

INSPECTION REPORT

WIRKSWORTH JUNIOR SCHOOL

Wirksworth, Matlock

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112652

Headteacher: Mr Bill Hawley

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims

28899

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th December 2001

Inspection number: 198994

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wash Green Wirksworth Matlock Derbyshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Simon Carter
Date of previous inspection:	15 th September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
28899	G Sims	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19727	E Langford	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14509	P J H Mann	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22380	P Parrish	Team inspector	English Design and technology Geography Religious education Equality of opportunity Provision for pupils with special educational needs Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wirksworth Junior School is situated in the town of Wirksworth to the south of Matlock in Derbyshire. It is an average-sized school, with 218 boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 11. The number on roll is falling, and there are 28 fewer pupils than at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils come from the town, where socio-economic circumstances are generally average. Three pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils have English as an additional language. These figures are below the national average. Around 11 per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. One quarter of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, ranging through specific, moderate and severe learning difficulties to pupils with emotional and behavioural problems. Six pupils have statements of special educational need, which is above average. Most pupils join the school from the two infant schools in the town, and the overall level of attainment on entry to the school is average. Apart from some modifications to the buildings, there have been no significant changes to the school since the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wirksworth Junior School offers its pupils a sound standard of education and provides satisfactory value for money. Under the headteacher's well-respected leadership, the school has improved over the last four years. Enthusiastic and dedicated staff provide good quality teaching, but the mixed-age classes reduce its effectiveness. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

What the school does well

- The staff provide good-quality teaching.
- The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good.
- The school caters well for pupils with special educational needs.
- Staff provide high standards of care, and a safe and secure environment for the pupils.
- The school fosters good links with parents and the local community.
- The school's finances are managed very well.
- The school identifies appropriate priorities for development and takes effective action to bring about improvement.

What could be improved

- The quality of pupils' writing.
- Standards in, and the use of, information and communication technology (ICT).
- The way pupils are grouped and timetabled for lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a good degree of improvement since the last inspection in September 1997. The school responded well to the previous key issues. There have been big improvements in the way the school plans its future development, and the school is now good at identifying and prioritising areas for development. Action plans identify clearly what action is to be taken, who is responsible for it, and how it will be monitored. The financial implications of future developments and the management of the school's finances are very good. The way subjects are coordinated has improved. The coordinators for English and mathematics have played important roles in monitoring and evaluating what happens and disseminating good practice. Procedures for assessment in these subjects, and the use to which this information is put, have improved and are now good. Although other coordinators have yet to be given

sufficient time to fulfil their roles in the same way, most have become more effective managers and leaders of their subjects. Class sizes are now more manageable. The provision for, and standards achieved in, design and technology have improved significantly. There have also been improvements to the school's provision for ICT, but progress here has been slower, and the school's main plans for improvement have yet to come to fruition. The school now has better resources for pupils with special educational needs. Curricular planning for all subjects has improved and sufficient time is allocated to most subjects. However, there is still very little time given to the teaching of music, ICT and religious education, and the range of learning opportunities in these subjects is narrow. Various factors have led to improvements in the quality of teaching. Although they have fluctuated, standards in English, mathematics and science have improved at a similar rate to the national trend, and are higher now than at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The school's results have fluctuated over the last four years, particularly in mathematics, but the overall trend has been one of improvement at a similar rate to the national trend. The biggest improvements have been in science and English, although over a third of the pupils still fail to reach the nationally expected level in writing by the end of Year 6. Although the results in 2000 compared unfavourably with other schools, the results in 2001 improved significantly and, overall, were very close to both the national average and the average for schools in similar contexts. Given pupils' attainment on entry and the fact that the school exceeded its targets in 2001, by some considerable margin in English, the school's targets for the future are not yet challenging enough.

The attainment of pupils when they start Year 3, as measured by their National Curriculum assessment test results at the end of Key Stage 1, the school's own assessments and observations made by the inspection team, is broadly average. The inspection findings indicate that pupils achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 and that they achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics because they are taught in smaller classes and receive additional help from teaching assistants. In other subjects, these pupils make similar progress to their peers. Pupils of above-average ability achieve satisfactorily in most respects; a quarter of the pupils exceed national expectations in mathematics, a third in science and a half in reading. However, very few pupils exceed national expectations in writing and over a third fail to reach the expected level in this aspect of their work. Writing continues to be the weakest aspect of pupils' work, although the school is trying various strategies to improve attainment in this area. One of the reasons why pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they should, is because not

enough attention is given to improving the quality of pupils' written work produced for subjects other than English. Pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards in design and technology and physical education. Standards are below the expected level in ICT, and pupils do not make sufficient progress in this subject because the school lacks resources and pupils do not have enough time to practise. However, plans for improvement in this subject are well advanced, and a new computer suite should be fully operational by the end of the spring term 2002. In all other subjects, pupils achieve satisfactory standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy school and generally show a positive attitude towards their lessons. Pupils often demonstrate good levels of commitment to their work but, in some classes, they are very passive in their response to teachers' questions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour within the classroom is generally good and frequently very good. In a few classes, some of the younger pupils can be very fidgety and unnecessarily noisy. Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils know what is expected of them and do their best to conform.
Personal development and relationships	Good relationships exist amongst pupils, and between pupils and adults. Many pupils display a sensitivity and awareness of the needs of others. Pupils are friendly, polite and cooperative. When given the opportunity to assume responsibility, they carry out duties willingly and sensibly, but few pupils exercise their own initiative or demonstrate real independence.
Attendance	Good. The level of attendance is above the national average. A small amount of unauthorised absence arises because pupils participate in family holidays during term-time. Pupils arrive punctually at the start of the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The overall quality of the teaching is good, and has improved since the last inspection. The school has a team of competent and committed teachers, who provide a good environment for learning within their classrooms. However, the effectiveness of the teaching and the quality of pupils' learning in many subjects are diminished by the school's arrangements for grouping pupils into mixed-age classes and sets. Although teachers try hard to meet the widely differing needs of pupils within each teaching group, the time taken to deal with these needs constrains overall progress. The school has weighed the advantages and disadvantages of its current arrangements carefully and has taken the decision to revert to single-age classes from September 2002 in order to generate a greater sense of progression as pupils move through the school. The decision is sensible and should result in better progress for all pupils. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and, as a result, standards are rising, but the arrangements for grouping pupils by ability are not as effective as they could be. The good work undertaken in the literacy hour to develop pupils' literacy skills is not consolidated as effectively as it should be in other subjects. There is a marked difference in the quality of pupils' writing in English and in the written work produced in other subjects, where the accuracy of pupils' English and the way they express their thoughts are rarely corrected. Similarly, opportunities are missed to develop numeracy skills through work in subjects such as science. However, the challenging pace and good use of resources at the start of mathematics lessons is helping pupils to become much more confident in handling numbers and carrying out mental calculations quickly and accurately. Science, art and design, geography and physical education are all taught well. The teaching of design and technology is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. The teaching of history, ICT, music and religious education is satisfactory. However, the small amount of time allocated to some of these subjects affects pupils' learning, as pupils acquire only a superficial understanding of some aspects of the curriculum. The limited range of resources means that pupils make very little use of computers to help their learning in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum which meets statutory requirements. An unnecessarily large amount of time is allocated to literacy and numeracy lessons, and this puts unhelpful constraints on the teaching of other subjects during the afternoon. Not enough time is devoted to covering the curriculum in ICT, music and religious education. Provision for extra-curricular activities varies throughout the year but is generally satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants provide good support for these pupils. Individual education plans generally include specific targets for learning, but they vary in quality as class teachers have recently taken over responsibility from the special needs coordinator for writing these plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop understanding of local culture, but there is not enough input to help pupils understand the multi-cultural nature of the wider community. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Teachers work hard to develop moral values and social skills in their pupils, especially through the recently introduced programme for personal, social and health education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is very good. The school has a caring ethos and provides a secure environment within which good relationships are of paramount importance. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory overall. Analysis of test results is helping teachers to identify and subsequently address weak areas.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	The school enjoys a positive partnership with parents who are kept very well informed about what is happening within school and are given good information about the progress their children are making. Parents are welcome in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher is well respected by parents and pupils and has been responsible for a good range of improvements since the last inspection. Subject coordinators have a much better understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and show a willingness to lead their subjects. The school has a satisfactory number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Governors take an active interest in the work of the school and help to shape its direction by reviewing policies carefully and by asking challenging questions. They provide good and sensitive support for the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has become much better at monitoring and evaluating its own performance, although coordinators for subjects other than English and mathematics need to be given more time to monitor teaching and learning. The school's development planning is good and identifies appropriate priorities and actions. Its effectiveness is seen in the good range of improvements since the last inspection.
The strategic use of resources	Apart from the use of computers, the school makes good use of the resources and funding available to it. Administration arrangements are good, and the school's finances are managed very efficiently. The principles of best value are properly implemented. Overall, the school's accommodation and range of resources are satisfactory. There are not enough computers at present, but this problem will be rectified shortly by the installation of a new computer suite.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents are pleased with many aspects of the school. The aspects with which they are most pleased are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school • The quality of the teaching is good • The teachers are very approachable. • The school expects children to work hard 	<p>A small number of parents also expressed concern with many aspects of the school, but 20 per cent or more would like to see the following improved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's approach to homework • Information about their children's progress • The way the school works with parents. • The range of additional activities.

The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 14 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 73 parents (34%) who returned the parents' questionnaire, some of whom also enclosed letters or added their own written comments. Inspectors endorse parents' positive views of the school, but find little cause to echo parents' concerns. The school's approach to homework is sensible. Parents are informed regularly about the progress their children are making through formal written reports and pre-arranged meetings with staff. Parents are also welcome to consult with staff at any time if they have concerns about their children's progress. The school endeavours to be open and receptive to parents. The range of extra-curricular activities is limited during winter months out of consideration for pupils' safety, but a satisfactory range is offered when evenings are lighter.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards at Wirksworth are improving. In the National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2 for the year 2001, the school's results were close to the national average in English and science and below average in mathematics. When compared to schools in similar contexts, the results were average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Four out of five pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 4 in English and just over a third achieved the higher Level 5. However, results in reading were significantly better than those in writing, where over a third of the pupils failed to reach the nationally expected level. In mathematics, seven out of ten pupils achieved Level 4 and two out of ten the higher Level 5. In science, seven out of eight pupils achieved Level 4 and almost a third achieved Level 5. The school's results in all three subjects are better now than they were at the time of the last inspection, and have improved at a similar rate to the national trend. Standards have improved most in English and science.

2. The pupils' overall level of attainment when they enter the school is average. Although results from both of the infant schools from which the school draws most of its pupils were above average in 2001, not all of these pupils transfer to Wirksworth Junior School. Examples of pupils' writing produced at the start of Year 3 and the school's own assessment of pupils' writing skills when they enter the school show standards in this aspect of their work to be average at best. Standards in reading are much more secure. In the key subjects of English and mathematics, for which pupils are grouped into teaching sets according to ability, good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs, and more able pupils are given sufficient challenge. Overall, therefore, the results of all groups of pupils represent satisfactory achievement, with the progress made over the course of four years being very close to that expected of pupils through Key Stage 2.

3. The school is aware of the standards it achieves and keeps a careful track of pupils' progress. Although results have improved over the last four years, the school's current targets are not particularly challenging, and are lower than those set by other schools within the local authority. The school exceeded its targets last year, indicating, perhaps, a somewhat cautious approach to target-setting. The school analyses its results and pupils' performance carefully, enabling staff to gain a clear picture of what pupils need to do to improve. Girls have produced better results than boys in English, mathematics and science over the last three years. Although the differences are not major, they are somewhat wider than those observed nationally. The school analyses its results by gender and is aware of the need to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. In science, for example, staff had felt girls were not making sufficient progress and were somewhat passive in lessons. Efforts to involve them more have been successful, and last year they produced significantly better results than the boys.

4. The inspection findings largely reflect the school's achievements in the 2001 National Curriculum assessment tests. In English, overall standards are average, but they are significantly better in reading than in writing. Pupils make good progress in reading as a result of the consistently good teaching and the frequent practice of skills, with support from home also making a good contribution. Pupils are taught important skills, such as how to scan texts, to skim read and to use reference works. There is, however, an imbalance in the emphasis given to fiction and non-fiction texts, which may account for boys' standards being not as high as those of the girls. The selection of suitable reading texts for pupils with special educational needs, which has improved since the last inspection, enables them to make

good progress. Pupils' writing skills are not so well developed, as the basic skills of writing are taught less rigorously. Teachers accept too low a standard in the written work pupils produce for other subjects; pupils make far too many spelling mistakes and these are rarely corrected. Many valuable opportunities are missed to develop pupils' writing skills through the work produced for other subjects. The standard of written work produced in English lessons is generally better than that produced for other subjects. Examples of good, imaginative and descriptive poetry show that pupils are capable of achieving higher standards generally in their written work. The school is, however, aware of weaknesses in pupils' writing, and standards are improving. The pupils' speaking and listening skills develop to an appropriate standard by the end of the key stage. Frequent opportunities to engage in discussion help pupils to improve this aspect of their English.

5. Pupils achieve average standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6. The inspection findings reveal slightly better standards than those portrayed in the latest National Curriculum assessment results, reflecting the fact that standards are gradually improving. Pupils' ability to carry out mental calculations is improving as a result of the emphasis given to mental mathematics sessions and the fact that pupils are encouraged to think up different ways of carrying out calculations and to explain their answers. The school is addressing the weak area of problem solving. The productivity and attention to detail of pupils in the top set in Years 5 and 6 enable them to make good progress. The ability of pupils in the lower sets to concentrate for the full duration of lessons which are too long hampers their progress. Additional support sessions, however, are having a good impact on the progress of these pupils. Since the previous inspection, there has been an improvement in the way pupils apply and use their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum.

6. There has been a good improvement in standards in science since the last inspection, and pupils now attain average standards by the end of the key stage. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress, benefiting from, and enjoying, the good emphasis on practical work. In some of the topics which are covered for the second time in the upper school, the teachers spend too long revising previously covered work and not enough time extending pupils' knowledge and understanding. Most pupils have a good understanding of a 'fair test' and carry out their practical work sensibly and responsibly. However, there is not enough opportunity for pupils to devise and conduct investigations in which they determine the materials required and the methods to be used.

7. Standards in ICT are improving, but are still below the level expected. A clear structure to the teaching programme and timetabled sessions to teach information technology skills are having a good impact on pupils' progress, but the lack of resources and the infrequent use of the equipment which the school does possess give pupils insufficient time to practise the skills they have learnt and to consolidate them through using ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects. As a result, pupils are not yet making sufficient progress in this subject. The school is well aware of the weaknesses in this subject, and has formulated good plans to rectify them. The infrastructure for a new computer suite has already been installed, and the new facility should be fully operational by the end of the spring term.

8. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In art and design, geography, history and music, pupils attain the expected level by the end of the key stage. Standards have been maintained at the same level noted in the previous inspection. Overall, pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in these subjects, although the time allocated to teaching religious education and music does not allow pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding as much as they could. Standards in design and technology are above average and pupils achieve well. This represents excellent improvement since the last inspection, when the school was not fulfilling requirements and pupils' progress was poor. Improvements have come about because of the

purposeful way the school has tackled the issue, and both pupils and staff now enjoy success in this subject and produce some interesting and challenging work. Standards in physical education are also above average and pupils make good progress. They acquire and develop games skills well.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set within their individual education plans. The relatively large number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs means that extra staff are available in most lessons to support both these pupils and others on the school's register of special educational need. This is of great benefit during literacy and numeracy lessons in particular and enhances the pupils' understanding of the tasks set, their concentration and their progress with learning. The good quality of this support, combined with the teachers' perceptive understanding of the pupils' special needs, means that pupils in the lower set for literacy in Years 5 and 6, all with special educational needs, are making very good progress both academically and personally. Those with problems in the management of their own behaviour make excellent progress in this class. Additional teaching by local education authority staff provides specific learning programmes for those who need them, and good liaison with school staff ensures that progress is good. However, the programming of extra lessons takes pupils from learning in other subjects, and a small number of pupils miss a significant amount of work within subjects such as geography and design and technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The attitudes, values and behaviour of pupils in and around the school are good and have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. Pupils of all ages and abilities are keen to come into school, and the great majority settle down to their work quickly. Most pupils demonstrate good listening and speaking skills, which enable them to take an active part in class lessons and make a valuable contribution to class and group discussions. Pupils often demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work, and most are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. Many are able to sustain good levels of concentration during their lessons and collaborate well with each other in both group and paired activities. Of note, are the mature attitudes demonstrated by most pupils, who ignore the occasional silly behaviour of a few pupils and do not allow this to disrupt their learning.

11. The good behaviour and discipline in school serve to enhance the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The good, and often very good, behaviour seen in the classroom is very much the result of the good teaching and the consistency with which teachers monitor and manage behaviour. A small minority of pupils in some classes have a tendency to fidget and indulge in silly behaviour and take up the teacher's time to refocus their attention. The well-structured system of rewards and sanctions is clearly understood by pupils and proving to be effective in supporting the ongoing development of the good behaviour and discipline observed during the inspection. No pupils have been excluded for bad behaviour over the past year, and no evidence of any inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection. An anti-bullying culture is promoted actively within the school, and comments from pupils demonstrate that they know the correct procedures to follow should any incidents occur. Parents and pupils agree that past incidents of inappropriate behaviour by pupils were dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff to the benefit of all involved.

12. Good relationships exist amongst pupils and between pupils and adults. Many pupils from all age groups display a natural sensitivity and awareness to the needs of others, and examples were seen in the school, and in the playground, of unsolicited help and support being offered to other pupils and adults alike. This was well demonstrated when a boy in Year 3, who had tripped and hurt himself on the way to a lesson, was first comforted by his peers and then voluntarily helped by a girl in Year 4 to go for first aid treatment. In general, pupils

throughout the school are friendly and polite to each other and are encouraged from an early age to consider the needs of others. The great majority of pupils collaborate well with each other in their learning and play activities, happily take turns without question, and willingly share and treat property and learning resources with care. Pupils with special educational needs are shown support and understanding, and are generally given any necessary help, with sensitive consideration shown both by staff and fellow pupils. The small number of pupils who attend school for morning lessons only are fully integrated and able to continue with arrangements for programmes set up by the specialist staff at the school they attend each afternoon.

13. The school provides pupils with a satisfactory range of opportunities to promote their personal development and pupils respond well to these. Examples include involvement in the school council, register monitors, managing the toy library and litter picking in the playground, as well as helping to get out and put away resources in the classroom under the direction of the teachers. However, opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to become more independent by using their own initiative and taking on more responsibilities for their own learning.

14. The level of attendance is good and has remained so since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and records show that few pupils arrive late. The level of unauthorised absence is below the national average and relates to pupils who are absent as a result of family holidays taken during term-time. Punctuality within the school is good and lessons were seen to start on time during the inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The overall quality of the teaching and learning is good, and has improved since the last inspection. Parents feel that their children are being taught well, and the inspection evidence reflects the fact that the school has a team of competent and committed teachers, who provide a good environment for learning within their classrooms. Two-thirds of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better, and there were only isolated examples of unsatisfactory teaching in classes where other lessons were good. In two of the classes in Years 3 and 4, the overall quality of the teaching is very good; the very good rapport between staff and pupils, good pace and a sparkling atmosphere in many of the lessons motivate the pupils to learn. The teaching is satisfactory, and occasionally good, in the other two classes; the pupils' response in some lessons is less mature, and is not always managed as well as it should be by the teacher, resulting in unnecessary levels of noise and, at times, lack of attention which affects their progress. There is a greater percentage of good teaching and a more even quality to the teaching in Years 5 and 6. Throughout the school, the staff work hard to meet the learning targets of pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants are well briefed and successfully promote learning for small groups or individuals in lessons. The pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed well and given effective support that is unobtrusive in lessons.

16. The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection; a greater proportion of good teaching and less unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection. Positive aspects noted in the last inspection have been maintained, and there have been significant improvements in the teachers' knowledge and understanding of design and technology and ICT. The support provided by teaching assistants continues to be of good quality. With the falling number of pupils on roll, the school has been able to solve the problem of large numbers of pupils in the classes in the upper school, which were having a detrimental effect on pupils' progress. Governors have made it a priority to preserve the current number of classes with a manageable number of pupils in each class and a favourable ratio of pupils to teachers. When grouping pupils into sets for English and mathematics, the school is able to have a small fourth set and additional support from teaching assistants for pupils with the greatest need, which ensures that these pupils receive much closer attention and, generally, make good progress in their learning. The teachers are committed, hard-working and support each other well. The cooperative approach to planning generally ensures that lessons are planned in detail and that the quality of learning experiences is similar for all pupils. Staff discuss the outcomes and effectiveness of their lessons, which helps them to identify future needs and leads to further improvement. The improved quality of the teaching is having a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve, as seen in the school's National Curriculum assessment test results, which are improving steadily and are better now than they were at the time of the last inspection.

17. The overall quality of the teaching of English and mathematics is good. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. The structure of lessons and the teaching methods used help pupils to learn well. The teachers are now very familiar with the National Literacy Strategy and have a good understanding of how pupils' reading skills can be developed. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading. Although there is evidence of some good quality writing produced within English lessons, pupils' writing skills are not developed as effectively and many opportunities are missed to develop pupils' writing skills through work produced for other subjects. Spelling mistakes and poor phraseology are rarely corrected, and pupils are not required to go back over pieces of work they have produced in order to improve them following guidance from their teachers. The teaching of writing within English lessons, however, is improving as the school, with support and advice from the local education authority's literacy consultant, focuses on this aspect of pupils' work. In some classes, teachers' expectations, with regard to the way pupils present their work, are not high enough. Well-paced mental mathematics sessions at the start of each lesson are helping pupils to improve their ability to carry out calculations quickly and accurately in their head. The school has identified the need to place greater emphasis on helping pupils to apply their numeracy skills to practical and problem-solving contexts, and this aspect of their work is starting to improve. There has been improvement in the teaching and use of data-handling, but opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills within the context of other subjects are sometimes missed.

18. There are no subjects in which the teaching is weak. Science, art and design, geography and physical education are all taught well. In science, this has led to improved results at the end of Key Stage 2. In art and design, skills are now taught more effectively, and pupils are achieving well. Skills are also developed well in physical education. The very good teaching of design and technology, much improved since the last inspection, has had a noticeable impact on the standards achieved, which are now above average. The teaching of history, ICT, music and religious education is satisfactory. The improvement in the teachers' understanding of ICT and the implementation of timetabled lessons is helping pupils to make better progress in acquiring new skills. However, the lack of resources means that pupils do not have enough opportunity to consolidate their learning in this subject, and there are few occasions on which technology is used to support learning in other subjects.

19. A significant factor affecting pupils' progress in ICT, music and religious education is the small amount of time which is allocated to the teaching of these subjects each week. Whilst an hour a week is dedicated to the teaching of most subjects, these receive only half an hour, which restricts learning opportunities and does not allow pupils to acquire a deeper understanding of the topics which have been introduced. It also means that some aspects of the curriculum, for example, the opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise a wide range of music, are very limited. In contrast, the time allocated to teaching English and mathematics is over-generous. Some of the lessons last for up to 25 minutes more than the recommended length of a lesson, and the extra time does not result in significant gains in pupils' learning. In the lower-ability sets, the length of the lessons is, at times, counter-productive, as teachers do not introduce enough variety and pupils lose their concentration.

20. Another factor, which reduces the effectiveness of the teaching and the quality of pupils' learning in many subjects, is the school's arrangements for grouping pupils into mixed-age classes and sets. Although teachers try hard to meet the widely differing needs of pupils within each teaching group, the range of needs within each class is very wide and does not allow teachers to give equal attention to all pupils. The setting of pupils by ability in English and mathematics goes a long way to mitigating the detrimental effects of the mixed-age classes, but is still not entirely effective. Nearly all sets contain a large proportion of pupils from the two year-groups. In English in the lower school, for example, the lowest set contains more pupils from Year 4 than Year 3. These arrangements make for a difficult transition from lower school to upper school. In other subjects, the range of attainment within each class makes it very difficult for teachers to ensure sufficient challenge for the most able pupils whilst giving enough attention to the least able and results in an overall lowering of expectation, as pupils lose the sense of progression and new challenge of moving into a new class each year. The arrangements do promote a greater sense of social cohesion, but the intended effect of older pupils motivating and providing inspiration for the younger pupils is not always apparent. In many classes, the older pupils adopt a somewhat passive role whilst further explanations or additional help are given to the younger pupils. Within these circumstances, not enough attention is given to helping pupils to become independent learners. The teachers frequently give too much direction, so that pupils rarely have the opportunity to make their own choices, for example, of resources, working methods, or ways to solve a problem. Opportunities for pupils to plan independently or conduct their own research are rare. In science, for example, there are few opportunities for pupils to take full responsibility for investigative work. The school has weighed the advantages and disadvantages of its current arrangements carefully and has already taken the decision to revert to single-age classes from September 2002 in order to generate a greater sense of progression as pupils move through the school. The decision is sensible, as it should provide more cohesive teaching groups, significantly simplify the planning process for all teachers, and allow all pupils to capitalise on the good quality of the teaching and make better progress in their learning.

21. Despite the difficulties imposed by the mixed-age classes, the unnecessary length of some lessons and the short time allocation for some subjects, there are many good features evident in the teaching. The teachers are well prepared for their lessons and show good knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum. This enables them to communicate well, promoting pupils' learning and giving them a clear understanding of what they have to do. Many of the staff have good musical accomplishment and there is very good specialist expertise in some subjects, such as mathematics, science and design and technology. All teachers benefit and the quality of learning is enhanced as this expertise is disseminated. In areas of relative weakness, such as ICT, staff show a commitment to improvement through the training provided. They structure lessons well and employ a good range of appropriate teaching methods. As a result, pupils are interested in what is taught and generally concentrate well. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are evident throughout the

school. In most classes, this results in good, and frequently very good, attitudes and behaviour, which stimulate pupils' learning. Pupils work well together and carry out tasks and activities sensibly and responsibly. The teachers use a good range of resources, which stimulate pupils' interest and promote learning. During lessons, teachers provide helpful comments and analyses of pupils' work, which help pupils to acquire better understanding. The quality of marking, however, is rarely as helpful. There is not enough rigour in the marking; mistakes are frequently left uncorrected, there are not enough comments to help pupils improve what they have done, and there is little evidence of pupils returning to a piece of work in order to learn from the mistakes they have made. In this respect, teachers could raise their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and be more demanding in the standards they require.

22. Although almost a quarter of the parents who returned the parents' questionnaire feel that the school does not have the right approach to homework, those who attended the parents' meeting felt that, overall, the balance is right. Prior to the inspection, the school had conducted a survey of parents' opinions and, although there were few respondents, the replies indicate diverse views on the merits of homework; some parents want more, others want less, a few want none. The school expects pupils to do some homework every night and sets out its expectations clearly in the school prospectus and the home-school agreement. The inspection findings reveal a sensible approach to homework. The examples of homework observed during the inspection were appropriate, contributing effectively to pupils' progress and providing a valuable complement to the normal school curriculum.

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

23. The school has taken action over the key issues relating to the curriculum which were noted in the previous inspection. National Curriculum requirements are now fully met for design and technology, and ICT. Planning documentation for all subjects has improved. The curriculum currently offered by the school is satisfactory overall. The planning and content of the school's curriculum takes into account the needs of pupils of all abilities, backgrounds and ages, and of their ethnicity and gender. Breadth is maintained through satisfactory provision for all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. However, the balance continues to be affected by the large amount of time allocated to literacy and numeracy, which occupy all of the available teaching time each morning, leaving all of the teaching for other subjects to be fitted into afternoon lessons. Some of the morning sessions are unnecessarily long, and the timetable could be structured more effectively to make the best use of the time available. The school has taken the decision to teach all subjects throughout the year, and pupils are now provided with a better-balanced curriculum in subjects, such as history, geography, art and design, physical education and design and technology. However, standards are still affected adversely by the low allocation of time for religious education, ICT and music.

24. The school meets statutory requirements throughout the curriculum. The syllabus for religious education is based on the locally agreed syllabus, and the school involves all pupils in its daily act of collective worship. Good progress has been made in the provision for personal, social and health education through which pupils receive sex education and are involved in a drugs awareness programme.

25. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, generally receive their entitlement to a full curriculum. Timetable arrangements, however, cause small groups of pupils or individuals, who are withdrawn from lessons to receive extra support, to sometimes miss significant elements of the curriculum. Where the system works at its best, pupils are withdrawn, for example, for additional literacy support during their literacy lesson. On other

occasions, the extra support happens at the expense of other learning, so small groups of pupils miss, for example, design and technology, geography or religious education lessons. Where this happens routinely each week, a significant amount of subject knowledge is missed, even though teachers endeavour to help these pupils to understand what they have missed. For example, one teacher spent a large proportion of a design and technology lesson giving individual tuition to a pupil with special educational needs to compensate for missed teaching. However, the attention given to this pupil meant that the rest of the class were deprived of the teacher's time.

26. The provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs is given suitably high priority in the school and is good. These pupils are generally enabled to take part in the full curriculum through a range of strategies, which result in good, and sometimes excellent, progress. Individual education plans generally include specific targets for learning, but recent changes within the school's arrangements mean that these do vary in quality, as class teachers take over the writing responsibility from the special needs coordinator. The requirements of the national Code of Practice are fully in place. Extra classes are also arranged in literacy and numeracy for pupils in need of additional support, and this is having a positive impact on their learning in these subjects, although occasionally to the detriment of other subjects.

27. In its attempt to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, the school devotes a generous amount of time to the teaching of English and mathematics. However, the lessons are 10 to 25 minutes longer than the recommended amount of time, due to the organisation of the timetable. This additional time does not have any significant benefit for the more able pupils and, is ineffective for many pupils, especially the lower-achievers, whose ability to concentrate on the same material over long periods of time is limited. Although the school day is longer than in many schools, the amount of time devoted to teaching is less than recommended. A more imaginative organisation of the timetable should not detract from the effectiveness of teaching in literacy and numeracy and would address the shortcomings in the provision for ICT, music and religious education, thus improving the balance of the curriculum.

28. Because of staffing restrictions and the number of pupils, the school chose some years ago to have mixed-age classes. Although, at times, this benefits the lower age groups, as their expectations are raised by the older pupils, in general it restricts the impetus for progress, as the teachers have to spend time dealing with material which is not immediately appropriate for the needs of all pupils. The setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy have generally had a positive impact on pupils' progress, as teachers are able to provide a suitable level of work for pupils' varying levels of ability, although some sets still contain a very wide variety of abilities. Pupils move to their various sets efficiently. They are proficient with classroom routines and collecting their resources. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum, except where there are additional support groups, such as 'Springboard' mathematics, when small groups of pupils are taken out of class. These pupils miss ongoing work, although teachers strive to ensure that they cover whatever has been missed.

29. Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted the government's recommended schemes of work for all subjects except physical education. This enables teachers to plan appropriate activities and to ensure satisfactory breadth to the curriculum. Subject policies and teachers' long-term plans have also been updated to accommodate these schemes of work. The long-term curricular plan is clear and concise; topics for the foundation subjects are planned over two years so that there is no repetition of curricular content within the two-year class grouping. The school is planning to revert to single year classes and will, therefore, have to monitor carefully how this change in organisation affects teaching and learning.

30. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies provides the content for the morning's work throughout the school. Teachers plan effectively from the strategies' frameworks and provide suitable work that matches their pupils' abilities. However, teachers need to provide a more varied content, especially for the lower-ability sets, to ensure motivation and concentration are maintained. For example, in numeracy, the practical activities could be varied more, with a number of shorter mental mathematics sessions, the addition of mathematics games and the use of ICT. Teachers do not take full advantage of the many opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills within other subjects. There is room for significant improvement in the presentation and correctness of written work produced for foundation subjects, and not enough attention is given to the development of varied writing styles. An exception to this was observed in history, where pupils in Year 6 had written diaries pretending to be mill workers in Victorian times. This work demonstrated a good grasp of conditions of the time and contained imaginative ideas that were well presented. The development of numeracy skills within other subjects, especially science, is limited. The use of ICT to support other subjects is also limited. With one computer in each classroom, pupils do not have enough access to use this resource. However, the school is due to open its new computer suite in early 2002, and pupils should then have much better access to ICT.

31. The provision for extra-curricular activities varies according to the time of year, but is satisfactory overall. The school offers better provision during the summer months, when pupils are able to use the local secondary school's very good facilities for tennis and gymnastics. At times throughout the year, a music club includes participation in strings, recorders, saxophone, keyboards and choral involvement. These activities usually precede celebrations, such as at Christmas. Pupils have sung locally in the Civic Service, St Mary's Church and at the Rotary charity concert. A drop-in study club has just begun on two lunch times per week, when pupils can receive support for their homework with access to the school's resources. Much additional artwork has been carried out by members of the art club. Pupils have extended their skills and knowledge through such activities as the annual Well Dressing and their involvement in the Stoney Wood project. Such events enable the school to maintain a high profile within the community. Further community links include involvement in the annual Wirksworth Arts Festival, visits to the local Mill to support history activities, and visits to the National Stone Centre, Treasure in the Rocks, where pupils see fossils and can pan for gold. The school also has links with the Derbyshire County Council Ranger Services and Nottingham Forest Football Club. Every two years, pupils in Years 5 and 6 go on a residential visit where they carry out a wide variety of academic and sporting activities and where good opportunities are available for social development. The school performs well in locally organised inter-school sports fixtures. They were runners-up in the schools' cricket tournament this summer.

32. There are good links with partner institutions, including Derby University, whose students use the school for teacher training, excellent links with the secondary school, including joint writing schemes, and regular contact with the two feeder infant schools which help to ensure a smooth transition between the infant and junior schools. The school also hosts students from local special schools.

33. The school has maintained the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, noted at the time of the last inspection. The recent inclusion of personal, social and health education within the curriculum has helped to improve the opportunities for both moral and cultural development.

34. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Through religious education and collective worship, pupils are offered limited opportunities for reflection about their feelings and their effect on others. The status of assemblies could be raised through giving pupils further opportunities to talk about their feelings and emotions. Occasional opportunities for spiritual development are provided through other curricular subjects. During a history lesson, for example, pupils were imagining life inside a Viking Long House. They were asked to describe sounds and smells and, through imaginative conversation, were able to write more effectively about life in Viking times. In general, however, there is still little planned contribution within other subjects to raise pupils' spiritual awareness.

35. The school offers good opportunities for pupils' moral development. There is an ethos of orderliness within the school, which is underpinned by the teachers' high expectations of behaviour and the good behaviour and attitudes shown by all the pupils. Pupils obey class and school rules and are aware of the sanctions imposed if these are transgressed. The sequence of sanctions to control unacceptable behaviour is very effective and does not intrude during teaching. The school council offers pupils the opportunity to discuss important school matters, such as the quantity and organisation of homework. Both assemblies and the planned personal, social and health education activities enable pupils to understand important social issues in connection with growing up responsibly and the fostering of acceptable habits.

36. Pupils have good opportunities to develop socially. In general, they display a reserved demeanour, which diminishes as they gain in confidence. There is a community feel about the school. Adults, including the classroom assistants, dinner supervisors, caretaker and cleaning staff, provide good role models and help pupils in the development of their social skills. Opportunities for pupils to become independent learners are less developed, as most of their learning depends heavily on the teachers' direction. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend the development of their social skills through a good range of sporting activities with other schools, the residential visit for the older pupils and in collaborative work in class. This good provision enables the pupils to enjoy calm working relations with other pupils and with the staff of the school.

37. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good where local culture is involved and satisfactory with respect to multi-cultural aspects. Good use is made of the region and the inherent local cultural traditions. These include involvement in Well Dressing, dry stone walling and 'bracken whacking'. The school was involved in an excellent dance presentation, Wirksworth 20:20, which was presented at the Millennium Dome. They have enjoyed a visit from the Quantum Theatre, which presented material of a scientific nature. The local 'lollipop lady' was invited to talk about her early years during the Second World War when her pocket money was one shilling a week. Although the school has adequate books of a multi-cultural nature, there is a lack of other more dominant multi-cultural resources, such as posters and artefacts from other cultural customs and traditions. Pupils learn about other

cultures satisfactorily in history, geography and religious education, but their understanding could be improved through the use of additional multi-cultural resources.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school's provision for the care and welfare of the pupils in its charge are very good. This represents an area of significant improvement over the findings of the last inspection. The very good child protection procedures are understood well and acted upon by staff in the best interests of the pupils. The headteacher is the named person for child protection, is fully trained and has established very good working relationships with external support agencies. All staff are familiar with the child protection procedures and are aware of, and alert to, the need for continuously monitoring the well-being and welfare of the pupils in their care. All staff are expected to respond in a discreet and sensitive manner to any personal queries or concerns raised with them by pupils and to ensure confidentiality.

39. Effective strategies have been established to identify and support pupils identified with special educational needs and to ensure that the school's policies and procedures ensure maximum inclusion for all pupils. There are appropriate procedures for the ongoing review of targets and progress of pupils with special educational needs, in consultation with their parents.

40. The school has established very good health and safety procedures that involve governors and embrace the whole spectrum of the pupils' time in the school. Risk assessment techniques are well embedded into the school's routines, and the certificate requirements for annual inspections of equipment and electrical systems are fully addressed. Fire evacuation drills are undertaken and logged each term to ensure all pupils and staff are familiar with school procedures. Formal governor-led health and safety inspections are undertaken each half term, and outcomes and recommendations are reported for discussion at meetings of the governing body. The school caretaker has adopted the good practice of carrying out weekly informal health and safety checks of the school's accommodation. During the inspection, staff and pupils demonstrated good health and safety awareness in and around the school. The school premises are maintained to a high level of cleanliness and provide a safe and secure environment.

41. The school has an adequate provision of staff with first-aid training, and very good procedures are in place for the management and reporting of injuries to pupils which occur within school time. Examples were seen during the inspection week of the quality of care and attention given by qualified first-aid staff in school and of the trust and reliance in them shown by injured pupils. Effective management arrangements are in place for the correct recording and administration of prescribed medicines to pupils, as and when requested by parents. The pupils benefit from the good standards of catering provided in the school, with a rotating menu providing a choice of appetising meals and a well-balanced and nutritional diet for pupils.

42. The school has very good procedures to record and promote pupils' attendance, and report and address incidents of pupils' absence. The daily registration practice in school fully complies with statutory requirements.

43. Very good, well-established behaviour management routines help to enhance and promote the self-image of pupils and contribute greatly to the good attitudes to learning displayed by the pupils. Great emphasis is placed on promoting good behaviour, and the school operates a number of incentives to encourage and reward pupils' good work and behaviour. The comprehensive, whole-school behaviour policy is discussed and personalised within each classroom to provide each pupil with a meaningful focus of the

school's expectations and rewards for good behaviour. The clear, simple and well-documented behaviour procedures are understood by pupils and parents, applied in a fair and consistent manner by staff, and used successfully to promote the good behaviour to be seen in and around the school.

44. The school has a philosophy of zero-tolerance towards bullying and has worked hard to promote a culture of anti-bullying amongst pupils. The school is rightly proud of receiving a certificate of excellence for its anti-bullying procedures in 1998 and is well on track to renewing this in the near future. During the inspection, there was no evidence of any oppressive bullying or harassment of pupils. Past incidents of inappropriate behaviour are judged by pupils and the majority of parents to have been dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and make the best possible provision to support them in their learning and personal development. All staff display a high level of care and concern for all pupils, and there is a good rapport and respect between pupils and staff. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and have the confidence and independence to raise any queries and concerns they may have with staff.

45. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and, generally, receive appropriate support. Termly reviews are held to assess the progress of individual pupils, and these are attended by the class teacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the child's parents, in addition to specialist staff from outside agencies involved in providing help and guidance. Although there is good informal liaison between teachers and support staff, opportunities are missed for support staff to keep notes on the progress of individual pupils, which might be useful for both the teachers and specialist agencies in reviewing progress towards targets set within individual education plans.

46. The school has made good progress in the management of assessment since the previous inspection. The use of data from tests enables the school to make more informed decisions concerning pupils' progress, the setting of targets and the nature of added value to each pupil's performance. These developments are still not yet firmly established within the school, and additional processes, such as the use of specific software, are yet to be involved. The devised system of analysis enables the school and governing body to make forecasts concerning tests at the end of Year 6 from data gathered in Year 5. Such forecasts take into account the intervention programmes, such as additional literacy and numeracy support targeted at particular groups. Further analysis of test results enables teachers to identify weak areas of the curriculum, such as problem-solving in mathematics and, subsequently, to address these areas in order to help raise standards.

47. Assessments in English and mathematics are good. Staff have built up a system for the assessment of writing skills which enable teachers to set individual targets for pupils. In mathematics, the key objectives from the numeracy strategy are assessed regularly and clearly inform teachers about pupils' ability and progress. The setting arrangements within literacy and numeracy make assessment procedures crucial, and staff possess the information needed to respond accurately and move individual pupils up or down sets. Assessment in other subjects is less well developed and chiefly consists of the monitoring of coverage. Records of achievement consist mainly of test results. Some written work is kept as evidence of pupils' ability, but little else is retained within each pupil's individual file. The school could help pupils' progress by ensuring clear targets are agreed in literacy and numeracy and encouraging pupils to be responsible for the setting of their own targets. The marking of work is varied and, in certain classes, does little to support pupils' learning. Apart from a portfolio for writing, there are no school portfolios of pupils' work, although some subject coordinators have good photographic evidence of activities. The school could celebrate the pupils' work through the development of subject portfolios and these would also help teachers in the accuracy of their assessments in all subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive the highest quality of care and education during their time in school. Most parents consider it to be a very open school, with all staff willing to listen and talk with parents. Parents' views on the school are more positive than at the time of the last inspection, although over 20 per cent of the parents who returned the questionnaires felt that the school's approach to homework, the information they receive about their children's progress, the way the school works with parents and the range of additional activities could be improved. The inspection findings do not substantiate these concerns.

49. The school has established good links with most parents that provide for their full, regular and quality involvement in all aspects of their children's education and personal development. Parents are welcomed and actively encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. All parents have signed the home-school agreement, and the parent-teacher consultation meetings are well attended. Many parents make good use of the home-school diaries to exchange comments with teachers and often talk with teachers at the beginning or end of the school day to clarify ways they can help with their children's homework. Governors make good use of questionnaires to canvas parental views and comments on the work and plans for the school.

50. Of particular benefit to pupils' learning and development is the voluntary involvement of parents and governors in the work of the school. Teachers appreciate greatly the valuable contribution of a small number of regular voluntary helpers, who are able to provide a pre-planned weekly input and support to the pupils' learning and development within the school and on swimming visits. Many more parents willingly volunteer to accompany and support pupils on field trips and out-of-school visits. The school also benefits from a very active parent, teacher and friends association, which organises regular fund-raising social events, all of which are well attended and provide informal opportunities for meetings and communications between teachers and parents. In addition, the association provides a valuable conduit for making parents' views known to the school. The good level of parental involvement in the working of the school has a positive impact on improving the quality of the pupils' learning environment and helping pupils' personal development. However, despite the best efforts of the school, there remains a small minority of parents who display no interest in working with the school or in supporting their children's learning in the home.

51. The quality, timeliness and range of information provided for parents are very good and have improved since the last inspection. Parents are kept well informed on a regular basis about all aspects of school life, including the progress their children are making. The provision of good-quality information is enriched by the informal opportunities provided for teachers and parents to discuss with each other any concerns or queries they may have at the beginning or end of the school day. The half-termly school newsletter and regular letters ensure that parents are kept up to date on all aspects of school activities and their children's involvement in school. The school prospectus and governors' annual report are comprehensive publications and viewed by parents as valuable reference documents about all aspects of their children's time in school. School policies are maintained in a central file and made available for parents to see.

52. Of worthy note is the practice of most teachers to provide parents with guidance notes on how to help their children with their homework. A number of parents praised the value of the guidance notes in enabling them to contribute actively to their children's learning in the home. End-of-year progress reports are detailed and provide good levels of information about what the pupils know and can do. However, while the progress reports identify targets

and areas for development in English and mathematics, they do not provide similar guidance for the pupils in the other subjects. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and consulted on the provision the school seeks to make for their children. They are routinely invited to all review meetings, and methods of extending the programme into the home are discussed.

53. Overall, the parental contribution to pupils' learning in school and in the home is very good. The close working liaison that exists between many parents and teachers has a positive impact on the continuity and quality of pupils' learning and is a major influence on the good progress that many are achieving.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The overall quality of the school's leadership and management is satisfactory, and there are some important strengths. Positive aspects noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, and the headteacher's leadership style continues to be heavily influenced by his concern to promote good relationships amongst staff and pupils. His concern for the welfare of his staff leads, at times, however, to a rather cautious approach to management. Most staff are keen to carry out their duties as subject coordinators, but are not always sufficiently empowered to use their talents as effectively as they could be. Nevertheless, the headteacher is well respected by staff, governors, parents and pupils, and has been responsible for a good range of improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher ensures that pupils from different backgrounds and with differing needs are fully and properly included in all aspects of school life. A new deputy headteacher took up her duties at the start of the term in which the inspection took place, and has not yet had time to make a significant impact. However, ideas proposed for the development of ICT and religious education, both of which subjects she coordinates, indicate positive future contributions to the leadership of the school.

55. The coordinator for special educational needs demonstrates effective management skills in keeping the system operating successfully. However, she is no longer allocated time away from her full-time class teaching commitment to carry out her role, and this is putting a great strain on maintaining standards in the system. For example, the most recent individual education plans are not of the same good quality as evident in past years, and this reduces the staff's ability to track the progress of individual pupils. Over time, this is likely to lead to a lowering of standards in a currently successful system. No staff training has yet been made available for teachers to take on this role with full success, and the quality of pupils' plans varies as a result. The special educational needs policy is soon to be reviewed in the light of the new Code of Practice.

56. As at the time of the previous inspection, the school has a very supportive body of governors, who fulfil their duties well. Governors show an active interest in all aspects of the school's work. The governing body has an appropriate structure of various committees for considering new proposals and reviewing all aspects of the school. It holds the school to account for standards achieved and, although governors ask challenging questions, they nevertheless provide good and sensitive support for the headteacher. They are active in consulting parents before making important changes, such as the decision to revert to classes with single-age groups of pupils. Governors fulfil all of their statutory duties, and help to shape the direction of the school in a quiet, supportive way.

57. The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating what it does are satisfactory, and some aspects have improved since the last inspection. The English and mathematics coordinators have monitored teaching and provided useful feedback to teachers. Other coordinators have not yet had the same opportunities to evaluate how well their subjects are

taught, although the school intends to give non-contact time to coordinators on a rolling basis in the future. The school's procedures for performance management are sound.

58. The school's procedures for development planning have improved significantly since the last inspection, and the headteacher and staff are becoming much better at identifying and prioritising areas for development. Action plans identify clearly what action is to be taken, who is responsible for it, and how it will be monitored. These plans are linked closely to the school's financial planning. Staff have a very positive approach and are willing to take on board new initiatives and try out new ideas. As a result, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

59. The success of the school's procedures for development planning can be seen in the range of improvements since the last inspection which, overall, is good. The school tackled the key issues from the last inspection well. The coordinators for English and mathematics have played important roles in leading their subjects and bringing about improvements, both in standards and in the way the subjects are taught. The coordination of other subjects has improved, although coordinators are not yet enabled to carry out all aspects of their role in a way, which could bring further improvements to standards of attainment and the quality of teaching. The school has addressed the issue of over-large class sizes, and governors have taken the important decision to maintain eight classes for as long as financially possible, even though the number of pupils on roll is falling. Standards in design and technology have improved significantly, and there has been some improvement in the school's provision for ICT, although much still remains to be done in this area. Procedures for assessment, and the use to which this information is put, have improved. The school now has better resources for pupils with special educational needs. Curricular planning for all subjects has improved. The school has revised the amount of time which is allocated to the teaching of each subject, although insufficient time is still given to music, ICT and religious education, which restricts the range of learning opportunities in these subjects. The quality of teaching has improved. Standards have risen in line with the national trend and are better now than they were at the time of the last inspection.

60. Financial planning and the strategic use of resources are very good and are clearly focussed on providing all pupils with a good-quality educational environment and learning opportunities. The governors are fully involved in the financial management and strategic decision-making process, ensuring that all priorities for expenditure are clearly related to improving the learning opportunities of the pupils. Spending patterns are matched to identified educational priorities within the school development plan, and the principles of best value are well-established and integral features of the school's budget management practice. This represents an area of major improvement since the last inspection. Very good financial reporting and control systems ensure the effective day-to-day monitoring and management of the school's expenditure. The school clerk uses electronic accounting procedures to manage the day-to-day budgets and to provide the headteacher and governors with meaningful, up-to-date and timely information reports on the budget.

61. Robust planning procedures provide for the involvement of staff and governors, and costed contingency plans have been agreed in line with the stated educational priorities of the school. The school development plan's educational priorities and targets are costed and provide a clear focus for the review and evaluation of past spending decisions. The prudent budget management practised in the school has enabled the continued funding of existing teaching staff and, in anticipation of a falling roll, has underwritten the governors' policy to maintain an eight-class structure to the school.

62. The headteacher and governors have fully embraced the principles of best value and make very good use of these in their evaluation and assessment of the use of school

resources in relation to agreed educational priorities. Very good use is made of 'what if' financial modelling techniques to evaluate future budget planning scenarios and to enable informed decision-making by governors to ensure best value is being maintained within the school. Competitive tendering and cost comparison are practised actively in respect of all school purchases, and the governors have set appropriate criteria for the evaluation and selection of chosen suppliers.

63. The school is pro-active in seeking out and securing additional grants and funding initiatives to help improve the school environment and enhance the pupils' learning opportunities. Specific grants are used well to improve the learning environment, good examples being the successful bid for 'Seed Challenge' monies from the DfES for the furnishing of the new computer suite, and the use of formula capital funding to refurbish the flat roof over the toilets and resurface the playground. Funding for pupils who have special educational needs is managed well and used to maximise the good support provided for these pupils.

64. Although good use is made of software applications to support the school's financial and administration processes, the overall use of new technology within the school is unsatisfactory. Very limited use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in the classrooms. The planned investment of hardware and software associated with the development of the computer suite should greatly improve this situation in the near future.

65. The school employs an appropriate number of qualified staff, who are generally deployed in a flexible and effective manner to make best use of their skills. Teachers and their support staff cooperate well with each other to provide the full range of curricular activities for all pupils. However, the number of teaching assistants is low and concentrated on supporting literacy and numeracy lessons. The school clerk, midday supervisors and caretaker are dedicated to their duties and ensure that the day-to-day life of the school functions effectively. Satisfactory appraisal procedures are linked to staff training and development needs. Effective induction procedures have been established for new staff, and good systems are in place to inform and support the staff working in the school.

66. Overall, the school's accommodation is satisfactory, provides a range of interesting and stimulating learning environments and is used well by staff for the benefit of the pupils' learning and personal development. Classrooms are of a reasonable size, and there is an adequate provision for the storage of learning resources. The slightly smaller size of the classrooms in the modular buildings can constrain the flexibility of their use by the teacher. There is an adequately sized hall, which provides pupils with access to indoor facilities for physical education. The school will shortly benefit from the very good provision of a central computer suite for use by the pupils.

67. Good use has been made of bright colours and examples of pupils' work on the walls of classrooms and along some corridor walls, and these provide for attractive and informative displays in support of pupils' learning. However, little use has been made of professional displays of artists' work or educational material to provide examples and stimuli for pupils to set challenges for them in their own learning and development. The playground is marked out with a variety of number games and includes a range of wooden play apparatus with soft-floor surfaces. There is a good provision of tables and benches for the use of pupils, and plans are in place to provide a shaded area within the playground. The school has worked hard to ensure suitable access for disabled pupils, and facilities are provided to meet the needs and requirements of those with physical disabilities. There is no evidence of vandalism, litter or graffiti, and the school accommodation is judged to provide a safe and secure environment for use by all pupils and staff alike.

68. Overall, the range and quality of educational resources is satisfactory. The school maintains a good provision of general learning resources to support pupils identified with special needs. However, learning resources for religious education are limited and restrict pupils' learning opportunities. The current inadequate resources for ICT will be significantly enhanced with the planned opening of the school's computer suite at the end of the spring term.

69. The funding allocated to the school is just under the national average for primary schools. When account is taken of all aspects of the school's work, including the good teaching, pupils' satisfactory progress throughout the school and standards which are close to the national average by the end of Year 6, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

- (1) Improve the quality of pupils' writing by making much better use of opportunities for pupils to produce written work for subjects other than English, and by being much more rigorous in the quality of marking and pupils' response to it.
(Paragraphs: 1, 2, 4, 17, 30, 71, 73-75, 106, 110, 114)
- (2) Improve standards in, and the use of, ICT * by:
 - improving the resources available to staff and pupils;
 - ensuring that sufficient time is devoted to the teaching of ICT and for pupils to practise their skills;
 - making much greater use of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects.(Paragraphs: 7, 18, 19, 23, 27, 30, 59, 64, 68, 78, 83, 91, 95, 101, 106, 111, 112-116)
- (3) Improve the way pupils are grouped and timetabled for lessons by:
 - ensuring that the grouping of pupils gives them the maximum opportunity to make progress from one year to the next *;
 - reviewing the length of time devoted to literacy and numeracy lessons;
 - ensuring that sufficient time is devoted to the teaching of music and religious education.(Paragraphs: 8, 9, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27, 28, 59, 80, 82, 86, 99, 100, 106, 117, 121, 122, 129)

* These issues have already been identified as priorities in the school's development plan.

In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:

- Ensuring that pupils' work is marked more rigorously.
(Paragraphs: 4, 17, 21, 47, 73, 82, 83, 90)
- Encouraging pupils to become more independent in their learning.
(Paragraphs: 13, 20, 36, 87)
- Providing sufficient time for all coordinators to monitor the quality of teaching.
(Paragraphs: 54, 57, 59, 106, 123)
- Providing training for staff in writing individual education plans.
(Paragraphs: 26, 55)
- Improving the quality of pupils' presentation.
(Paragraphs: 17, 30, 73, 89)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	26	15	2	0	0
Percentage	2	14	51	29	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	218
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	52

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	36	32	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	25	28
	Girls	27	23	29
	Total	53	48	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (62)	71 (53)	84 (82)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	25	29
	Girls	25	21	27
	Total	49	46	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (70)	68 (65)	82 (70)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	215
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	398 160
Total expenditure	396 963
Expenditure per pupil	1 661
Balance brought forward from previous year	40 966
Balance carried forward to next year	42 163

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	73
Number of questionnaires returned	218

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	45	4	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	32	61	6	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	60	8	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	49	19	4	0
The teaching is good.	45	52	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	46	18	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	48	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	49	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	22	55	18	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	31	56	6	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	23	66	10	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	10	41	26	10	14

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

ENGLISH

71. Standards of attainment in English are average overall, as indicated in the school's most recent national tests for the pupils in Year 6. Reading skills, however, are better developed than writing skills, and girls tend to achieve more than boys. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully established in school, and standards have risen in line with the national trend.

72. As pupils are admitted to Year 3, their reading skills are generally well established to at least an average level. The school improves further on these secure skills and, by the time pupils leave the school, results in reading are even better, with more than half of the pupils achieving a high level in national tests. This good progress is achieved through consistently good teaching and frequent practice of skills, supported further at home by most families. Reading is a strong feature of every English lesson, and good attention is given to analysing texts shared by the whole class. A good level of discussion takes place, which develops the pupils' appreciation and understanding of what they read. Work organised within small groups captures the pupils' interest, and pertinent teaching aids good learning. For example, a group of pupils in the lower school read a play-script together, each taking a part and reading with increasing expression, showing a growing understanding of the meaning of the words and their effect on other characters. At the end of the lesson, individual pupils read a specific line of the play to the class, using the expression identified by a selection of written adverbs. Thus, their voices delivered the same line either angrily, calmly, happily or sadly. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils are studying the styles of a variety of different diaries, with activities organised to emphasise understanding of the text. These include what is known in the school as 'hot-seating', where individual pupils sit and answer questions posed by other pupils. This helps pupils to explore the thoughts and actions of individual characters, such as Boy in the fictional diary written by Roald Dahl. Specific reading skills are taught well. For example, pupils in Year 5 are taught to scan texts, looking for key words to help them to find the answers to questions without re-reading every word. They learn to skim read as they locate the information they need. Pupils show that they can use the library classification system, Dewey Decimal, to locate books, and then use contents and index lists within books to find the information they require. Although both fiction and non-fiction books are included in lessons over the year, by far the greatest emphasis is placed on studying and practising reading through fiction texts. This represents an imbalance in the subject, which may account for the relatively greater success of girls in reading than of boys. National research indicates that boys work more successfully with a predominance of information rather than fictional texts. Nonetheless, all pupils say that they enjoy reading and can list favourite authors. Pupils with special educational needs read carefully chosen books, suited to their interest level as well as their reading level, and make good progress. This is an improvement in provision since the last inspection, when reading resources for these pupils were said to be inadequate overall and progress was no more than satisfactory.

73. The pupils' writing skills are not so well developed as those in reading and this is evident from Year 3, when pupils join the school. The basic skills of writing are taught less rigorously. Standards of writing within all subjects are generally accepted at too low a level for the pupils' ages. Spellings are left uncorrected, and final pieces of work frequently include spelling errors. Although a small number of spellings are practised weekly, the word-work section of the nationally devised literacy hour is the school's weakest element. Pupils do not always benefit from a daily, short, but important example of word-building to firmly establish recurring letter strings and combinations. The organisation of the pupils into mixed-year groups makes following the word lists set for each year group within the National Strategy

more difficult both to teach and to check for learning. For the younger pupils, frequently used words are not made easily available within class to aid the learning and use of correct spellings. Pupils can name the various means of punctuation, but are less reliable in their use. Handwriting is taught each week, but teachers do not always provide a good model of joined script between these lessons to enable pupils to supplement their skills. The work of many pupils is inconsistent in presentation.

74. Writing composition skills are slow to develop within narrative written work, although pupils display a successful ability to include interesting and descriptive words within their work. The benefits of this skill are obvious within the many examples of captivating and perceptive poetry. Pupils are justly proud of their work within the published book of poems based on the local Stoney Wood. Many further examples are evident from a review of previous work. As alternatives to over-used verbs, such as 'said', pupils suggest 'murmured', 'screamed' and 'growled'. In composing the ending paragraph for a story, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are careful to include interesting and captivating words, and change them to add to their work as they read and re-read the sentences back to themselves. Nevertheless, this hard work on vocabulary does not come together in written accounts and stories to produce narrative work of sufficiently high quality. The focus of teaching tends to be on helping pupils to describe well but is not sufficiently supplemented and balanced by teaching to develop a sense of audience to be captivated and informed. Settings are not described before the action of the story begins, and characters are not fully established within written work, despite a good facility for identifying characters when reading.

75. The school has identified this weakness in pupils' attainment and is working to improve writing skills. Teachers are working to help pupils identify the particular features of different styles of writing as easily as they identify the different styles of books when teaching reading. In the younger classes, some of the teachers use a checklist for features of written work, such as clauses, alliterations, similes and 'strong' verbs. There is clear evidence that standards are improving through the school. Interesting links are forged between reading and writing, such as when pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote dramatic newspaper accounts of the murder of Macbeth. A similar style of work was adopted in geography to provide newspaper accounts of the plans for a local by-pass. The work of the coordinator in analysing writing skills and setting targets for individuals or groups of pupils is already beginning to pay off, and the quality of teaching and learning is improving. For the pupils with special educational needs, provision is good overall, and very good for those in the lower set for literacy lessons in Years 5 and 6. Although their levels of attainment are lower than average, progress towards targets set is very good. Here, the strong poetic style developed in the school is evident when pupils write dramatic accounts in their fictional diary of a child trapped in a war zone, such as "Horried people shouting. Help! Babies crying. Blood on the windows." and "I was real scared. I was really. There was silence for a long time yesterday."

76. The pupils' speaking and listening skills develop to a suitable standard for their age. Pupils have frequent opportunities to engage in asking and answering questions through discussions, such as the 'hot-seat' arrangement described above. These sessions successfully build the pupils' confidence in asking questions, presenting their views and listening to those of others. The school's good work on vocabulary supplements the pupils' awareness of description, so that they are alert to descriptive words both within their reading and when listening to others. Discussion work in twos or threesomes supplements this class work well. Practice in giving a verbal account to others is less well provided for, although where pupils with special educational needs are supported by a teaching assistant, this need is met more successfully.

77. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching seen in lessons ranged from satisfactory to excellent and was generally of higher quality than was evident

from a review of past work. The teaching of writing, in particular, is improving as a result of the school's close focus on this skill, supported by the local education authority's literacy consultant. Where teaching is of high quality, the teacher is very clear on the learning outcome and the means to achieve it. The teacher in very good or excellent lessons works successfully to motivate the pupils very well and to improve their skills extremely well during the course of the lesson. The pupils, whatever their previous achievement, are well challenged to achieve high standards in relation to previous work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding within the lower set in Years 5 and 6. Their interest is raised by various imaginative ruses, and work of increasingly high quality results. Behaviour and concentration problems abate as pupils focus closely on the quality of their work. Teaching assistants enable these pupils to verbalise their thoughts before committing them to writing. In this class, the attention to writing is as good as to reading, and both skills are developed with great patience, persistence and an infectious optimism.

78. Since the last inspection, the coordinator has successfully moved from general management of the subject to a position where she is clearly leading standards forward. All classes have been observed in order to share good practice and raise standards in teaching and learning. Pupils' written work is assessed in increasing detail, and now results in specific targets set for individuals or groups of pupils. As this work is expanding, pupils are becoming more fully aware of their next steps and more involved in deciding how well they are achieving. The sharing of lesson objectives with pupils is also helping to involve pupils more profitably in their own learning. Resources are adequate for the subject, although the range of big books suitable for class use is limited and links with other subjects, particularly for non-fiction work, are under-developed. Very little use is made of ICT to improve pupils' skills in writing.

MATHEMATICS

79. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum assessment tests were just below the national average and the average for similar schools. Over the past five years, the results in mathematics have fluctuated considerably. Compared with standards at the previous inspection, the school has made a small improvement, but the trend in improvement has been slower than the national trend. The inspection findings show that pupils achieve average standards by the end of Year 6, reflecting the school's gradual improvement and a more able cohort of pupils. However, the school needs to make its targets more challenging. After the previous inspection, the school was designated as a school requiring intensive support for numeracy and, as a result, received regular support from the local education authority's numeracy consultant. This support has proved beneficial and has helped to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics.

80. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are developing successful strategies for mental calculations. The use of an empty number-line supports the early development of addition and subtraction skills and the understanding of the number system. This progresses effectively to the addition and subtraction of decimals with older pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school is addressing the weak area of problem solving through the use of real-life problems, where pupils have to relate a context for a particular number problem. Throughout the school, pupils are urged to think up different ways of solving problems, they are asked to explain their methods and then other pupils will evaluate. In one set of pupils in Years 3 and 4, they evaluate their understanding at the end of each lesson, entering their comments into their books. This enables the teacher to assess their progress accurately, it involves the pupils in their own learning and allows weaknesses to be identified and then dealt with. In Years 5 and 6, progress in the top set is good. Pupils are productive and their work is presented tidily. They are careful in the setting out of numbers, being aware of the importance of place value. Progress in the second set is satisfactory. Work is less prolific, but again pupils take care in

the way they present their work. Progress in the third and fourth sets is less pronounced, and pupils are less productive, because they do not maintain their concentration for the whole of the long lessons. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are supported well by classroom assistants, who have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Additional support is provided through 'Springboard' sessions for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. These additional sessions also have a good impact on pupils' progress.

81. By the end of Year 6, pupils have satisfactorily covered the required programme of work. As well as carrying out long multiplication and division using different methods with numbers up to 1000, they are used to making estimates of their results. This system of checking, introduced lower down in the school, enables them to increase their understanding of the number system and numerical processes. They work out remainders, such as $564/52=10.846$, and they check back to see if their answers are correct, such as $216+17=233$, so $233-216=17$. They can work out $1/3$ of $480=160$ and can convert litres to millilitres and centimetres to millimetres. They have carried out work on proportion and ratio, and know that 2 in every 10 is the same as $1/5$. They have carried out data-handling activities and produced conversion graphs for degrees centigrade to Fahrenheit and UK shoe sizes to the continental sizes.

82. Since the previous inspection, the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced. This has changed the way mathematics is taught and organised within the curriculum. The school has implemented the strategy successfully. Lessons are planned around the national scheme of work for numeracy, and teachers follow the suggested format of lessons. Pupils are put into sets throughout the school for mathematics. Teachers assess their pupils well, and work is given to match individual pupils' abilities within each set. The timing and proportion of mental work, main activity and plenary session at the end of the lesson needs to be carefully adjusted in order to maximise opportunities for every pupil to do their best. In the lower sets, for example, a 70-minute lesson with a 40-minute main activity is too long. In order to maintain the pupils' interest and motivation, teachers could plan shorter sessions within the allotted time, enabling those with a shorter concentration span to be more productive. The mental mathematics sessions generally have good pace and challenge. Teachers use resources imaginatively, especially individual whiteboards, so involving all pupils in developing their quick-thinking number skills.

83. The teaching of mathematics is good. Most teachers have undergone numeracy training and have developed effective methods for teaching to the Numeracy Strategy, especially the mental section of the lesson. In general, these sessions have a challenging pace and the use of resources engages all pupils as they strive to succeed. Teachers have developed good routines to support the understanding of number processes. These include the mnemonic NSEWC, number, sentence, estimate, work out and check. Teachers ensure pupils carry out estimates regularly, where appropriate, and this helps to extend pupils' understanding. The use of 'best friend' in understanding the inverse relationship where $45+32=77$ so that $77-32=45$ is an additional routine teachers use to help their pupils to understand number processes. The marking of mathematics varies from excellent to just satisfactory. Teaching is good where marking is helpful, diagnostic and enables pupils to express and understand their difficulties. In general, teachers ensure work is well presented with headings and dates, and this helps pupils to value their efforts. Although computers are used for some data-handling activities, there is very little use of ICT to assist pupils' learning in mathematics.

84. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Since the previous inspection, there has been an improvement in the application and use of mathematics and also in data-handling. These two areas were identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection. Through its own assessment processes, the school has identified problem-

solving as an area of weakness, and teachers are using particular strategies to address this. Provision for mathematics homework is good. Pupils do mathematics homework regularly, and teachers ensure that parents are also aware of the particular techniques used in numeracy processes at school.

SCIENCE

85. In the 2001 National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the school's results were very close to the national average, although they were slightly below the average for schools in similar contexts. Most pupils reached the national expectation of Level 4 and almost a third achieved the higher Level 5. The school's results have improved since the last inspection, at a slightly faster rate than the national trend, and now compare more favourably with other schools than they did. The biggest improvement was between 1998 and 1999, since which time the results have remained fairly stable.

86. The overall quality of teaching and learning in science lessons is good, and is the main factor accounting for the rise in standards since the last inspection. Overall, however, the inspection findings show that pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress throughout the school and that they achieve average standards in all aspects of science by the end of Year 6. The expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and the mix of ages in each class are factors, which prevent pupils from making better progress. Although the curriculum for science has been carefully devised to take into consideration the mixed-age classes, so that pupils cover all aspects of science on a two-year rolling programme, the expectations demonstrated in some of the teachers' planning, particularly in the early stages of a topic, are lower than they should be. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, start their work on green plants with activities and an investigation which have frequently been covered by younger pupils, and spend too much time reviewing previously covered work, rather than being given challenging work which extends and deepens their knowledge and understanding. Similarly, in their work on habitats and food chains, pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not develop their progress significantly beyond the work covered by pupils in Years 3 and 4. The mixed-age classes prevent a sense of progression from one year to the next. Although the work produced by pupils in Year 4 shows greater maturity and depth compared to that of pupils in Year 3, the difference between work produced in Years 5 and 6 is less discernible. Nevertheless, because the curriculum is covered thoroughly, pupils of all abilities acquire a sound understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes.

87. Much of the pupils' learning derives from practical work and, as pupils move from the lower school into the upper school, there is evident progress in their ability to carry out and record their investigative work. Younger pupils have previously used a more structured framework for recording their investigative work, but are now being encouraged to use a similar approach to that used in the upper school. Older pupils respond to a series of headings, but show greater flexibility in the way they devise and set out their evidence than pupils in the lower school. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils have a good understanding of the concept of a 'fair test'. However, teachers do not always give enough attention to what conclusions are to be drawn from investigations. In the work of some pupils, their conclusions are very sketchy and do not always focus on the main learning points. Nevertheless, pupils still derive much benefit from a good range of practical activities, whether it be to reinforce understanding of solids, liquids and gases, investigating light and shadow, or discovering the effects of different forces. Most of the practical work is carefully prepared by teachers, but there is not enough opportunity for pupils to devise and conduct investigations in which they determine the materials required and the methods to be used.

88. Collaborative and detailed planning ensures that all pupils are catered for equally, and careful timetabling ensures that the school makes the most efficient use of its resources. Lesson planning is very detailed, and relates closely to, and contributes to the overall development of, the school's scheme of work. Teachers are, therefore, well prepared for their lessons, and the collaborative approach ensures that staff benefit from the help and experience of other colleagues. There is a good degree of expertise amongst the staff, and this is evident in the careful use of terminology. In a good lesson in Years 5 and 6, it enabled the teacher to extend pupils' learning through the use of carefully framed questions, which drew on a thorough understanding of the concepts covered by the investigation. In the better lessons, teachers frame questions carefully to get pupils to think more deeply about what they are doing. In a lesson in the lower school, for example, the teacher did not just accept pupils' answers, but got them to justify them. Teachers' instructions are generally very clear, so pupils have a good understanding of what they have to do. On some occasions, a clearer focus on why pupils are doing things and greater rigour in drawing conclusions would help pupils to make better progress.

89. Pupils' positive attitudes to science contribute significantly to their learning. They enjoy investigative work. Pupils working on a project making circuits show absorption and interest in their work. Older pupils concentrate well on the tasks they are given, showing perseverance and making effective use of time. In two lessons in which pupils were investigating whether objects weighed more or less in water than in air, large containers of water provided potential for disaster, but the sensible and responsible behaviour of all pupils ensured that good progress was made. Not all younger pupils demonstrate the same level of concentration. Some are poor at listening, unnecessarily talkative and, at times, very fidgety, and such responses are not always dealt with as effectively as they could be. Pupils' learning is directly affected in these cases, as it takes them longer to complete their work and they do not always understand what they are required to do. The way pupils present their work varies considerably. Some pupils take great care, but the work of others is scruffy and diagrams are poorly presented. The need for good standards of presentation is not reinforced enough. A good feature of the work in many classes is the way pupils are not only required to work together collaboratively, but do so without fuss and to each other's benefit. Some classes in the lower school are not quite so good at doing this, whilst in others the teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour, involvement and collaboration are laying good foundations for the future.

90. A good feature throughout the school is that pupils are required to record their work in science in their own words and without recourse to worksheets. However, many opportunities are missed to develop pupils' literacy skills through their written work in science. Poor phraseology and inaccurate spellings are hardly ever corrected, with the result that pupils are either unaware that their English is incorrect or they gain the impression that the quality of their written work is unimportant. In one example, pupils were asked to complete definitions of scientific words to form a point of reference for future work, but the samples seen were full of spelling mistakes which had not been corrected, and future reference would have only reinforced the errors. On the rare occasion that teachers do highlight spelling mistakes, pupils do not return to correct their errors. The quality of teachers' marking is generally unsatisfactory. Most pieces of work receive a tick and a bland comment. In some cases, the teacher's effusive praise is unmerited. By describing an ordinary piece of work as 'excellent' gives pupils a false idea of what they should be aiming at. A few teachers are more analytical in the comments they make and give pupils helpful advice on how they can improve their work. This is a very good feature, but pupils do not respond to this advice by revisiting their work to improve what they have done or, in a number of cases, completing work which they had previously left unfinished.

91. Occasionally, teachers link work in mathematics and science very effectively. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 had spent time learning how to read different scales in mathematics, and this skill was then practised in a science lesson as pupils interpreted different scales on a force-meter. In other lessons, reinforcement of the methods for calculating differences to one decimal point and carrying out reverse operations to check the validity of the answer would not only have helped pupils to achieve accurate results in science, but would have reinforced their numeracy skills. There are various examples of the use of ICT. Pupils in the lower school, for example, have investigated an Internet site on pond-life and constructed a graph to record the length of shadows. Overall, however, not enough use is made of technology as a tool for learning in science.

92. The subject is led well, and the coordinator has done much to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's teaching of science. Although a published scheme of work is used, it has been adapted well to suit the school's circumstances. The scheme has been reviewed extensively and checked carefully to ensure that pupils cover all aspects of the curriculum thoroughly. The need has been recognised to provide more extension work for the more able pupils. Educational visits occur twice a year and contribute positively to pupils' learning in science; the school would like to organise more such opportunities. The school shows its concern to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity in the way that it analyses pupils' performance. In the past, for example, girls were observed to be passive in lessons, and staff have worked at including them more in discussions. Last year, there was a significant improvement in the percentage of girls achieving Level 5, and their results were better than those of the boys. Assessment procedures are improving. A new booklet is being used at the end of each unit to test pupils' understanding, and time is planned for teachers to deal with any misconceptions which are identified through this process. Test papers are analysed to identify areas of weakness. The coordinator has gathered together a portfolio of work produced by pupils across the school, although its usefulness could be enhanced by assessing each piece of work against National Curriculum levels in order to identify what pupils have to do to achieve higher standards. Good partnership with the local secondary school not only provides a boost to the school's resources for science, which are good, but provides opportunities for teachers from other schools to meet together to discuss issues relating to the curriculum and smooth the transfer of pupils to the secondary school.

ART AND DESIGN

93. Standards of attainment in art and design by the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations. The inspection findings are broadly similar to those of the last inspection, although there has been an improvement in the teaching of art and design skills. This judgement is based mainly on the scrutiny of pupils' work, and conversations with teachers and the subject coordinator. Three art and design lessons were also observed. There are a few examples where pupils attain standards above the national expectation, such as the sketching of chairs in Years 3 and 4, and the paper collage work on moving sports people in Years 5 and 6. In general, progress in acquiring art and design skills throughout the school is now good for all pupils.

94. The pupils' work covers the range expected in the National Curriculum and pupils learn to use a good selection of media. Pupils develop their drawing skills satisfactorily through associated work in several subject areas. For example, following a visit to the Derby Museum, pupils in Year 3 and 4 sketched some Roman artefacts and, following work on the Vikings, they made plaster casts of Viking rune stones. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were involved in the construction of chairs made from mod-roc. They had chosen their design from favourite books and applied them in acrylic paint. Collage work features widely in the school's displays, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 had produced fabric collages to illustrate scenes from Bible stories and Greek myths. The pupils make good progress in their three-dimensional activities. The older pupils visit the local secondary school to use clay and glazes, where they have also made papier-mâché containers, which had art straws to create a relief, and then covered them with mod-roc prior to painting in a metallic paint. The lessons observed in Years 5 and 6 were based on the creation of movement through a variety of artistic techniques. Pupils were planning their park scene and adding annotations as to how the illusion of movement was going to be made. Some chose a line and paint technique, others choosing paper-cutting such as curling, twisting, fringing and weaving. Pupils moved around the room to evaluate what each had done. String prints depicting movement were also displayed and were of a good quality. Pupils' use of shading and perspective in their drawing and sketching techniques is less evident, and progress in this area is just satisfactory.

95. Although only three lessons were observed, from the quality of work displayed and the photographic evidence available, the teaching across the school is judged to be good. Teachers plan from the recently adopted scheme of work and, where possible, build in links to other subjects. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra support where possible, and their progress is also good. The corridors and hall do not allow pupils' work to be displayed easily. Teachers could display their pupils' work more effectively through the installation of additional display space. This would help to raise the status of pupils' work and give their efforts increased purpose. Teachers need to ensure pupils have opportunities to carry out work in the style of famous artists and to have opportunities to evaluate well-known works of art. The use of ICT within art and design is unsatisfactory; there is very little evidence of computer generated images or the use of technology to plan or evaluate art work.

96. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The coordinator has worked hard at maintaining the good links with the local secondary school. She has been instrumental in bringing the school's art and design into the community through such events as Well Dressing and the Stoney Wood initiative. Pupils receive additional opportunities to develop skills in the Art Club, and a visiting artist inspired many pupils during her recent visit when she demonstrated her sketching techniques. These additional features help to raise pupils' interest and promote higher standards within the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. By the end of Year 6, the standard of attainment in design and technology is above that expected nationally. Pupils achieve well, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. There has been excellent improvement in the subject since the last inspection, when the requirements of the National Curriculum were not fully implemented, the pupils' attainment was below expectations and progress was poor. The school has made the subject a priority for improvement, and the coordinator speaks of a transformation in standards. The subject has been allocated a specific place on the timetable and is no longer incorporated into other subjects. The national scheme of work has been adopted, providing a clear agenda for teaching, and a training programme for staff has been led by the headteacher, who has specific skills in the subject.

98. The pupils have a firm grasp of the full process of researching, designing, making and evaluating their work. Teachers choose interesting and relevant projects that lead to high levels of interest and promote pupils' understanding well. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils are making books with moving parts, showing a working understanding of levers. Work is evaluated thoroughly as it proceeds in order to improve on standards achieved, particularly with regard to the finishing process. Previously, the pupils in Year 4 and 5 have made pneumatically powered models of monsters, where the operation of an air syringe makes the creature's nose move, for example. Models are finished to a high standard and are durable. Pupils in Year 6 have made carefully sewn and decorated slippers, choosing the shape for themselves and investigating alternative ways of joining the fabric tops and attaching the soles. Again, products are hardwearing and still in use in many cases. These pupils also designed and constructed battery-powered models of fairground roundabouts and big wheels. An exhibition of work held in the summer term was much appreciated by parents. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are currently working on the construction of wooden toys with moving parts, operated by a variety of cams on rods. The work is complex, and pupils in Year 6 show a good understanding of the design features of their models. They have the skills to measure, saw, drill and smooth wood to a specific size, and to interlink the cams and followers to allow the toy to function smoothly. They are aware of the differing actions of cams of differing shapes and points of attachment to followers. Some pupils managed to cut and smooth a 'snail' or a 'nine' shaped cam to achieve the required movement in their toy.

99. The projects involve the pupils in research as a starting point. For example, a variety of books and toys with moving parts were investigated thoroughly. Toys were made by members of staff to provide working models for study. The older pupils made working card models of cam and rods, or followers, in order to fully investigate the way that they operate. They drew designs for their toys and decided on the order of work. As work proceeded, models were tried and adjusted to allow free movement of all working parts. Differing guides for the rods were achieved using either wood or plastic casing. The pupils are very proud of their work and discuss their projects with animation. Their evaluations of their own and other pupils' efforts are perceptive and show a good understanding of the operation of cams. There is no difference in the skill or the quality of work between the boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are supported as necessary and generally make good, and sometimes very good, progress. Occasionally, however, the work of these pupils is significantly disrupted when they are withdrawn from the lesson to receive extra support in literacy.

100. The quality of teaching is very good, enabling pupils to maintain their interest and to progress rapidly in developing their work. Time is used very well, and all tasks are managed with due regard to safety, although the lack of a vice to clamp wood to enable safe and accurate sawing of shaped cams sometimes engages the teacher for too long with one pupil. In classes where a teaching assistant is available, this disrupts the lesson less. In a class where the teacher needed to spend a considerable amount of time helping a pupil with special educational needs, who had missed previous lessons, the quality of the teaching for the rest of the class was reduced from very good to good.

101. The subject contributes suitably to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, but there is little involvement of information technology skills. The coordinator is knowledgeable and monitors planning and pupils' achievements in the subject to ensure high standards are maintained. A staff-training programme precedes all new projects taught, enabled by the good skills in the subject of the headteacher. A portfolio of photographs of pupils' previous work is kept, and the school is justly proud of the high standards of work achieved by the pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

102. Standards of attainment are in line with expected levels for pupils at the end of Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriate standards and make satisfactory progress. Some improvements to the curriculum have been made since the last inspection; the national scheme of work has been adopted, and pupils now study issues within the locality of the school in greater depth.

103. By the time they leave the school, the pupils have a confident grasp of how to read atlases, maps, graphs and charts and can both interpret and devise them to find the information they need. They use geographical terminology in discussing, for example, the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a fishing quota for the North Sea west of Norway and in the contrasting area of the waters surrounding the Philippine islands in the southern hemisphere. Pupils use their own experience and knowledge of the locality to provide insights into the proposal to establish a major road to by-pass the local town of Matlock.

104. Younger pupils have a sound knowledge of environmental issues and use terms such as 'recycling' and 'pollution' confidently and accurately. They are committed to improving their environment and demonstrate their understanding through evaluating the changes made to Stoney Wood, the land reclaimed locally from the former quarrying industry. They are beginning to understand the different lifestyles around the world, comparing life in Wirksworth, for example, with that in an Indian village.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although a review of past work indicates that standards vary between the classes. Learning material is carefully chosen to promote good levels of interest. Visits into the locality are used productively and supplemented by secondary sources of information, such as discussions with the school's 'lollipop lady', who has lived in the locality for many years and is able to describe changes observed. Photographs, past and present, and videotape recordings are used to enhance the pupils' understanding of changes and differences between localities. There is no longer the over-reliance on worksheets and copied information noted in the last inspection. Effective class control is based on positive relationships and leads to good standards of behaviour; interesting tasks result in good levels of concentration. In the best lessons, the teachers' high expectations lead to high standards of effort, and a lively style of interaction with the class lifts the pupils' interest and concentration to a good level. A friendly and welcoming response to

suggestions encourages all to take part. When considering the fishing dispute, opportunities are given for the pupils to take the role of people with differing viewpoints within question-and-answer sessions. This helps to expand the pupils' understanding, as they consider the factors which might affect the interests of the fisherman, the scientist and the marine biologist. Well-planned support ensures that pupils with special educational needs work productively and make good progress. Teachers generally know their subject well and share their own commitment to and enthusiasm for environmental issues with their pupils. This contributes to the pupils' appreciation of the world they live in.

106. There are opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills, but these are not used sufficiently rigorously by teachers to help pupils develop their skills. Information and communication technology is used occasionally, although not sufficiently, to enhance the curriculum. However, pupils involved in extra lessons in mathematics miss many of their lessons in geography. The energetic and well-informed coordinator is newly appointed and has good ideas for the development of the subject. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school to resolve differences in the depth of study noted between the classes.

HISTORY

107. The school has maintained the satisfactory standards that were found during the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve as well as expected. As at the last inspection, the more able pupils in Year 6 attain above expectations in written descriptive work.

108. Within the lower school classes, pupils develop satisfactory skills of historical enquiry and interpretation and have a sound knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past. During the inspection, pupils were imaginatively involved in work on the early invaders and settlers. Pupils demonstrated the ability to think about the reasons why the Vikings settled in Britain, discovered how long-boats were constructed and demonstrated their understanding of life in the past by writing a letter home describing what life was like in Britain as a Viking child. Good secondary resources were used to illustrate Viking longhouses and carved wooden artefacts. The activities chosen by the teacher helped to motivate the pupils and deepen their understanding. Having chosen an appropriate Viking name, the pupils discussed the sights, sounds and smells, and were imagining what life was like living inside such a house as a child. An effective part of the lesson was when they 'hot-seated' and, through simple rôle-play, took turns in being an actual Viking child whilst others asked questions about their life in the longhouse. 'I found it difficult to sleep because my father was busy sharpening his tools!' This enabled them to share effectively their understanding concerning details of Viking houses and what life was like then.

109. Older pupils learn how to use primary and secondary resources to find out about life in the past. Upper school classrooms are well resourced, with items brought in from 30 and 40 years ago to illustrate and stimulate pupils' interest in that period of history and act as sources for research. In their studies of Britain since the 1930s, pupils show a sound understanding of how life has changed. Teachers organise the work well, giving pupils the opportunity to choose a particular area, such as technology, fashion, transport or music, to enquire into changes and draw comparisons between then and now. The higher-achievers have produced some well-presented work, with perceptive comments comparing life in the 60s, 70s and 80s. However, in one of the lessons observed, a significant minority of pupils made slow progress in their enquiry groups, as they lacked the analytical skills to make comparisons and draw conclusions. In work from the previous year on the life and times of Richard Arkwright as part of their Victorian and local history study, written work produced by pupils in Year 6 about life as a mill child was very imaginatively written and was of a high

standard. Pupils currently in Year 6 were unsure about the chronology of certain early civilisations, but could remember a satisfactory amount of detail concerning life in Ancient Egypt, Roman, Tudor and Victorian times.

110. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in history is satisfactory. Some of the teaching is very good, and this is characterised by the imaginative use of resources, and teachers questioning and enabling pupils to make links and comparisons. Teachers make good use of local features to stimulate knowledge and understanding in history. The local Arkwright mill, Derby Museum and the Jorvik Centre in York are all places used to support learning and stimulate pupils' interest. The school uses local personalities, such as the 'lollipop lady', who came into school to answer prepared questions about life during the Second World War. Good cross-curricular links are made with religious education, geography, art and design, and personal, social and health education. Opportunities are provided for pupils to produce written work in history, but teachers do not make maximum use of these opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills. Although informal, procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Pupils carry out a self-assessment about what they know and have learned after each unit of work.

111. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The use of ICT to access data in history is satisfactory although, the use of word processing or desktop publishing to present work is underdeveloped.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. The school has made some improvements to its provision for ICT since the last inspection, when it was noted that there were many issues which needed to be addressed. The school now follows the government's suggested scheme of work. This has provided staff with much clearer guidance on what they are expected to teach, and has resulted in greater breadth to the curriculum and improvement in the standards attained by pupils. Each class now has a half-hour lesson for ICT, which has helped to improve the way new skills are taught and gives a clearer focus for pupils' learning. However, standards are still below the expected level, and pupils are not yet making sufficient progress because the school has insufficient resources and pupils do not have enough opportunity to consolidate the skills they have learnt or to apply them in a wide range of contexts to promote their learning in other subjects. The school is well aware of its deficiencies, and has a good plan of action to rectify the problems. A room has already been furnished and wired, ready to receive a suite of new computers, which are due to be installed and fully operational by the end of the spring term.

113. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand that ICT can be used to help them find things out. Younger pupils, for example, have explored a web-site to find out about the sort of houses people lived in during World War II and what the effects of rationing were. However, the use of such activities is not widespread, and pupils do not have regular access to a range of CD-ROMs as sources of information. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress in learning how to develop ideas and make things happen. During the inspection, older pupils were successfully writing and amending procedures to control lights, buzzers and motors connected to a cut-out figure of a clown. In this activity, the progress of some pupils was hampered significantly by their inaccurate spelling, as the computer did not recognise incorrectly spelt words in their procedures, such as 'swich'. Younger children have successfully used sensors to record how much light passes through different materials in connection with their work in science on light and shadow. Older pupils have used an object-based graphics program to experiment with the layout of furniture in the classroom. They have understood the principle of moving and positioning objects on the screen, but have yet to develop the ability to place objects with precision. Pupils are developing their understanding of how to exchange and share information using technology, but have yet to

develop their skills in sufficient depth for them to be able to use a range of programs with fluency and ease. Younger pupils have a sound command of how to use various tools in a graphics program to produce designs, such as a shop logo. They know how to enter and edit text using a word processor to produce, for example, a play script, but do not have sufficient skill to produce a uniform layout. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils' ability to alter the style of presentation and their awareness of audience has improved to an acceptable level. Pupils have successfully used email. Some have submitted book reviews to a commercial enterprise, and these can be found on a web-site, but such examples of the use of electronic communication are rare.

114. The teaching of ICT has improved this year because the teachers now have a clear programme to work to and they have a timetabled lesson each week in which to teach new skills. Relevant training has improved teachers' confidence and ability to teach the subject, although further training still needs to be provided for some teachers. This is shortly to be provided as the school embarks on the next stage of training, funded by the New Opportunities Fund. Overall, the quality of the teaching and learning is now satisfactory, but the subject is not yet covered in sufficient depth, and pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise. The pupils' positive attitudes to the subject contribute, however, to their learning. They concentrate well during lessons and try hard to complete their tasks. Lessons are carefully planned and well structured. Teachers give pupils clear explanations, although the sessions are generally too short for pupils to consolidate their skills within the time available. The lack of time also restricts opportunities for effective concluding sessions in which the teacher and pupils reflect on what they have learnt. Most tasks are planned within meaningful contexts. Graphics work, for example, is linked into the teaching programme for art and design, the use of the Internet complements work in history, and the production of graphs has contributed to work on a geography topic. Various examples were seen during the inspection of written work produced on computer. Younger pupils had combined writing about the Vikings with pictures of Viking ships, but little use had been made of the exercise to improve the quality of pupils' writing, which could easily have been edited, but was printed in its finished version with many orthographical errors. In contrast, written work produced by older pupils presenting arguments for and against a bypass for Matlock showed a more rigorous approach, with the power of the word processor being used well to produce good finished articles, and demonstrating very effectively how one piece of well-planned work could contribute not only to pupils' understanding of environmental factors in geography, but also to the development of both literacy and information technology skills. In general, however, not enough use is made of new technology in the teaching of all subjects, and there are few occasions when pupils are able to return to work they have previously done on the computer in order to review and modify it.

115. Work undertaken in school is occasionally supplemented with appropriate pieces of homework. Just prior to the inspection, for example, pupils had written procedures at home ready for them to be tested when it was their turn to use the classroom computer. Many pupils also have access to computers at home, and some teachers give good suggestions as to how pupils can use them in connection with their work at school. In one class, for example, pupils were referred to an interesting web-site in connection with their topic in history. The school has noted, however, that pupils who do not have access to computers at home have fewer skills than those who are able to practise at home and are less confident in using computers in school. At present, the school's procedures for assessment are not robust enough to identify individual pupils' levels of skill so that teachers can introduce a greater element of differentiation into their teaching and ensure that those who lag behind are given appropriate teaching and opportunity to consolidate skills.

116. The new deputy headteacher has taken over leadership of the subject, and has a very clear grasp of the situation with regard to ICT in the school and good ideas as to how the

subject can be developed. The current lack of resources is the major factor affecting pupils' progress at the current time, although more thought could be given as to how the existing computers could be used more efficiently and for a much greater proportion of the day. The development plan for the subject and the proposals for the new computer suite, already partially accomplished, are good. However, there needs to be a clearer mandate to coordinators of other subjects to ensure that they identify appropriate software and opportunities to make greater use of ICT within their own subjects. The school realises that much still remains to be done in order to raise standards in ICT. It has taken sensible steps in the right direction, and staff show a commitment to providing the right opportunities for pupils and to raising standards.

MUSIC

117. Although the school has maintained all of the positive features noted in the previous inspection, the school devotes much less than the recommended amount of time to the teaching of music. As a result, there have been no significant improvements in the school's provision for music, and some aspects of the curriculum are covered in very little depth. A full evaluation of the school's provision for music was hampered by the absence of the music coordinator during the week of the inspection.

118. In the aspects of music which were observed during the inspection, relating to pupils' performing and composing skills, pupils achieve satisfactory standards. However, discussions with pupils indicate that they have little opportunity to listen to a broad range of music and develop sufficient knowledge and understanding of this aspect of the subject. Additional activities, such as instrumental music lessons or participation in the school's choir, help some pupils to achieve significantly higher standards than others, and whole-school productions are also a very important factor in improving pupils' performing skills to an appropriate level.

119. There are good qualities to the pupils' singing; it is generally tuneful, and words are enunciated clearly. However, their day-to-day singing lacks sparkle and verve. As pupils entered each of the assemblies during the week of the inspection, they joined in with singing extracts from the musical production, which was to be performed to parents shortly after the inspection. Because of the constant movement of pupils into the hall and the lack of a dynamic lead, the singing lacked real life, and pupils found it hard to raise their performance when given the opportunity to sing without the distractions. The school choir, however, hinted at higher standards as they performed two songs, maintaining some tricky rhythms and singing with a much greater degree of enthusiasm. Equally, a small group of recorder players, after a shaky start, displayed good standards of musicianship as they played the accompaniment for a song performed by the whole school. Most pupils sing willingly when part of a large group in class, but some pupils, particularly boys, are reticent to sing in smaller groups in front of an audience. In one lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, however, some groups of four pupils sang with great enthusiasm and aplomb.

120. Pupils' composing skills are satisfactory. In a lesson in Years 3 and 4 on the pentatonic scale, pupils composed and performed short melodic phrases using a variety of tuned percussion instruments, such as xylophones, metallophones and glockenspiels. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 displayed a wide range of ability as they endeavoured to compose a chorus, using words from commonly heard sayings to fit a well-known tune. Some pupils produced very effective results, creating amusing choruses and displaying a good sense of rhythm and dynamics in performance. Others struggled to make their words fit the tune.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although there are indications of distinct strengths in the teaching in some classes. Many of the teachers are musically gifted.

In one class, the teacher gave a good lead to pupils through her singing. In another, the teacher showed a very good command of musical terminology and gave clear explanations to pupils. Other teachers play musical instruments. These positive features help pupils to have confidence when performing and give them a clear understanding of musical terminology. However, the weekly half-hour slots for teaching music do not give enough time for teachers to develop lessons as effectively as they could. Because of the time constraints, pupils are not always given enough opportunity to contribute their own ideas and suggestions, and little time is available for pupils to develop their appraising skills. In all of the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils composed and performed, but there was insufficient time at the end of each lesson for them to evaluate what they had heard, to make suggestions as to how the performances could be improved or draw points of learning for their own performances. In some lessons, the teachers ask questions skilfully, helping pupils to think and learn. In others, questions are not open-ended enough and do not provide pupils with enough challenge to help them deepen their understanding. Most pupils display positive attitudes to music and, as a result, participate enthusiastically in lessons. This led, for example, to some good attempts at producing choruses composed of catchphrases. Some pupils, however, display embarrassment at performing in front of others, and some boys a reluctance to work with girls. These issues need to be tackled more effectively when pupils are younger, so that pupils' reluctance to perform does not hinder their progress.

122. Time constraints restrict the depth of the curriculum covered, and little opportunity is given to pupils to develop their skills of listening to and appreciating music from a range of traditions and cultures. Other opportunities are missed to make good these deficiencies. For example, there is no regular programme of music for pupils to listen to at the start and end of assemblies. In discussion, older pupils showed a distinct lack of knowledge of famous composers. Some pupils miss their weekly music lesson because they attend additional classes for mathematics. It is very difficult for these pupils to make up the ground lost.

123. Occasional visitors to the school, and involvement in various community activities, strengthen the school's provision for music. The annual Christmas performance involves all pupils, and gives opportunity to those who are learning to play a musical instrument to perform in front of others. A good range of peripatetic teachers offers individual tuition to pupils who wish to learn to play the flute, recorder, guitar, cornet or cello, although the number of pupils taking up these opportunities is relatively small. Because of the absence of the music coordinator, it is not possible to judge the impact of her leadership for the subject. However, in common with many other subjects, there have yet to be opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. During the inspection, classes were chiefly involved in games activities, although one dance lesson was also observed. From the evidence seen during these lessons and from discussions with teachers and the coordinator, standards in physical education are above those expected nationally and have improved since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. By the end of Year 6, the standards of attainment in swimming are satisfactory, and up to three-quarters of pupils achieve their 25-metre swimming certificates.

125. Pupils acquire and develop games skills well. During the inspection, pupils in both lower and upper school were practising hockey skills in the playground and demonstrated above average skills for their age. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrated good control over the ball, using the hockey sticks effectively and sensibly. They progressed from controlling the ball on their own, to passing the ball in pairs, whilst gradually increasing the distance. Most pupils could pass the ball accurately over some distance. Pupils in Years 5 and 6

demonstrated a good level of skill when dribbling and were starting to master the art of reverse-stick dribbling. In small-sided games, pupils controlled the ball well, moved around the pitch with confidence and made accurate shots at goal. Good direction from the teachers also helped pupils to improve their skills. Exercises, which required pupils to change direction rapidly on the teacher's whistle, helped them to develop greater control. Pupils looked carefully before running in different directions and could make careful moves to avoid collisions on the pitch. When combining these skills in a game, pupils showed a good ability to organise themselves, work together and play as a team.

126. A dance lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrated that standards are above expectations for this aspect of physical education. The pupils worked together well, listened carefully to the instructions from both their teacher and the taped programme, and enjoyed building up the sequence of a new country-dance. They used well-remembered sequences from previously learned dances and applied them successfully in the new context.

127. The teaching of physical education is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and some very good skills that help to clarify expectations of lessons and enable pupils to make good progress. Since the previous inspection, the school has benefited from a popular commercial scheme, which includes training for teachers and the provision of good-quality equipment. All teachers have undertaken this training. Teachers ensure that lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and that there is an appropriate balance between demonstration by teacher or chosen pupil and whole-class involvement. Teachers use good examples and critical evaluation to extend pupils' learning and improve their skills. In the country-dance lesson, more use could have been made of evaluation by having half the group watch whilst the other half performed. This would have enabled pupils to improve their own performance through observing and commenting upon that of others.

128. Leadership and management of physical education are good. The school has devised its own scheme of work that covers all the required aspects. The scheme is comprehensive and helps the teachers to plan a varied programme of physical activities throughout the year. In the summer term, pupils make use of facilities at the local secondary school. Pupils have very good opportunities to take part in sporting activities. In June, there is the South Peak Sports athletics event, and in July the school is involved in the local area Festival of Sport. Last summer, the school's cricket team got to the final in the Wrigley's Quick Cricket competition. Interest is maintained through visitors helping to train in school; these include members of the Matlock Football coaching team and a pupil's grandmother who coaches netball.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. Standards for pupils in Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus but, as at the time of the last inspection, the pupils' learning lacks depth in many aspects of the subject. This is mainly because too little time is allocated to lessons, limiting the pace of learning. Improvement in the subject has been unsatisfactory, and further developments are now on hold again as the school awaits the introduction of a revised local syllabus next term.

130. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 know that the New Testament gives an account of the life of Jesus, and that some of the stories, such as that of His birth, are repeated in slightly different detail within different gospels. The pupils are unaware of the names of the twelve disciples, although they can give an account of the Easter story, understanding its significance for Christians. They know that Moses received the Ten Commandments and that other major world faiths also establish rules for the behaviour of followers. For example, they remember the Five Pillars of Islam, but not the

requirements of each. They know that Buddhists represent eight points of law on a wheel. They are aware that different world religions have their own place of worship, and some pupils remember that Muslims worship in a mosque and Christians in a church. Pupils cannot remember visiting a church, but know that members of local churches visit school each week to lead the school's assembly.

131. Younger pupils have considered the different versions of the story of the Creation that exist within different religions, such as that of the Christians and of the Hindus. They consider places which are special to followers of different faiths and their means of prayer and meditation. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were observed enjoying the benefits of meditation as a feature of the Buddhist religion, and they found the experience calming and peaceful. They entered readily into the visualisation process, imagining a walk on a beach, and visibly relaxed as they became lost in their own thoughts.

132. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, although past written work and discussions with pupils indicate that learning generally lacks depth. The main reason for this is that not enough time is allocated to the teaching of religious education. Some of the short lessons allocated to religious education, however, are effective. In a lesson on meditation for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher had a good strategy for preparing pupils for the experience so that they were attentive and focused on the topic. Accordingly, pupils' attitudes to religious education are generally positive, and individual pupils say that they find the subject interesting. In Year 6, pupils found interest in spotting the similarities and differences between the accounts of the birth of Christ within the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with support from the teacher or other pupils and, as a result, make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils.

133. Through the study of world religions, the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The opportunities for reflection, seen working well with pupils in Years 3 and 4, and discussions on the principles of good behaviour through following rules, make a good contribution to the pupils' personal and moral development.

134. The newly appointed coordinator has made a start on improving standards in the subject through introducing a more efficient method of planning. However, she is waiting for the publication of the new locally agreed syllabus to enable her to make a full review of the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. There are some shortages in resources to be addressed, such as the lack of a set of Bibles for class use and gaps in resources for Judaism and Buddhism. There are currently no procedures for assessment in religious education, which is unsatisfactory.