in the last inspection, is no longer a concern but many lessons are now at least an hour long and the time is not always used to best effect. The use of the strategy is having a positive impact on learning for most pupils as the teachers are generally confident in teaching mathematics, there is much good teaching and the pupils show a positive attitude. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as they are often supported by the teacher or another adult.

139. Daily sessions of mental mathematics are helping to improve pupils' facility in handling number. Not all the sessions are fast enough or challenging enough to sharpen all pupils' intuitive feel for number. In several sessions, the pace was slow enough to allow pupils to work things out on their fingers or to look at the cards others were showing before holding up their own. Two other weaknesses in many lessons are the lack of challenge in the group activities, particularly for the higher attaining pupils, and the slow pace of the final plenary session. At such times, pupils often become restless and the teachers miss chances to get pupils to explain their thinking or to apply new skills in a different way. In a good lesson seen, Year 1 pupils referred to a number square to show different ways of subtracting numbers from 20. The teacher's emphasis on asking pupils how they might check their answer helped to reinforce good work habits.
140. At both key stages, pupils make steady progress in using number and in learning number facts. They learn about place value and how to use strategies such as doubling numbers and repeated addition. By Year 6, most pupils are secure in the four rules of number and in their awareness of place value of numbers to 1,000 - this was a weakness identified in the last inspection. Nevertheless, in all year groups, there is little in pupils' books to show that they use their knowledge and skills to solve problems other than those in worksheets and routine exercises. These inhibit the development of pupils' skills in setting out number problems and how to record ways of working them out. For Year 6 pupils this has been aggravated by the practice of not dating worksheets or entering them into files in a structured way. This makes it difficult for pupils to refer back to previous work to refresh their understanding of how to set out and calculate sums such as long multiplication and division.
141. Few classrooms have displays or mathematical puzzles to test and challenge pupils to apply what they know. In some lessons, the teachers use interesting contexts for problems. The teacher's use of an increase in book prices kept Year 2 pupils' attention well focused on what to pay and which coins to use. Year 4 pupils were also motivated to sort information as it related to their own eye and hair colour. Higher attaining pupils were quick to grasp how to do this having seen the teacher's demonstration and their explanations showed a good understanding of the process.
142. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good at Key Stage 1 where a consistently strong element is the mental mathematics and plenary sessions. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 but varies from

unsatisfactory to good. Year 3 pupils made limited progress in one lesson as it was too long and the pupils lost their concentration. Far too much time was spent on the mental mathematics and introductory activities on how to take away nine and 18 with insufficient time for pupils to work independently.

143. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator has made a sound start in developing a record of pupils' progress against the key objectives for each year group as set out in the National Numeracy Strategy. The pupils' test results have been analysed to identify general areas of weakness and where action has been taken, as in steps to improve the quality of teaching of mental mathematics, this has been effective in raising standards. Not enough has been done to use assessment information to identify factors in teaching, learning and standards. Not all teachers, for example, regularly evaluate their lessons and note how they will modify their planning in the light of what pupils have learned.

SCIENCE

144. Standards are above average at Key Stage 1 but are well below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards have seesawed at Key Stage 2 since the 1997 inspection and have failed to keep pace with the national upward trend.
145. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' attainment is low at Key Stage 2. This is partly due to weaknesses in curriculum planning. Some attempt is made to remedy this in the content of booster classes in Year 6 but this is insufficient to ensure that pupils have a good recall of knowledge and understanding of major principles. Year 6 pupils have worked through many past papers covering different topics but there is little evidence of in-depth coverage of aspects such as gravity, magnetism, solids, liquids and gases. Progress at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory and pupils are underachieving. This contrasts with Key Stage 1, where standards have risen significantly this year. All pupils have achieved well because of much good teaching of skills through the effective use of interesting activities.
146. The previous inspection identified several weaknesses in teaching, planning and in the curriculum and the school has rectified some but not all. A scheme of work is now guiding the teachers' planning. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen but, as in 1997, the learning objectives were not always clear or phrased in a way that pupils could easily grasp. While assessments of pupils' knowledge are made at the end of topics, these are not related to National Curriculum levels of attainment and there is still no formal record of pupils' progress. As in 1997, the main area for improvement is the development of pupils' skills in experimental and investigative science.
147. Key Stage 1 pupils develop good scientific knowledge. They remember well what they are told and higher attaining pupils show a good developing understanding of principles. They describe clearly how an electrical circuit is made and how the circuit must be complete before a bulb will light. All pupils,

including those with special educational needs, learn how to record their work in simple reports, diagrams and charts. They make less progress in acquiring the skills of asking their own questions and investigating their own ideas. Pupils learn about living things and their needs through activities such as planting pansies and observing them grow. They are interested in science and enjoy looking at information books to find out more about plants and animals.

148. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on this knowledge. Strengths in the teaching help pupils to acquire good habits in predicting, doing and checking and by the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a partial understanding of a fair test. They use what they know to make sensible predictions, such as how quickly their pulse rate will return to normal after exercise, but are less confident in talking about the impact of different factors.
149. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is good in some lessons. In a good lesson for Year 3 pupils, the teacher had carefully prepared shopping baskets so that pupils could examine the different foods and decide whether they were healthy foods or were foods that should be eaten only occasionally. Her comments and questions ensured that the pupils compared information about fat and fibre content and were able to justify their views on the basis of their findings. A scrutiny of the work in pupils' books shows little evidence of such good investigative work. Much is highly directed by the teacher with the outcomes determined by the content of a worksheet or by the phrasing of the teachers' questions. Little use is made of ICT to aid learning in science. Year 6 pupils have had minimal experience in using sensing equipment and in recording their findings in different ways.
150. The quality of subject leadership and management is satisfactory although much remains to be done to ensure that standards rise at Key Stage 2. The coordinator has improved the range of resources, compiled a scheme of work and advises colleagues. The main weakness lies in the lack of action to identify why standards are so low at Key Stage 2 and what needs to be done. Booster classes to plug the gaps in pupils' knowledge have not been wholly effective. Good displays at Key Stage 1 to celebrate the pupils' work and to reinforce their learning, are less evident at Key Stage 2.

ART AND DESIGN

151. Standards in art and design are similar to those expected nationally of pupils at the age of seven and 11. This sustains the standards reported in the previous inspection. The school has made satisfactory progress in compiling a policy and scheme of work. Both make good use of national guidelines and provide valuable support for teaching. Two art lessons were seen and these as well as art portfolios, sketchbooks and discussion with pupils indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is good overall at both key stages. There is much evidence to show the systematic teaching of techniques and pupils' progress in using different tools and media.

152. Pupils learn a variety of procedures and study the work of famous craftspeople and designers. Art and design is often linked to themes that provide pupils with opportunities to apply what they have learnt. Good examples are the millennium mural in the entrance area, the striking Potteries cityscapes by pupils in Years 5 and 6 in the style of Lowry and the project for Year 3 pupils to create sculptures to brighten up areas within the school. Having studied suitable sites, the pupils drew inspiration from pictures of famous sculptures, including Rodin's 'The Kiss' and the local statue of Sir Stanley Matthews. They produced a sketch for their own sculpture and had many ideas about materials to use, such as a wire frame in conjunction with clay or lighter materials.
153. Pupils throughout the school enjoy art. All, including those with special educational needs and emotional and behavioural difficulties, concentrate and work hard. They reflect on, modify their efforts, and are receptive to suggestions. As they are not over directed by the teachers the pupils become confident and competent in using in their own way the techniques seen in others' work. Year 1 pupils' work showed not only how well they had appreciated the swirling movements in 'The snail' by Matisse but also the care and control with which they had built their own collage.
154. Observational skills are taught well. Year 4 pupils relished the prospect of drawing fruit and jugs and made good progress in the lesson as the teacher used her subject knowledge to help the pupils build on their ideas. The pupils took the task seriously, engaged in mature discussion with the teacher about their ideas, and tried hard to improve the quality of their work. The teacher helped them to observe details and to deal with difficulties, such as how to capture the white sheen on a highly glossed jug as it caught the sunlight. Having spotted that one pupil had produced a striking stylised version, she gathered a group to look at this compared with a similar still-life by Leger. This led to a discussion of how the pupil could draw on Leger's outlining technique and use of colour.
155. The school makes good use of teachers' interests and expertise and the subject is well managed. The coordinator has a clear idea of standards in the school and how the scheme is being implemented. Good use is made of the hall in some lessons to provide space and pupils' work is usually displayed attractively. As art and design alternates on the timetable with design and technology, the time allocation is quite low but statutory requirements are met as the curriculum is wide and well planned.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

156. Standards in design and technology are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment is broadly similar to that expected nationally at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The school has improved the quality of the curriculum and raised standards since the previous inspection. Resources are adequate to deliver the

scheme of work which is based on national guidance, and the quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages.

157. Pupils enjoy design and technology and work with a will. When this is combined with good teaching, the pupils make good progress. In all year groups, pupils are beginning to understand the importance of thinking carefully about a product, its purpose and who might use it. Much of the initial deliberation about materials and methods is undertaken in teacher led question and answer sessions. In all the lessons seen, the teachers effectively ensured that pupils understood the importance of the design element and the need to consider the success of the product together with ways in which it might be modified or improved. Nevertheless, pupils' design drawings lack detail and little use is made of ICT to record or assist learning.
158. In a good lesson, the teacher helped Year 1 pupils to review their work critically. After visiting the local park and looking at the swings, pupils had constructed their own swing and confidently talked about how they had joined doweling to make legs and fixed pieces of string to the cross bar to suspend the seat. They showed considerable dexterity and ingenuity when asked to sit a pipe-cleaner person on the swing to ensure that it worked properly. Searching questions from the teacher encouraged them to reflect on and discuss how they would modify their models to make them better. They made sensible suggestions, such as shortening the strings or using rubber for the seat to make it more comfortable.
159. An area of improvement is in the good range of experiences to develop pupils' understanding of how materials can be joined and how items can be made to move. Pupils learn how to fix axles and wheels, use pneumatics (a balloon on a simple tube-pump) to open and shut monsters' mouths, to weave and combine textiles, and to make models with elements that light up. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 explore food technology. The teacher drew on his own expertise to demonstrate bread-making and pupils discussed different types of bread, including those typical of other cultures. From making their own bread, they quickly became aware, and could explain, how the slightest change from the recipe created problems and affected the appearance and texture of the baked bread. The teacher challenged them to develop their basic design (a recipe and method for a standard loaf) and consider either how the flavour or the shape of their bread might be changed. As in other lessons seen, the pupils' oral evaluation was better than the written.
160. The management of design and technology is satisfactory and is having a positive impact on standards. There is much to be done to develop current practice and ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met fully. It is difficult to track pupils' progress as there is no system to assess and record the development of pupils' skills, use of tools and materials.

GEOGRAPHY

161. Standards are as expected for pupils' ages at the end of Key Stage 1, but below at the end of Key Stage 2. Overall standards have not improved since the 1997 inspection. There is little to show what older Key Stage 2 pupils have learnt in geography this year and current work lacks depth. This compounds the gaps in the pupils' knowledge and skills that reflect weaknesses in the teaching and in the curriculum in previous years.
162. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory but there are some weaknesses. As reported in 1997, Key Stage 2 pupils have only a superficial knowledge and understanding of geography. Pupils in Year 3 learn about different weather conditions but their travel brochures show only a few facts about different countries. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 remember well information about local features such as the bottle ovens and Six Towns but find it harder to talk about the characteristics of different locations or to find them on maps. Year 5 pupils were not sure which city was the capital of India or how the position and size of India compared with England. Their study of an Indian village is leading to some misconceptions, such as all people in India getting water from the local well. In the lesson seen, pupils made too little progress as the teacher missed chances to prompt pupils to compare and contrast lifestyles and to find out the answers to their own queries.
163. Key Stage 1 pupils are developing a good awareness and knowledge of different places, lifestyles and environmental issues because of good teaching, especially by the coordinator, and also because of the imaginative use of themes and practical experiences. This improvement since the 1997 inspection has lifted the standard of pupils' attainment.
164. Pupils enjoy geography as they learn from using photographs, information books and talking to others. Year 1 pupils look forward to getting postcards from Barnaby Bear on his travels and had learnt much about being a child in Mexico from studying information about the daily life of Omar. Year 2 pupils were very excited about their trip to the rainforest. Parents ensured that they had shorts, rucksacks, hats, binoculars and cameras and their teacher used drama very effectively to take the pupils on a hot air balloon flight and then a guided walk along the river Amazon (a frieze of the pupils' paintings of flora and fauna). In their comments about piranhas, jaguars and toucans, pupils showed a good knowledge of the wildlife and of issues such as the loss of habitat when trees are cut down.
165. A good school initiative this year was the study of the local area. This was well planned and involved all classes, including the nursery, in looking at different aspects of the environment. Walks in the area, trips to places of geographical interest and good use of photographs and local maps, not only ensured that pupils learnt why the area became a pottery making centre, but also linked successfully work in history, English and art and design. This was accentuated by the coordinator's compilation of 'The Potteries', an excellent big book for class use as a reference and teaching aid. Year 6 pupils' brochures for visitors to Stoke also incorporated simple maps and illustrations.

166. The management of geography is satisfactory. The coordinator has adapted national guidance to compile a scheme that is now guiding teachers' work and is a good start to ensuring that all requirements of the National Curriculum are met. A developing strength is the high emphasis on practical experience and the coordinator is gradually increasing the range of resources as topics are taught. A noticeable gap is the use of ICT. The coordinator is aware that standards are not high enough and her plan to teach geography to the older Key Stage 2 pupils is a useful step in making even more effective use of her subject expertise.

HISTORY

167. As no lesson was seen at Key Stage 1 and only one at Key Stage 2, it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching overall. As in geography, there is little in pupils' books to show what they have learnt this year, especially at Key Stage 2. Year 1 and 2 pupils' booklets and accounts of life in Victorian times show that standards are generally satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Standards have fallen since the 1997 inspection at Key Stage 2 and are unsatisfactory. Pupils' attainment is lower than expected for their age.
168. Pupils at Key Stage 1 learn about people and events in the past. Through looking at reference books in the literacy hour, Year 2 pupils learnt about Florence Nightingale and her impact on nursing. They know that lifestyles and practices are different now compared with then and that we learn about the past from different sources, such as stories and artefacts.
169. At Key Stage 2, pupils learn about different historical periods but have a poor grasp of chronology and facts. This is not helped by the rather haphazard coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum. A scrutiny of teachers' planning showed some discrepancies compared with the agreed scheme. One topic had been carried over into this term as it had not been taught in the spring term. Opportunities are missed to ensure that work in English coincides with work in history. For example, current work for Year 5 and 6 pupils on a story set in Germany during World War II is being taught alongside 'The Vikings'.
170. The pupils have only a slender grasp of the impact of events on different peoples. Year 3 pupils struggled to compare the lifestyle of the Celts and the Romans as they found the information sheets difficult to understand. They were interested in the differences between house styles, clothing and armour but their learning slowed as they had very few books to consult despite a good collection of relevant books in the pupils' own classroom. This inefficiency was also criticised in the 1997 inspection.
171. The school study of the local area in the autumn term provided good opportunities for all pupils to see how things had changed, to look closely at artefacts and to compare life then with now. Pupils remember their visits to Ford Green Hall and the Gladstone Pottery Museum and some of the things

they saw. Year 6 pupils learnt much from their tour of Stoke about places connected with famous people such as Wedgwood. The teachers had displayed pupils' work from this topic very attractively. The small museum of Victorian artefacts was well set out but had outlived its usefulness as a stimulus for learning.

172. The leadership and management of history are unsatisfactory as there are too many inconsistencies in how the scheme of work is being implemented. The teachers have yet to include ICT as a resource for learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

173. Standards are below, but close to, those expected for pupils' ages at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards are well below at the end of Key Stage 2. Since the 1997 inspection, not enough has been done to improve the ICT curriculum and to develop pupils' keyboard and computing skills. As many as two out of three pupils in each class have access to a computer at home and have some knowledge and experience but the school has not built on this or provided enough experience across all the required strands of the ICT curriculum. The one exception, as reported in 1997, is in control technology where in work with the floor and screen turtle, pupils' knowledge and skill is average. Year 6 pupils reproduced on screen a path that they had drawn on squared paper. In this aspect only, they achieved the standard expected for their age.
174. These findings reflect exactly those of the previous inspection. Recent initiatives have not yet had an impact on standards and the school still does not have all the equipment it needs to ensure that it meets statutory requirements. Additions such as the digital camera, the teaching unit linked to the networked suite and the extension of the Internet access are all in the action plan.
175. One area of progress is the range and quality of what the school provides. Pupils now have access to a recently established suite of high quality, networked computers as well as to free-standing machines in every classroom and four computers in the library. The coordinator has compiled a scheme of work that incorporates units from national guidance but there is no overview to show how pupils' skills and knowledge are to be developed from the nursery to Year 6. This limits the potential for teachers to understand the systematic and sequential nature of basic skills in all required ICT aspects. It also makes it hard to gain an overall picture of how the required elements of finding things out; developing ideas and making things happen; exchanging and sharing information and reviewing, modifying and evaluating work all link together. As the units are not tightly cross-referenced to work in other subjects, potential contexts are missed to develop ICT. For example, while the use of photocopiers and tape machines in art and design and in music is highlighted, the use of computer programs is gravely underdeveloped.

176. The overall quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. The teachers give too little emphasis to teaching ICT as part of everyday classroom life and pupils' attainment reflects this. During the inspection, teachers very occasionally sent a pupil to use the computer but rarely gave specific tuition so the pupils made limited progress. In many cases, the computers were merely used as typewriters to copy out work. The pupils enjoy working at the computers, but they are frequently under-challenged, or for those who have poorly developed keyboard skills, they are faced with more than they can achieve in the time given.
177. In lessons in the ICT suite, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. All pupils are learning how to log-on and how to save their work to the user file or to disk. Year 2 pupils have just been introduced to word-processing functions. Pupils are quick to learn. They remember how to use the menu to select and load the required program; they confidently follow the teacher's reminders and instructions. They change the font size to enable them to read what they have written on screen more easily but have yet to see this as a tool to improve presentation. Too many pupils have developed inappropriate habits such as leaving several spaces between words. Pupils also use the direction keys in preference to the mouse for moving the cursor and the 'caps lock' key to create a capital letter. This takes up much time and is aggravated by pupils' constant checking and correction of every letter and word as it is typed. The potential to save, print, and then retrieve and modify pupils' work is not being exploited.
178. Year 4 pupils are at a similarly basic stage. They were keen to enter information about pulse rates into a database but it took some an inordinate length of time as their keyboard skills are so poor. As a result, they made limited progress in learning how to present their data in graphical form. They were quick to understand how to use the menu to select a graphic representation and how to change the colour of the blocks. Year 5 pupils learned how to create line graphs.
179. Much remains to be done to boost pupils' progress and raise standards. The teachers are using the scheme to guide their planning but there is no agreed system to assess what pupils know and can do or to track their progress. Not all the teachers have the confidence and expertise needed to ensure that pupils acquire basic ICT skills. They use a limited range of strategies to instruct and help pupils and hour-long lessons are not always used effectively. Opportunities are missed for pupils to work cooperatively on computers in the ICT suite and in classrooms. The ICT suite presents its own problems. In the mornings the room is used as a classroom for mathematics lessons and the computers are not always used as a learning tool. In the afternoons, there are times when the suite is idle. Class based machines and those in the library are grossly underused. This accounts in large part for pupils' slow progress.
180. Subject coordination is at a basic stage and is unsatisfactory. The coordinator's pre-occupation with the development of the ICT suite has meant

that little has been done to make best use of existing equipment to raise standards.

MUSIC

181. Pupils are taught music by a specialist teacher who was not in school during the inspection. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching as only one lesson, in musical appreciation, was seen at Key Stage 2. From the limited evidence available, pupils' attainment is similar to that expected at the end of both key stages.
182. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the curriculum includes listening and responding to music, as well as composing and performing it. Although there is no coordinator, the very detailed planning file indicates that the specialist teacher has a good overview of how to ensure progression throughout the school and plans carefully to promote pupils' progress and development of skills.
183. Music is not an integral part of everyday school life. Pupils do not regularly sing in assemblies but they enjoy music. In the lesson seen, Year 4 pupils listened appreciatively to 'Mercury' from Holst's Planet Suite. Some likened the music to an object travelling through the air and to bees buzzing round a flower. Almost half of Key Stage 1 pupils are learning to play the recorder and many Key Stage 2 pupils are in the main recorder group.
184. Key Stage 1 pupils learn to explore sounds and to identify instruments. They follow simple notation and are developing an understanding of pulse and rhythm. They acquire a good range of songs, which they know by heart, and compose their own sound effects to accompany stories such as 'Rocket in Space'. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop their skills in composing and performing. Much is done to complement work in other subjects. Year 3 pupils composed a song that the Romans might have sung and Year 6 pupils adapted songs based on the story of Macbeth. Pupils learn to accompany their singing using tuned percussion instruments and several pupils competently read standard notation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

185. Standards are satisfactory. Pupils are working at the expected level for their age at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. A strong feature is that the vast majority of pupils swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave school and have learnt to dive. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the facilities for gymnastics and for adventurous activities but the space in the school hall is restricted by stored staging and furniture. Older pupils participate in a range of outdoor pursuits during their residential visit to a sports centre. Unfortunately, this was curtailed this year because of the difficulties of travel in the countryside.

186. The school has adopted a nationally approved scheme of work and is in the process of adapting this to its own needs. All areas of the National Curriculum for physical education are covered and the school places a high priority on pupils participating and co-operating in team games. The headteacher and others give their time freely to supervise a good variety of extra-curricular sports and to enable pupils to compete in local festivals and sports days with considerable success. All pupils are invited to take part in trials and the school again won the athletics trophy for small schools.
187. All pupils achieve well because of good coaching and the teachers' enthusiasm and encouragement. The quality of teaching was good in both lessons seen and pupils made good progress. Teachers' planning shows that lessons are demanding and build on previous learning. Key Stage 1 pupils learn to bounce a ball with control and to pass and catch a ball with increasing success as they run. Pupils develop a good sense of cooperation and fair play when playing team games. Older Key Stage 2 pupils know the rules of a good range of team games and their good level of skill contributes to the school's success in tournaments. They conduct themselves well. When visiting the swimming baths, their behaviour was exemplary and they tried really hard to improve their performance.
188. Leadership and management are good. In her role as coordinator, the headteacher has high expectations of the pupils. As a result of her monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in gymnastics, she organised training for the teachers to help them use a range of techniques to teach skills and this has enhanced the curriculum and lifted standards.