

INSPECTION REPORT

TYNSEL PARKES C.E. (C) FIRST SCHOOL

Uttoxeter

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124282

Headteacher: Mrs. L. Gallimore

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. Gill
4074

Dates of inspection: 11-14 September 2000

Inspection number: 224502

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Uttoxeter Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST14 7HE
Telephone number:	01889 256380
Fax number:	01889 256380
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. P. Edginton
Date of previous inspection:	December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. R. Gill – 4074	Registered inspector	Science, religious education, art and music.	What sort of school is it? The school’s results and pupils’ achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs. B. McIntosh - 8922	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 its parents?
Mr. J. Porteous - 28011	Team inspector	English, mathematics, design and technology, physical education, special educational needs.	How good are the curricular opportunities?
Mr. M. Egerton - 11927	Team inspector	Under fives, equal opportunities, information technology, history, geography.	

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services
5, Huntsman Close,
Beaumont Park,
Huddersfield,
HD4 7BR

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The Registrar,
Inspection Quality Division,
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33 Kingsway,
London WC2B 6SE.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized school for boys and girls aged between 3 and 9 years old. It has 226 pupils on roll with 40 children in the nursery who attend on a part-time basis. At the time of the inspection there were 35 children on roll in the reception class. Nursery and reception class children are introduced into school over a period of three weeks at the beginning of the school year. The majority of pupils are from the immediate locality. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. All the pupils are of British heritage and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Seven per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Tynsel Parkes C.E.(C) First School is an effective school with a warm and caring atmosphere for learning. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced significantly in the last four years and the quality of teaching is now good. Standards are still low compared to national averages, but more pupils are now reaching nationally expected levels at the age of seven. However, there are still too many pupils scoring at the lower levels and not enough at the higher levels. The school is well led by the headteacher, staff and governors who have a strong commitment to improving standards and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Helps the staff improve their teaching.
- Provision is very good for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The pupils' behaviour is very good and results from very good relationships and provision for personal development.
- Provides very well for pupils with special educational needs.
- The headteacher and staff create a Christian, caring and family atmosphere in which pupils feel confident and cared for.

What could be improved

- The setting of targets to improve standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The way that reading is taught.
- The provision for those capable of higher than average attainment.
- The standard of art and design.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1996 and since then it has made good progress in dealing with the key issues identified in the previous report. Teaching, at that time, was a serious weakness with one in four lessons judged as being unsatisfactory. This is not the case now. Much of this improvement is due to the direction, monitoring and support given by the headteacher and the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. This improvement of teaching has been accompanied by equally solid improvements in: the number of seven-year-old pupils reaching the required level in English and mathematics; standards in science and information technology amongst the seven- to nine-year-olds; standards in design and technology; the system for monitoring and evaluating

spending; managerial systems and the use of the school's development plan; and the role of co-ordinators. However, standards in art throughout the school have not improved. Assessment procedures have improved, but they are not yet used well enough to make overall standards better for seven and nine-year-olds. The school has worked hard to improve the level of attendance and this is now satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7- year -olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	D	D	E	E*	Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E Very well below average E*
Writing	C	D	C	D	
Mathematics	C	D	E	E*	

This table shows that pupils' overall attainment, at seven in 1999, was well below the national average in reading and mathematics. However, standards in writing were average. Pupils' attainment was below or very well below average when compared with pupils' results from schools with a similar free school meal figure.

Attainment for seven-year-olds, at the time of the inspection in English and mathematics is in line with the national average. Unconfirmed results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests show that high numbers of pupils reach the expected levels in writing and mathematics with fewer in reading. These results show improvement over the last few years. Overall, pupils' learning is good and they achieve suitable standards except that those capable of higher attainment could do even better and some pupils who score within the lower levels could reach the average.

Pupils in the juniors achieve higher than expected in information technology due to the good quality teaching they receive in the new computer suite. Standards in music are high throughout the school as a result of the specialist teaching that is provided. Attainment is below that found in most schools in art throughout the school. In all other subjects standards are satisfactory. By the age of five children attain in line with expectations in all areas of learning.

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, but those capable of higher attainment do not always do as well as they could do.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour is of a high standard and contributes very effectively to the good learning in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work very well with each other and are very confident with other children and adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has improved levels of attendance. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

The very good behaviour of the pupils, the relationships in school and pupils' personal development are significant strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5 - 7 years	Aged 7 - 9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons observed. In 75 per cent of lessons teaching was good or better and in 17 per cent of all lessons it was very good. Lessons are unsatisfactory in five per cent of cases. Teaching is good for children under five. The teaching of pupils aged between five and nine is good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been satisfactorily implemented by staff and are generally well taught. The teaching of writing is sound, but reading is weaker. The school has grouped older pupils for English and mathematics based on how well they have learnt in the past and this has helped to improve pupils' progress. The school meets the needs of all pupils, but teaching in art is still a weakness. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a strength. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they concentrate hard on their lessons. Sometimes too little is expected of those pupils who could learn faster or go further than the rest. Their learning is limited in this respect.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced. It meets statutory requirements. The planning for art is a weakness, as aspects are not covered in enough depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is strong and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision has improved since the last inspection and is a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is successfully providing a very good level of care to ensure pupils' welfare. Assessment procedures have improved, but are not used effectively enough to ensure a more rapid rise in standards.

There are good relationships with parents and they are supportive of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and staff are an effective team who are self-critical and plan constructively. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school. Standards are being raised, but the school needs to be ambitious for those capable of higher attainment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are enthusiastic and very involved in evaluating the school's performance. They fulfil statutory requirements and take a keen interest in the pastoral work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes use of national data and local statistics to evaluate its performance and the headteacher evaluates teaching well. The co-ordinators have not yet monitored teaching enough.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of resources. Good use is made of computers in the new suite, but too little use is made of them in classes.

There are enough teachers and classroom support assistants for the number of pupils on roll and they are appropriately deployed. The accommodation is good and maintained to a good standard. Resources are satisfactory and used well. The headteacher and governors take a vigorous interest in all aspects of school life. They seek information from all sources, including parents and they are constantly seeking ways in which to run the school more efficiently and effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school expects their children to work hard.• Teaching is good.• Children are making good progress.• Standards of behaviour are good.• Children are happy in school.• The school is approachable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside school.• The homework system.• Information about their children's progress.• The way that the school works closely with parents.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views, but some children's progress could be better. A good range of activities outside lessons is available for the older children. These are well attended. The school establishes effective relationships with the majority of parents encouraging them to come into school at every available opportunity. Communications between home and school have improved over the last two years. There is good information for parents about their child's progress, but targets for improvement are not always written in a way that parents can easily understand. The homework system could be improved to make it clearer to parents about the tasks and how they can help.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The National Curriculum test results in 1999 showed that seven-year-olds were well below the national expectation in reading and writing and above average for writing. Science results, which are measured by teachers' assessments, were well above national expectations, but no pupils scored at the higher level. When these results are compared with those achieved by schools with similar numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals, they are worse. Reading and mathematics are very well below the expected level and writing is below it.
2. Initial assessments on entry to the school show that the majority of children are below average in literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. This is borne out by the findings of the inspection. Nevertheless, children are on course to reach the nationally expected goals in learning, in all areas of learning, by the time they are five. This is due to the good teaching that they receive in the nursery and reception classes.
3. Children, who reach an average level of attainment by the time they are five and are then below average at seven years old, seem to make poor progress during their time in the infants. This is, in part, due to the way attainment is measured at the age of seven. The below average results came about because, although a satisfactory proportion of the pupils was attaining appropriately for their age, too few pupils attained higher standards.
4. Over a four-year period from 1996 to 1999 pupils' results follow a similar pattern. They are well below average in reading and mathematics and below it in writing. However, there are signs of improvement that demonstrate that the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and the general improvements in teaching, are finally beginning to show dividends. For example, in the 1999 results for writing 100 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level, 90 per cent achieved it in mathematics and science, but only 88 per cent achieved it in reading. Despite high numbers of pupils achieving expected levels, the schools average is low because there are too few higher attaining pupils and too many score at a low level. This is also shown by the unconfirmed results of the national curriculum tests in 2000.
5. There are no statutory tests for nine-year-olds, but the school's own tests, show that last year's pupils were not on course to achieve national expected levels, in English for example, by the time they are eleven. The situation is slightly better in mathematics, but still too few pupils achieve a higher level. This situation will not improve unless teachers have a clearer idea of what they want individual pupils to achieve by the time they are nine and therefore where they need to be by the age of seven. This lack of specific goals contributes to the lack of higher levels attained amongst seven-year-olds. Teachers do not look at what pupils achieve at five and then decide on ambitious goal for those pupils to reach by the age of nine.
6. In English, pupils, in Year 2, do much better in writing than in reading. This is confirmed by the inspection's findings. The pace of reading progress has lessened as the emphasis on writing has increased. Until this term many teachers gave greater weighting to writing in the literacy hour than they did to reading. The school has moved the direct teaching of reading to groups of pupils from the literacy hour. It now takes place as a separate session before the hour. Standards are beginning to improve now that teachers know precisely what they intend to teach in this short reading lesson and assess pupils' success at the end of it. Standards in finding information from

reference books and CD-ROMs are much lower than they should be. The school's library is not yet established enough to provide a good place in which pupils can research. Writing is often accurate and conveys meaning to the reader in the form of simple sentences. Some more imaginative writing is undertaken in the juniors, but higher attainers could do better and computers are vastly underused for English work.

7. In mathematics, pupils are becoming more confident in arithmetic and are reasonably quick to solve simple problems. The inspection findings concur with the test results that show that many pupils reach the required levels now but few go beyond them, except in the unconfirmed results of 2000 where more pupils reached the higher levels. Nevertheless, standards are still lower than they should be because not enough is demanded of higher attainers, the pace of mental arithmetic is not quick enough in some classes, the use of mathematics is not capitalised upon in other subjects and computers are not often used to further mathematical investigations.
8. In science, many pupils have acquired a satisfactory level of scientific knowledge and older pupils are able to investigate well in groups and reflect on their results. However, the higher attaining pupils do not yet ask additional questions and generate their own experiments to find the answers. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use computers in science lessons. Seven-year-olds have done well when compared to pupils in other schools because 90 per cent of last year's class gained the expected level, but few went beyond it.
9. Beyond English, mathematics and science, pupils' attainment is typical for their age in: religious education; history; geography; physical education; and design and technology. In information technology standards are satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors due to the teaching carried out in the new computer suite. In music, pupils throughout the school achieve higher standards than would be found in most schools. By contrast standards in art are lower than is found elsewhere. The low standard in art is due to weak planning, unconfident teachers and low expectations of that which pupils are capable.
10. Pupils with low attainment on entry to school achieve well in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils with special educational needs, in infant and junior classes, achieve well in lessons, particularly in English and mathematics. There are good procedures in place that help the school to identify pupils who may be having difficulties. The school follows guidance issued by the local education authority and receives good quality professional help whenever they need it. Individual education plans are thorough and are very helpful in enabling class teachers to provide programmes of work and lessons that help pupils to make progress. Teachers are very well supported in classrooms by the work of support assistants who know pupils well and help them to understand tasks and to concentrate for extended periods of time. Some pupils receive additional help to support difficulties they may experience with fundamental reading skills and the school is careful to ensure that these pupils are taught the whole curriculum. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are generally well supported and they make satisfactory progress in lessons. While most pupils achieve well, higher attaining pupils are not making sufficient progress as lessons are too often pitched at what most pupils can achieve and extension tasks are not frequently included in any subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the very good standards of behaviour and relationships. Pupils' attitudes to the school continue to be very positive. Attendance is satisfactory though improving.

12. All staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour and this contributes to the very pleasant and well-ordered community in which learning is supported. This reflects parents' positive views of pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the school. Pupils like coming to school. They clearly enjoy their work and approach tasks with enthusiasm. Staff appreciate the letters and comments they receive complimenting the pupils' behaviour when they visit places outside school and when visitors come into school.
13. Children in the reception class are very well behaved. They quickly gain an understanding of school routines and expectations, as members of staff are very supportive. When the children are changing for physical education lessons, rather than intervene, staff use praise and encouragement to those who find some articles of clothing difficult. This has the effect of promoting independence. Children readily ask questions if they need guidance and respond positively to adults and each other. They are keen to learn and know how to take turns, learning to raise their hands when making comments. They know that things have to be put away at the end of the lesson and they happily work together to achieve this. From this early stage they are beginning to develop positive attitudes towards books and reading. During the reading session they establish secure routines for changing books and they are encouraged to share books with an adult at home.
14. Pupils aged six and above, including those with special educational needs have good attitudes to their work. They show a good level of interest in their work and apply themselves well to their learning. The older children enjoy lively, challenging whole class number games which has the effect of getting them into a confident framework of mathematical thinking. Pupils settle quickly to work and most remain involved in their work, even when not directly supervised. In many lessons pupils are keen to answer questions and ask relevant questions to enhance their learning. Pupils are keen to contribute to discussions and employ previous learning in their answers and suggestions. For example, in a Year 4 lesson the teacher soon found out that the pupils have good basic skills and knowledge about the workings of a computer. Using the pupils' ideas a system for 'cutting and pasting' is worked out and the whole group are confident and eager to tackle the practical tasks themselves. Pupils learn to evaluate their learning and suggest ways for improvement. In a Year 2 physical education lesson the teacher raises pupils' self-esteem by using them to demonstrate their skills and points out what they are doing correctly. The other pupils respond and act upon advice given, which enables them to improve their own performance. Work and ideas brought from home are valued and used in the classroom. In a geography lesson, a book produced at home about a child's summer holiday was used effectively to stimulate a discussion on the climate and landscapes of different places.
15. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school, and when at play is very good. When moving around the building pupils are very orderly and sensible. During playtimes pupils mix well and play together in a friendly way, making full use of the grounds and play equipment provided. Lunchtimes are very well organised and are pleasant social occasions. Many staff including the school secretary sit and eat lunch with the children to make sure that children new to the school are settling in.
16. Relationships throughout the school are of a high standard. Pupils are friendly, polite, and helpful to adults. They give good support and encouragement to each other. At the end of lessons they are keen to share each other's successes and achievements. Pupils show good levels of co-operation in group, class, and individual activities. In many lessons relationships are highly effective in helping achieve a very positive work ethos in which pupils collaborate well. This was evident in a Year 3 and Year 4 science lesson, where pupils shared and used resources well and through observations modified their original ideas about light, vision and visibility. The nice

touches of humour from teachers helps pupils feel valued and this benefits their learning. The school is a happy harmonious community and bullying is not an issue.

17. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils show initiative in their learning and assist in the daily routines of the school. At the beginning of the week a 'special child' is chosen from each class. These children enjoy taking responsibility for tasks in class and around school and carry out their duties with pride. Even the youngest pupils readily accept suggestions for improvements to their work and are able to select, use and return resources. In design and technology lessons pupils are taught to handle tools safely and carefully and they do so sensibly. Pupils carry out independent research work either accessing their information from the Internet or CD-ROM. They are keen to listen to each other and hear about each other's interests.
18. Attendance is satisfactory but improving. Unauthorised absence is below national figures. The school has successfully raised the level of attendance by putting incentives in place to reward those children with good attendance. The children's attitude to attendance has improved. The weekly cup presented for best class attendance is very popular with the children and the announcement of the winner in assembly causes a real 'buzz'. Although good attendance is promoted a number of children are taken on holiday during term time due to the holiday pattern of some local firms. Punctuality is mainly good and most children arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality teaching throughout the school is good and this represents a significant improvement from the time of the last report when twenty five per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory.
20. The good teaching for children in the nursery and reception classes ensures that, from a low starting point, children make effective progress and attain standards, by the age of five, that are similar to those expected nationally. The keynote to this successful teaching is the way in which the teacher and support staff create confidence in the children from the very beginning of their schooling. This has a beneficial effect on children's learning. They are excited by stories and books and are becoming good at predicting what might happen next in a story. Mathematics is taught using a lively approach consisting of songs, rhymes and other counting activities that helps to make learning fun. This is successful and children are beginning to know what the difference is between two numbers and how much change they need at the classroom shop. Other areas of learning are taught equally well.
21. Whilst teaching for pupils in both the infants and the juniors is generally good, there are differences between the two sections of the school. There is more successful teaching in the juniors and the small amount of unsatisfactory and poor teaching exists in the infants where work is occasionally ill matched to pupils' abilities causing their learning to be effected by restlessness and inattention. This does not happen frequently and these pupils are often well motivated for other teachers.
22. Improvements in teaching have taken place across the school. Teacher's planning has greatly improved and the implementation of national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy has helped in providing more brisk teaching that concentrates on what pupils need to know and the speed at which they need to work. The main reservations at the time of the last inspection were that teachers spent too long talking, pupils spent too little time working and tasks lacked challenge. These weaknesses have been tackled well. Most teachers now explain clearly the purpose of the lesson and what they expect the pupils to do. Work is more demanding, but there is still a general lack of additional challenge for those pupils capable of higher attainment.

23. The school has successfully implemented the national frameworks for teaching literacy and numeracy. The teachers' plans follow the national recommendations well and lessons begin effectively with a good decision about what is going to be learnt. This is followed up, at the end of the lesson, by an appraisal of the pupils' success and in what they could have done better. In some classes pupils are asked to comment on their own performance and teachers compare how well this approximates to their own view. Where there are weaknesses they relate to the lack of additional challenges for some pupils and the failure to use computers to extend the learning.
24. Weaknesses in teaching, identified during the last inspection, resulted in low standards in English, mathematics, design and technology and art in the infants. Standards were low in English, science, design and technology, information technology and art in the juniors. In these subjects, pupils' learning was slow. Teachers lacked confidence and expertise. Now standards are only low in art. In the other subjects, teaching has improved well and pupils' learning is good. These improvements have been achieved by systematic monitoring of teaching that has led to teachers being informed of their strengths and weaknesses. Areas for improvement have been identified and dates set for improvements to be achieved. Specialist teaching has also been introduced in music and information technology using the skills of existing staff to teach specific lessons to groups of pupils or whole classes. Pupils in the juniors are usefully grouped according to their capabilities for English and mathematics so that they can receive work more appropriately matched to their level of attainment. The best teaching, under these circumstances expects a great deal from the higher attainers. For example, in one mathematics lesson in the juniors pupils avidly enjoyed the mental arithmetic session at the beginning of the lesson and were desperate to get on and demonstrate their knowledge of numbers up to 1000. Several higher attaining pupils could manage numbers up to 10,000 and relished the chance to solve problems using them. Teaching was brisk, demanding, enthusiastic and well planned. The lesson progressed like clockwork leading to learning that demonstrated significant advances in confidence and understanding. One drawback of this lesson, which is also a fault in many other lessons, is the lack of opportunities to use computers to practise and develop learning in the subject. Computers are used very well in the computer suite, but not in classes. Similarly there is effective teaching in the infants. For example, in an art lesson in Year 2 pupils were taken step-by-step through the techniques of drawing fruit and vegetables by observing them very closely and putting down the small details that they observed. The lesson was so well planned, and the teacher made such good reference to artists and their attempt to do the same thing, that pupils' achievement was of a very high order. The pupils capable of higher attainment achieved well owing to the teacher's high expectations for them.
25. Teaching generally meets the needs of pupils whatever their age except in art where older pupils have produced work that would be more typical for younger pupils in other schools. Teachers help pupils to make progress irrespective of whether they are a boy or a girl. The school's decision to group junior pupils in mathematics, by how well they have done in the past, is a good support for those who have special educational needs. The relationship between pupils, support assistants and teachers is of such a high quality that pupils are able to attempt new work without being afraid to make mistakes. Their efforts are valued and the adults are not afraid to change lessons part way through if they feel pupils do not understand new ideas. Teachers are skilful in including pupils with special educational needs in discussions and their friends listen to their ideas with great patience. There are high quality individual education plans that teachers follow diligently and they also keep sensible and helpful records of the progress made by pupils.
26. The good teaching in lessons results in good learning where pupils concentrate well, gain knowledge and understanding and know how they could have done better. Teachers assess

what the pupils do in lessons well enough, but the slower progress made over time in the infants or juniors, by higher attainers and some lower attainers, who could be pushed to reach the average, is due to the lack of specific targets for nine- year-olds. Teachers do not have specific and ambitious goals for Year 4 pupils in English and mathematics. Consequently, they have no detailed notion of where each pupil is in relation to these goals and what they need to do to improve. Moreover, homework, which is a concern amongst some parents, is not geared to helping pupils achieve individual goals.

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

27. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. At the time of the previous inspection there was limited provision for some aspects of design and technology such as food technology and textiles. This has improved. The school now pays sufficient attention to investigations and experiments in science. There has been good improvement in the opportunities pupils are given to speak, debate and listen to their teachers and their friends, especially in junior classes. The quality of art seen in the school is unsatisfactory. The opportunity pupils have to experience a wide range of styles and media are too few.
28. There is good provision for children under the age of six in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers plan their lessons well and deploy nursery nurses and classroom assistants very well to support children. Good links are made between the nationally recommended area of learning and children receive a wide range of enriching experiences. Children in both nursery and reception classes make good use of the school grounds to further their learning. For example, they find out about the places where ants, slugs and tadpoles live and observe changes in the weather and in the school grounds. They also make a number of visits within the local area, which help their learning.
29. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Teachers have worked hard to implement the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the school chooses to teach junior pupils in groups for mathematics based on how well they have succeeded in previous lessons. Additional time is given each morning to teaching reading. The reading lessons give good support to pupils and help the majority of pupils to improve their skills. The school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy means that the time for other subjects is limited. In some subjects, such as art, the lack of time is one of the factors that makes the subject unsatisfactory, but in music any lack of time is richly compensated for by the quality of the teaching and learning which goes on during lessons. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects, but some of these are of limited value. The scheme of work for physical education, for example, offers little help for any teacher who lacks specialist knowledge and skills. The school is working towards implementing the new National Curriculum and is doing so using national guidelines in most subjects. This is helping to ensure an adequate organisation of subjects while maintaining a sensible balance. Governors have decided not to teach sex education except that which is required by the National Curriculum in science. The school makes very good provision for the personal, health and social education of pupils. The school has good links with primary schools in many countries including France, Italy and Germany. These links are maintained through the Internet and by visits from teachers from link schools. Pupils write and receive information from their friends in foreign countries and this gives them a real sense of purpose for their writing.
30. The quality of planning was criticised at the time of the previous inspection. This is improving. Plans for literacy and numeracy lessons use national guidance and they are always at least satisfactory and often they are good or better. Teachers have a clear idea of what pupils have

learnt about in previous classes and what they need to do over a period of time. Plans for each week are thorough and help teachers to deliver lessons that are interesting and stimulating for pupils.

31. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are careful to include pupils with special educational needs in all class activities. They make sure that the tasks pupils are set improve their confidence and enhance their learning. They take proper account of pupils' individual education plans, especially for reading. Pupils are included in all lessons and teachers are careful to make sure pupils know what they have missed when they receive additional individual or small group support. The national Code of Practice is fully implemented and the school is well supported by the local education authority and other professional services. Learning support assistants give pupils very good support when they are experiencing difficulties. The school's decision to group pupils in mathematics, according to how well they have achieved in the past, is particularly beneficial to pupils with special educational needs. They have the confidence to answer questions and they know that the teacher will adjust the lesson if they experience particular difficulties.
32. Provision for out-of-school activities is good overall but it is very good for junior pupils. There are many after-school clubs for junior pupils which both boys and girls attend. There is a wide diversity of activities including sport of various sorts, language and gardening clubs. The school has close links with its parish church and also maintains links with non-conformist churches in the district. Visits to places such as museums, zoos, theatre and field centres help to enrich the curriculum offered to pupils.
33. Since the last inspection provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved and is now very good and a strength of the school. The very good provision is reflected in the school's caring, Christian ethos and has a very positive impact on the relationships within school.
34. Provision for spiritual development is very good. A strength is the way staff raise pupils' self-esteem and make them feel valued. The school has introduced 'circle time', where pupils sit in a circle and take turns to speak and learn to explore their feelings. In a Year 2 lesson, children gained confidence in making a contribution, because the teacher reassured them that whatever they said would be valued. This had a positive impact in helping children to appreciate each other's thoughts and ideas. The school has an excellent system of recording examples of spiritual development. Members of staff record anything that children say which is of a spiritual nature that shows reflection of a non-material world. Assemblies are well planned and provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and to celebrate pupils' achievements. There is appropriate quietness and calm, and prayers are responded to respectfully. Music is used effectively to provide a good atmosphere for reflection and the quality of singing is good. Displays around school show how spiritual development is well integrated in the curriculum.
35. The provision for moral development is very good. The school is a caring community with clear values, and this permeates its ethos and working practices. Staff set good role models and encourage pupils to understand right from wrong in relation to behaviour in school and beyond. Pupils develop an understanding of school and class rules and are involved in drawing up the school charter. The school uses a good system of rewards that is valued by the pupils. The culture of the school is one where good behaviour is positively reinforced and pupils grow in self-confidence.

36. The very good social development arises from many and varied opportunities provided by the school. Pupils' good social skills are very evident on occasions such as lunchtimes, playtimes and during assemblies. Throughout the school pupils are given appropriate responsibilities. Older pupils prepare the hall for assemblies and run the tuck shop at breaktime. Children are encouraged to look after their environment through the litter picking project which they have introduced themselves. Reception children are developing a good understanding of being part of a group sharing their ideas. Pupils relate well to each other and there are very good examples of this where they are given opportunities for co-operation in lessons. Extra-curricular activities, including sport, drama and language clubs, provide opportunities for pupils to work and play together outside school. Each year all pupils take part in a school production such as the Christmas or summer concerts and these opportunities contribute greatly to social development.
37. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Through subjects such as art, history, geography and music pupils learn about other cultures. Pupils have designed and made pots and tiles in Greek style and studied African art. In school there is an informative display about links with the European schools showing how children exchange information about each other's culture and customs. This work is further enhanced through the 'European Week' held in school each year when all pupils take part in finding out about different ways of life in other countries. Pupils begin their journey in the hall, which is the 'airport', and make their own way to the different destinations. A parent led the visit to Malta bringing into school a wide range of useful resources. Pupils gain a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity of British society and this is reflected in the range of visitors and 'multi-cultural week' activities held annually in school. Pupils experience a range of activities from different cultures each day. For example, a Sikh spoke to the children about his religion and customs and brought a range of artefacts for them to see. Pupils learn about living in a different locality through the links with a predominantly Muslim school. Assemblies link with other faiths such as those of Quakers, Roman Catholics and Baptists.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school is successful in providing a strong level of care to ensure pupils' welfare and safety. Inspection findings agree with parents' views that this is a caring, supportive school. Every opportunity is taken to react positively with the pupils and boost their self-esteem. Pupils are happy to come to school. Daily routines are well organised and run smoothly, so that pupils develop a feeling of confidence which helps them cope well with school life. Teachers clearly know their pupils and their families well and use this knowledge sensitively to help and support them as much as they can. The process of getting to know pupils begins before they come to nursery. A carefully planned induction programme, which includes a home visit from the nursery nurses, ensures each family is prepared for their child to start nursery. Similarly, children receive opportunities to become familiar with the reception classes and teachers before they move into main school.
39. The school receives very good support from educational and health professionals to help them identify pupils with special educational needs and to provide essential support in school. There are very good procedures in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and the school monitors pupils' progress conscientiously. Pupils undertake the whole school academic programme and receive good support from all adults, especially when they experience difficulties. Pupils with physical disabilities are well cared for and are included in all the activities they can manage.

40. All members of staff, including lunchtime assistants, provide a very good level of supervision and carry out their duties in a caring way. All appropriate welfare procedures are in place and used appropriately. The school has a detailed health and safety policy that follows local education authority guidelines and this is implemented very well. The school nurse and community police officer play an active part in promoting the welfare of the pupils. The school nurse has a planned programme of meetings for parents which raises their awareness on health related issues, for example, she has recently spoken to them about infectious childhood diseases. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and all staff aware of the requirements. The designated person has received relevant training and is well experienced to undertake her responsibilities.
41. Attention to promoting good behaviour receives a high priority and it is very well managed. Teachers and other staff maintain very good discipline in a calm effective manner. There are only rare occasions when standards of behaviour decline and this is because the appropriate strategies are not used to maintain good order. Pupils respond well to the teachers' praise and encouragement. The emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem is achieved effectively through the regular celebration of individual success both in class and assemblies.
42. Levels of attendance at the school are satisfactory though improving. Procedures for following up unexplained absences are good. Letters are sent to parents of pupils with unsatisfactory attendance to encourage improvement. The school actively promotes the need for good attendance.
43. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, with some good features, and represent an improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has put together an assessment programme which: helps teachers learn from the results of national tests; and make use of the optional national assessment materials, and other nationally available materials, in the juniors. Children, in juniors, complete a piece of writing every term and the teacher who then sets goals for improvement in the next term assesses this. This concentration on writing as opposed to reading accounts for the difference in results between the two aspects of English. Some pupils' work is studied regularly by senior staff to identify weaknesses from which all pupils could benefit. Targets for improvement are set for all pupils, in English and mathematics, three times a year. These are communicated to parents and tie in with the targets written in the pupils' annual reports. This is a good system, but some parents are rightly concerned that the targets are written in educational jargon and not easily understood. This makes it hard for them to help their child at home.
44. This sound collection of assessment methods is missing one vital component. There is no useful way of recording the results of all these assessments that allows the teachers to set challenging targets for individual pupils, annually, and then see whether they have been achieved. Children are assessed on entry to the nursery and reception classes. These initial assessments enable teachers judge progress made by the end of the reception class, but it is after this that the lack of a continuous record prevents some pupils from doing as well as they might. This particularly applies to those pupils who are capable of attaining beyond the average and those who might fall just below it without extra help. The lack of specific targets for nine-year-olds in English and mathematics also prevents teachers setting ambitious targets for individual pupils in the knowledge that this would help to raise standards overall.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The school successfully works in partnership with parents and carers for the benefit of their children. In the main the school is successful in this aspect of its work. Over the last 18 months

liaison and communication with parents has improved. Parents' views indicate good support for the school. The good number who attended the meeting prior to inspection and returned questionnaires demonstrated this. Many parents are interested in school and support their children well. Parents feel that this is a welcoming, approachable school, the headteacher is very responsive to parental concerns and teaching is good. Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. A significant number of parents responding to the questionnaire, express concern about the range of provision for activities outside lessons, the lack of a clear system for homework and the school not working closely with parents. The inspection team judge the number and range extra-curricular activities provided is good even though they are mainly for the older children. Although there is an expectation that parents will support their children's learning at home, and many do, there is no structured homework system providing clear guidance. The school works hard to encourage and welcome all parents into school.

46. The school gives some good quality information to parents and encourages them to become involved in their children's work. The weekly newsletter is very well received by parents and is a very good way of informing them about the school's daily life and events and is often used to seek parents' views. Parents feel communication between home and school has improved and they appreciate the new planning meetings and the way they are informed about the school budget.
47. Details of topics and work to be taught are included in the newsletter. Meetings for parents on the curriculum have been held, providing useful information about numeracy, and helping children to read and spell at home. Attendance at such meetings is good from parents of the younger children. A number of parents feel that they are not kept well informed about how their child is getting on. Inspectors judge there are a good number of opportunities to learn about how their child is progressing. Parents are always welcome to talk informally to staff at any time if they have any concerns regarding their child. There are also three formal opportunities for them to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress. Parental attendance at progress meetings is very good. If parents are unable to attend they are provided with alternative arrangements. Pupils' annual reports give good information about attainment and progress - clearly highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers set targets for each pupil in mathematics and English. These provide a focal point for discussion at the progress' meetings, but some are not written in a way that parents would readily understand. The school works closely with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are informed from an early stage of the school's concerns about their child. Most attend reviews and are kept well informed of the child's progress.
48. The parents of pupils with special educational needs feel that they can talk to class teachers at any reasonable time. Parents of pupils with special educational needs attend annual reviews and support the school's work well.
49. The school has done much to establish effective relationships with parents and works hard to encourage and welcome them into school. Parental involvement has a good impact on both the pupils' learning and the work of the school. As soon as parents approach school they are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school and their child's education. A good number of parents help in class regularly and many more are willing to assist on educational visits. Parents provide invaluable support by accompanying children to swimming lessons and running extra-curricular activities. There is positive involvement of parents, and pupils in the fund-raising activities organised by the committed Parents' Association that provides good financial support to the school. Parents have made a good contribution towards the cost of numeracy resources and large play equipment for the younger children. Many parents are happy

to support their child when work is sent home. Parents of younger children listen to their children read and make regular comments in the home and school reading diary.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The school is led in an effective way. The headteacher, governors and staff all work well together in endeavouring to raise standards. The headteacher is very well organised in making sure that everyone knows what the school is attempting to achieve and ensuring that the school's aims are discussed and reviewed regularly. The headteacher's work in this respect, and the school's involvement with the Church, have a strong influence on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development - all of which are very good. This was a strength at the last inspection and is even stronger now. Parents are generally pleased with the school and the way it is managed. Any reservations some parents may have are being tackled by staff and governors with the exception of homework that is not yet effectively enough organised to meet the needs of pupils and parents.
51. Four years ago, when the school was last inspected, the standards achieved by seven-year-olds were low in English and mathematics and the teaching in one in four lessons was unsatisfactory. The headteacher, who was new in post at the time of the last inspection, and staff have worked hard to improve this situation. Teaching has greatly improved. Few lessons are now taught unsatisfactorily and the number of pupils reaching the required levels in National Curriculum tests has risen. Much of the improvement in teaching has resulted from the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The staff welcomed these and they have helped them become more effective in the teaching of writing and mathematics - for example. Reading has improved, but it remains a weakness. The school's performance, overall, still looks weak in comparison with other schools because there are not enough pupils who reach the high levels in English and mathematics.
52. The headteacher has instigated a programme of monitoring teaching that is thorough and effective. Each teacher is monitored every term and has targets for improvement set for them. This work has put the school in a very good position to implement the government's system of performance management when it is fully introduced. The governors are aware of this process and how it fits in with their monitoring of standards in general. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have observed teaching, but co-ordinators in general have not yet had the chance to observe teaching in their subjects. They do, however, usefully monitor planning and pupils' work.
53. The governing body has made some good improvements to the school since the last inspection in the areas for development identified in the previous report. Standards have been raised in English, mathematics in the infants and in science and information technology in the juniors. Attainment in design and technology has also improved. The governors are now far more involved in the management of the school, through their committee procedures, their involvement in the school's development planning process and the monitoring work carried out by the literacy, numeracy and special educational needs governors - for example. The governing body now invites parents and staff to an open meeting every year so that the direction of the school can be discussed before the new development plan is written. Many parents state that this has improved their knowledge of the school. These improvements coupled with the better teaching throughout the school have had a positive impact on children's learning. There are two aspects from the previous report that have not been tackled well enough. Standards in art remain low and the use of teachers' knowledge about pupils' performance through assessment techniques is too limited. The school has a wide range of assessment techniques, but the information has not

yet been used in a way to raise overall standards particularly for those pupils capable of higher standards. The governing body is meeting its statutory requirements in full.

54. The school's development plan contains good detail about what the school needs to do. The governors have been closely involved in its production and have linked its implementation well to the school's budget. The need to raise standards even further and the improvements needed in pupils' reading are both central features of the plan. However, the work that needs to be done to raise attainment amongst those pupils capable of higher levels is only referred to and is not detailed enough to ensure success. The plan contains no specific targets for seven-year-olds and those pupils in Year 4, to reach in English, mathematics and science. These are not a statutory requirement, but the absence of such targets means that the school has not set itself specific enough challenges that influence what every pupil could and should be achieving. Currently, the school's development only contains the general aspiration to raise standards substantially.
55. The headteacher's successful leadership and the governors' improved involvement in the management of the school ensure that they know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Some of the school's weaknesses for example in art, have been due to the long-term absence of staff which has held up much needed developments. These matters have now been resolved and new co-ordinators have been appointed. The school is good at taking effective action to deal with its weaknesses. It makes good use of experts from within the local education authority and has developed a good system of delegation within the school to encourage staff to assume responsibility. Co-ordinators, for example, now speak with confidence and enthusiasm about raising standards and improving learning in their subjects.
56. There is an appropriate number of teaching staff who are deployed effectively and form an enthusiastic and committed team. There is also a strong band of classroom support assistants who work well with teaching staff and have a good impact on pupils' learning. The accommodation is good including spacious grounds. The school has built a Millennium garden in its grounds, which provides a retreat for adults and children. For example, one teacher took the class into the garden for their daily moment of reflection and prayer. Resources for learning are generally adequate, but the library is underdeveloped and there is not enough apparatus for physical development for the youngest children. Computers are well used in the school's new computer suite, but underused in classes to allow individuals and groups to follow up their studies in any area of the curriculum.
57. The school makes good use of available grants and actively seeks additional funding. These grants are largely designated for specific purpose and have been put to good use. Funds available for information technology, for example, have had a positive effect on standards. Funds for special educational needs are used effectively, mostly to employ staff. Staff and governors closely monitor the benefit from these monies.
58. The headteacher and governors manage the school's finances very well. The budget is closely monitored throughout the year. The governors make sure that money is spent wisely by always researching how to spend it and choosing the goods and services that represent the best value for the school. A very efficient school secretary who ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the school ably supports them in this work. The school's spending on pupils is about average and given the improvements in teaching and the number of pupils now meeting national expectations, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The headteacher, staff and governors, with support from the local education authority should:

Set more specific targets to raise standards in English, mathematics and science for seven- and nine-year-olds. To do this they should (Paragraphs 5, 26, 44, 54, 80):

- set ambitious targets for Year 4 pupils to aspire to in English, mathematics and science expressing these as percentages;
- set ambitious targets for Year 2 pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science expressed in percentages;
- set targets for subsequent years;
- create a profile for each pupil (from the reception class onwards) that summarises levels achieved in the year and which contains a target for the next year;
- monitor closely the application of these profiles; and
- support teachers in finding ways to help pupils achieve these targets.

Improve the way reading is taught. To do this they should (Paragraphs 6, 47, 51, 69, 72, 74):

- make teaching in guided reading sessions even more focused;
- establish the library and teach the pupils how to research information from books;
- broaden the range of fiction books in classes beyond the commercial reading scheme material;
- introduce pupils to a wider range of authors;
- ensure that parents understand the targets set in reading and that they know how to help their children; and
- teach higher attaining pupils skills that use a higher level of comprehension.

Make better provision for pupils who are capable of higher than average attainment. To do this they should (Paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 44, 54, 76, 78, 79, 81, 86, 87, 91, 116):

- ensure that lesson plans contain particular tasks for higher attainers;
- set extension tasks for those who finish early;
- ask co-ordinators to suggest further areas of study for these pupils;

- make sure that computers are used regularly in classes for additional tasks; and
- keep a close track on higher attainers’ progress and review targets where relevant.

Improve the standards in art and design. To do this they should (Paragraphs 9, 24, 25, 27, 29, 53, 55, 85, 86, 87, 88):

- ensure that enough time is allocated for lessons and that all aspects of the subject are taught; and
- provide teachers with the knowledge, confidence and assessment techniques to improve pupils’ learning.

Other areas for improvement identified during the inspection are (Paragraphs 6, 8, 23, 24, 26, 45, 50, 75, 84, 106, 117):

- the use of computers in classrooms; and
- the use of homework in the drive to raise standards.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

40

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	58	20	3	2	0

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

Information about the school’s pupils

Pupils on the school’s roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school’s roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	194
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

Nursery	YR– Y4
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Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	37

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	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.23
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	26	18	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	25	18
	Girls	13	16	13
	Total	31	41	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (61)	93 (82)	70 (82)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science
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Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	13	26
	Girls	13	13	17
	Total	35	26	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (75)	59 (88)	98 (98)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	194
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	392235
Total expenditure	383646
Expenditure per pupil	1554
Balance brought forward from previous year	7110
Balance carried forward to next year	15699

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	226
Number of questionnaires returned	118

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	35	6	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	46	6	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	44	8	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	45	11	8	11
The teaching is good.	42	50	4	3	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	47	14	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	39	6	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	42	1	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	29	44	15	5	7
The school is well led and managed.	34	52	8	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	49	7	2	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	40	18	3	13

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60. The school admits children to the nursery from the age of three years and four months. The school has a clear policy for the education of children in the Foundation Stage and this is given to all parents along with a welcoming pack of useful information. The school has a carefully thought out induction programme for children entering the nursery and the transfer from nursery into the reception class is done sensitively. Planning is to the nationally accepted early learning goals and this prepares children well for their move to the National Curriculum. The previous inspection report stated that children's achievements in the nursery were not systematically built upon in the reception class. A noticeable improvement in the quality of teaching, well-planned lessons and activities and a new policy for the whole of the Foundation Stage has made a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching and children's learning are now good. At the time of this inspection children were not being taught in the nursery as it was the week set aside for the induction of children through home visits and small groups with parents or carers visiting the school. Judgements are based on work samples provided, planning and observation of the older pupils in the reception class.
61. The school uses an accredited baseline assessment test when children enter the reception class. This shows that more than half the children have below average attainment with particular under-achievement in language. Most children are on target to achieve the early learning goals by the end of their time in the reception class. This represents good achievement and an improvement since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. The school makes good provision for the development of children's personal, social and emotional skills and needs. Children including those with special educational needs achieve the required goals by the time they leave reception. The children settle quickly into the reception class and make good progress in developing their personal and social skills because there are interesting and lively activities through which the teachers make each child feel valued. They are confident when moving around the classroom and moving through the school to the hall. They enjoy responsibilities such as taking the register and putting apparatus away after a physical education lesson. When engaged in class discussions they take turns, listen to each other and put up their hands if they have a particular point to make. Children clearly enjoy each other's company and relate well to each other and to adults. During games in the hall, children did not hesitate in choosing a partner and working with them. The teachers take every opportunity to praise children and raise their self-esteem.

Communication, language and literacy

63. The provision for the development of language and literacy is satisfactory. Most children enter the nursery with below average language skills and often lack confidence in using language in speaking and in writing. Teachers work hard, giving praise and encouragement to the children in order to develop confidence and by the time the children leave reception they are likely to have achieved satisfactory levels in the development of their literacy skills. For example, they speak with confidence and listen well to adults and other children. When writing simple phrases about the Great Fire of London the children are able to recall events from the story and make an

attempt to use full stops and capital letters. The children's response to this story and their ability to recount the events indicates some well-planned and lively teaching. By the end of their time in the reception class, those children capable of higher attainment can write confidently and attempt to spell words they have not used before. Children who experience difficulties in their learning often use the initial letter sound to attempt the spelling. They make good progress in developing enjoyment of books and stories through well-planned sessions where the teachers join in with individual children in talking about the book, asking questions and raising the child's level of interest. All children learn to use their pencils correctly. Teachers provide a suitable range of activities that improve the children's hand and eye control and there are very regular sessions of handwriting. The children who have special educational needs receive effective support that enables them to make satisfactory progress. The positive comments made when teachers mark the children's handwriting and written work not only build children's self-esteem, but also gives clear guidance on how they can improve their work.

Mathematical Development

64. Children's achievements in mathematics are good and most are likely to have achieved the required goals by the time they leave the reception class. Children have a lesson in mathematics each day and most make good progress in consolidating and developing their skills with numbers. They add and subtract numbers up to ten and beyond, work out the difference between two numbers because good teaching provides such well-planned activities with good resources. Children are able to identify a half and estimate how much a jug will hold, often being quite accurate. They can put together coins to make an equal value and calculate how much they have spent and how much they have left when playing number games. They know the correct names or shapes such as squares, triangles and circles and use them accurately. The teachers are good at providing activities where children can consolidate, build on and develop their early mathematical experiences well. Children who have special educational needs receive a suitable level of support that enables them to make satisfactory progress,

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

65. The school makes good provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's achievements in this area of learning are good and they are on course to achieve the typically expected level by the end of the reception year. Good teaching ensures that children learn about their own environment and places close to school. They study the habitats of different creatures such as ants, slugs and tadpoles and observe changes in the weather and in the school grounds. They learn well about people who live far away and are beginning to appreciate the wider world because the teaching uses literature and reference material well to introduce children to new ideas and places. They also are beginning to develop a good understanding of the past through well chosen stories and visual aids. Teachers are adept at seizing opportunities to develop language skills, particularly the introduction of new words. Early investigative skills are developed through experiments on forces and finding out how things work by pushing or pulling and finding out how things respond to stretching, squeezing or twisting. They learn to use the tape recorder and write down instructions that other children could follow. Children's good achievements represent an improvement since the last inspection.

Physical Development

66. The provision for the physical development of children is good and they are on course to reach expected levels by the end of their time in the reception class. The nursery class has a secure paved outdoor area where pupils can climb, run and use wheeled vehicles in safety. In addition

to this they have access to the school hall for movement, gymnastics and the use of small apparatus. Most children's achievements in developing control and co-ordination are good. From an early age they have access to pencils, crayons, scissors and glue. In the reception class helpful guidance from the teacher gave them confidence when using brushes to mix a range of colours. Children develop satisfactory skills in using pencils and other mark making tools through a carefully structured range of activities. Good teaching helps to improve children's achievements throughout the two classes.

Creative Development

67. The school makes satisfactory provision for children's creative development and they are on course to reach expected levels by the end of the reception year. Children learn the basic techniques of colour mixing and applying paint. Teachers ensure they learn how to use and control materials well. Good teaching helps them to gain an awareness of shape, pattern and colour and this can be seen in their lively illustrations of the Great Fire of London. The teachers provide spirited accompaniment to the children's singing. The children know a variety of songs from memory and can sing with real enjoyment.
68. The quality of teaching for children under the age of six is good in all the areas of learning. The reception teacher is very ably supported by the nursery nurse who makes a significant contribution to the children's success. The planned work has clear learning objectives, is geared to the needs of individual pupils and the outcomes of lessons and activities are carefully assessed. The teachers have a good understanding of the new nationally approved levels and plan the children's curriculum well to achieve them. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good in all the areas of learning. The nursery and reception class now work closely together to ensure that children make systematic advances in their learning and this plus the improved teaching has resulted in the advances since the last inspection.

ENGLISH

69. Pupils' achievements, at the age of seven, have improved since the last report, but this is not yet reflected in the average grades gained by the school because not enough pupils achieve the higher levels for reading and writing. The trend of falling standards in reading over the last three years has been halted, but pupils could do much better. The school's own internal tests for nine-year-olds show that standards in reading and writing, in 1999, were low in Year 4, particularly in the number of pupils who do better than would be expected for that age. However, there is now a new team of teachers and standards are more typical at the age of seven and nine. The quality of teaching is now generally good throughout the school. Standards in speaking and listening have improved, especially in junior classes and now they are satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers have tended to place a greater emphasis on pupils' writing, knowing that it is a national weakness. They have helped most pupils to achieve well, despite the fact that those capable of better writing could do even better. Developments in reading have not followed suit. Teachers are aware of this and have put in place some methods to tackle this. Pupils' technical proficiency in reading is benefiting from the new arrangements for reading in groups, but there is still a lot more to do before pupils' achievements reach expected levels.
70. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are so well supported by adults. They learn the most fundamental rules of grammar such as the use of capital letters and full stops and how to build up their own ideas for a story.

71. Teachers plan lessons well and often share the aims of the session with pupils at the beginning of lessons. They are careful to make sure that the activities undertaken by pupils match their level of attainment and that pupils enjoy success. This helps pupils to see the purpose of the lessons and consequently try hard to achieve success both for themselves and for their teachers. Lessons are enlivened and given purpose by the clear, natural links teachers make between the text being studied and basic rules for spelling and grammar. At the time of the previous inspection teachers were beginning to plan together. They are now skilled in this and support one another to the pupils' benefit. In literacy lessons pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to discuss ideas and express opinions. Older pupils explain why some apparently trivial things are important to them before they attempt to put their ideas into a poem. Younger pupils look at the pictures in a large storybook, tell the story to their teacher, and try to guess what will happen on the next page. In these lessons pupils listen to one another with great courtesy and are happy to wait their turn to speak and offer their own ideas. In a geography lesson an older pupil outlined the highlights of his recent visit to Italy to a very attentive audience of his friends who then questioned him in a very mature way. Teachers manage pupils well and pupils respond by behaving well in most of the lessons seen. One result of this is that pupils work with great concentration, especially when writing, and make at least satisfactory and often good progress in lessons. Teachers offer a wide and exciting range of activities, which capture the children's interests and allow them to practise the skills they have learned in lessons. Skilful questioning by teachers encourages pupils to speculate and offer both spoken and written opinions based on careful thought. Younger children are encouraged to recall and re-tell stories when teachers' questioning provides the prompts they need to help them.
72. Occasionally, where teaching is merely satisfactory, learning is sometimes limited when the activities lack the necessary structure to ensure that all pupils remain attentive for the whole lesson. In one lesson, in the infants, the book read by the whole class was too small and could not be seen by all pupils. This resulted in pupils achieving less than might otherwise have been the case.
73. Pupils' writing is usually technically correct. They increasingly use the basic rules of grammar and legible handwriting is seen in most books. Pupils, in the juniors for example, use these skills well when they write reports in science and when they explain their ideas in subjects such as geography and history. They are also adept at re-telling a story or explaining how they might resolve a social or moral dilemma. Teachers mark work conscientiously and often offer good advice to help pupils improve technical skills. Pupils' workbooks indicate that they are not always encouraged to find new and interesting ways of using words when writing stories or poems. Skills learned in lessons are rarely translated from the formal lesson into free prose or poetry. Pupils who clearly have a feel for language are rarely asked if they can think of fresh ways to express a common phrase although they are asked to justify an opinion or to join letters when writing.
74. The school is right to emphasise the need to improve reading standards at all age levels and at all levels of attainment. Teachers have moved the direct teaching of reading to groups of pupils to the beginning of the literacy hour. This has allowed them to concentrate more closely on the skills that need to be developed with pupils who need to make rapid progress in reading. Children clearly enjoy stories and books, but they have no clear idea of its importance in their lives. Pupils are not surrounded by good quality factual, story and poetry books, which stimulate their imagination and cause them to become excited about books. The school does not often promote reading as exciting and enjoyable in itself, but it is seen as an essential tool which pupils must acquire. Targets for improvement relate only to year groups and not to individual pupils or to groups of pupils who have achieved similar levels of attainment. Pupils are rarely expected to

use the library to find information and the quality and range of the books in the library is limited. This limits pupils' scope in reading and has a detrimental effect on the achievements. Teachers rely heavily on a commercial reading scheme to provide the essential elements for all reading skills. Some teachers have difficulty in knowing how to help the poorest readers and how to challenge the more skilful readers. The best teaching in the reading lessons helps younger pupils to become increasingly confident in using their skills. High quality teaching helps older pupils to know that they must try to understand the author's intentions and not merely translate print into words. Those pupils who have few difficulties with basic reading skills are not challenged to question, predict and interpret the author's ideas, intention or use of language.

75. An enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator leads the subject. The emphasis on literacy lessons is having a positive effect on pupils' achievements and they are enthusiastic participants in these lessons. Since the previous inspection standards in writing have improved, especially in infant classes. The rate of pupils' progress has improved but it needs to improve further in writing in junior classes and in reading throughout the school. Computers are used well in the new computer suite for word processing, but they are not used frequently enough in classes for pupils to practise their skills.

MATHEMATICS

76. The achievement of seven-year-olds has been too low over the last three years. However, far more pupils reached the expected level in the 2000 national tests compared to 1996 and the number of pupils gaining higher than average scores has risen sharply. The school's own tests for pupils in Year 4 indicate that standards are as you would expect for this age group, but the number at the higher level is too low. Inspection findings demonstrate that there is now a good standard of work throughout the school. Teachers and pupils enjoy interesting and lively mathematics lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make similarly good progress.
77. Teaching is good throughout the school and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning in lessons. Consequently, the way pupils learn is also good. Teachers explain mathematical ideas well. Pupils are encouraged to use knowledge they already have and work in increasingly complex ways. Pupils in Year 2, for example, are able to see patterns in number, which help them to add and subtract up to 10. With encouragement from their teacher they are able use this skill successfully with numbers up to 20 and have confidence to attempt to work with numbers up to 100. Pupils' interest is maintained as new ideas are taught in a variety of stimulating ways. At the time of the previous inspection there was a lack of co-ordination between classes and some work was repeated. This is no longer the case. Teachers pay close attention to national guidelines when planning lessons. This ensures that pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge are improved term by term. The quality of teachers' planning is good and the good range of activities chosen contributes positively to lively lessons. Pupils are given appropriate work and they enjoy succeeding in mathematics lessons. Good planning allied to the good behaviour, in the majority of lessons, results in good achievement. In one lesson junior pupils were given opportunities to explain the value of individual digits in a four-digit number. The knowledge gained was then used to complete complex addition and subtraction problems. Pupils worked hard and concentrated well for extended periods as they responded to the teacher's high expectations. During working sessions teachers give good support to individuals and groups of pupils. Good questioning by teachers helps pupils to resolve their difficulties and pupils' confidence grows as they complete increasingly complex problems. Good quality questioning also helps those who have difficulties with numbers to think in new ways as they try to solve problems.

78. Teachers mark work carefully but most do not offer written advice that helps pupils understand new processes. One set of junior books has marking for the current term that is constructive and helpful showing pupils exactly what they must do to improve their skills. In this group the teacher changed the work that had been planned because she realised from her marking that some pupils had not fully grasped how to add numbers involving hundreds, tens and units. In another junior class the teacher changed the activity being undertaken by some pupils because they had not fully understood the value of the numbers with which they were working. Teachers are adept in changing plans and activities in order to improve pupils' understanding of difficult mathematical processes. In the best lessons seen pupils enjoy testing their skills against one another and also against their teachers. Such lessons have an element of excitement and pupils delight in their success as teachers increase the difficulty of the task set. Even in these lessons, however, the best mathematicians are rarely challenged to undertake tasks that extend their mathematical thinking.
79. Standards in mathematics are rising, especially in infant classes. The school is successfully implementing the national strategy for numeracy and this is helping to raise standards in all classes. Pupils are not systematically encouraged, however, to attempt work that helps them to use basic mathematical skills in all areas of their work. Year 2 pupils are given a wide variety of stimulating activities in which they use and apply the skills they have learned in more formal lessons. This does not happen consistently in other year groups. In most classes the highest attaining pupils are only occasionally given work that compels them to think deeply and carefully about the way in which they solve problems and present answers in most areas of mathematics. There are good examples of the way in which pupils collect information and present their results in the form of graphs and charts. The school has not yet integrated this kind of work with the tasks pupils undertake with computers. Pupils have sound knowledge of number facts and can add, subtract, multiply and divide simple numbers. They do not recall these facts quickly and few demands to do so are made of them at the beginning of numeracy lessons.
80. The subject is well led by a committed co-ordinator who has analysed test scores and highlighted areas of mathematics, which need to improve. No specific targets are set, however, for individuals or groups of pupils and this limits achievement overall. Nevertheless, there has been a good improvement in the school's mathematical provision since the previous inspection.

SCIENCE

81. Pupils' achievements have steadily improved since the time of the last report, where standards for the nine-year-olds were below that found in other schools. Now, most pupils achieve what is expected of them and some do much better. This is linked to the kind of teaching they now receive from a new team of teachers. The quality of teaching has improved because teachers focus on what different groups of pupils should achieve in the lesson, including those who could achieve more than the rest. This is beginning to pay dividends in the way that pupils rise to the challenges. The same kinds of improvements are being made in lessons for seven-year-olds. Standards of pupils' work at the end of Year 2, as judged by their teachers have improved steadily since the time of the last report. Far more pupils achieved the expected level in 2000 compared to 1996. The weakness now lies in the very low numbers of pupils that do better than average. Current teaching is designed to tackle this weakness, but changes in lesson planning are too new to show a sustained improvement in this aspect. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress because classroom assistants who work in tandem with the teacher to fulfil the aims of the lesson so closely support them.

82. Pupils in all classes gain scientific knowledge from listening to their teacher, looking things up in books and experimenting for themselves. They get plenty of opportunity to test things out; making simple predictions and arriving at conclusions. They are good at this, but they are not expected to ask their own questions arising out of an investigation or suggest another test to do. This limits the achievements that are made particularly amongst those pupils capable of higher attainment. Sometimes pupils do not write their conclusions clearly enough and this goes unchallenged by the teacher. This happens in classes where the marking of pupils' work is more concerned with effort and not enough with the quality of thinking and explanation shown by the pupil.
83. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school, but there are signs, in some classes, that teaching is improving rapidly because those teachers are more clear about what they want pupils to achieve in the lesson. They have thought very carefully about how to challenge pupils' thinking. In satisfactory lessons teachers plan appropriate work covering the required range of activities. They do not depend too heavily on getting the pupils to fill in simple worksheets, but require pupils to practise their writing when explaining what they have done. However, these lessons are aimed too much at the average and all pupils are expected to tackle the same task. Pupils with special educational need are supported well, but average and higher attaining pupils often end up with similar work in their books. This is the reason so few pupils at the age of seven achieve the higher levels in National Curriculum assessments. For pupils in Years 3 and 4 their science work has been written up in workbooks that also contain history, religious education and geography. This has confused pupils and does not help them to concentrate on the knowledge and skills that are being learnt. The best teaching produces very good learning amongst the pupils. They learn to ask pointed questions, think deeply about the results that they obtain and work very well with other pupils when investigating. For example, in a lesson for older pupils about light the teacher was most expert in listening to pupils' talking about their work and probing with further questions designed to improve understanding. This continual dialogue between teacher and pupils, coupled with extension tasks for those who can go further, helps to cement learning in an exciting way. The same sort of quality teaching exists in Year 2, where pupils were classifying types of food and were challenged by the teacher to place a fruit pie into one or other of the categories. This simple, but demanding task caused good debate and eventually the idea of items being in two or more categories at once.
84. The management of the subject has been held up recently by the absence of the co-ordinator. This has effected pupils' achievement since many of the planned improvements in learning were put on hold. There is a new co-ordinator in place, for this academic year, and the management of the subject is now focused on improving pupils' learning. The assessment of pupils' achievements at the end of a unit of work is a common weakness throughout the school. Computers are not used enough in lessons to record data and present results.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Standards reached by seven- and nine-year-olds are below those that are typical for their age. This was the case at the time of the last inspection and the school has improved little since then. Pupils' achievements are weak and their work from last year shows that they make slow progress in lessons. The co-ordinator has been absent from school for some time and the subject has been under developed. There is a new co-ordinator now and some teaching shows the immediate impact gained from having a co-ordinator in post with specialist knowledge of art.
86. The weaknesses stem from the fact that most teachers: lack confidence in their ability to teach art; have weak knowledge of the subject; and expect too little from the pupils. This results in

painting in the juniors that is no more advanced, in terms of technique, than that produced in the infants. Sketchbooks, used in the juniors, contain little beyond quick sketches and nothing that represents experimentation towards a wide range of sketching techniques, for example. Computers were not used in art until this term so pupils have not built up confidence in using a range of programs to produce images. Some good art has been produced, like the African patterns in Years 3 and 4, in response to looking at batik work and the three-dimensional collages made out of natural materials in Years 1 and 2. However, these depend too much on the individual teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm rather than a clear school policy put into practice.

87. The school has made a very good start, this year, to tackle the weaknesses. Teachers' plans are guided well by the national scheme of work for art and the new co-ordinator has advised on individual lesson planning with good results. For example, a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 was focused on producing pastel sketches of a lit candle. Pupils were asked to draw from memory and then again after watching a candle burn and looking at an image of a candle in an artist's work. They also had the opportunity to produce an image of a candle on the computer. The results were dramatically different to anything produced before. The pictures were vibrant and full of lines and colour that showed that the pupils had thought hard about what they had seen and struggled to improve their work as they went along. Pupils achieved the same sort of high quality results in Year 2. They were sketching fruit and representing the smallest details that they observed. However, these lessons are not common and the majority of teaching and learning remains unsatisfactory. In general, the pupils do not achieve enough, particularly those who could do more.
88. The school's policy and schemes of work, to guide lesson planning, are out-of-date and the annual programme of work does not cover the various aspects of art in sufficient depth - for example, printing and three-dimensional work. There is no systematic build up of skills throughout the school. The assessment of pupils' work has not been developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. By the end of Years 2 and 4 pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve standards appropriate for their age. At the time of the previous inspection the subject was not taught fully, but this is no longer the case and every aspects is taught properly. Teaching and pupils' learning are now satisfactory throughout the school.
90. Teachers question younger pupils well to help them to learn that it is essential to work safely in design and technology lessons. Pupils respond by handling simple tools with great care both when working on their own and when they pass tools to their friends. Learning is satisfactory because pupils think carefully about the equipment that they will need to complete the task. Teachers have clear expectations about how pupils should behave and pupils respond appropriately. Pupils settle to work without fuss and co-operate well in groups. Pupils use their time efficiently and complete tasks within the allotted time. A display set up by the teacher led to an animated discussion on whether tomatoes, peppers and beans are fruit or vegetables. The teacher is able to refer to previous work in science to help them make a decision. Pupils also refer to their previous work to remind themselves that they should plan their own work before beginning. At the end of the lesson they are encouraged to evaluate what they have done and suggest ways in which they could improve. Teachers encourage pupils to think carefully and to assess their work during lessons. In a Year 1 lesson this led to pupils producing recognisable three-dimensional representations of the fruit they had been studying. In a Year 2 lesson pupils used a digital camera to record their work. Pupils have good ideas on how they can improve their work and they are encouraged in this by their teachers.

91. The subject has been handicapped by the long-term absence of the co-ordinator. At the time of the inspection the new co-ordinator had been in post only four days. Therefore the staff has not yet matched current practice to the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Moreover, the current assessment procedures are casual. This lack of assessment methods has an effect on the work of pupils who could do more demanding work as they are not identified well enough under the present arrangements. The teachers have not yet worked out how they are going to assess pupils' work in this subject.

GEOGRAPHY

92. Standards throughout the school are satisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when there was too little work completed to allow pupils to reach expected levels.
93. Teachers build successfully on work done at the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good throughout the school. Lessons are well planned to enable the youngest pupils to learn about the local environment, they begin to do this by drawing maps of what they can remember seeing on their way to school. At a later stage, inspired by a story told by the teacher, they use their earlier skills to draw good clear maps of Rosie's Farmyard. Whilst reading a story of the people who live on a small Scottish island they become engrossed in the life and features of the island and are able to retain and recall a great deal of information. The response to this work suggests that it has been presented to them in a way that has captured their imagination, indicating teaching that has been well planned and lively.
94. As pupils progress through the school they begin to develop good mapping skills, use a key to identify features and draw with greater accuracy. They study the position of their own town in relation to other places, particularly those European towns with which the school has links. Studies are made of weather phenomena such as tornadoes, acid rain and thunderstorms. In making pupils aware of the journey of a river, teachers make valuable links with local river systems in order to make the work more meaningful. This good teaching results in good learning and achievements in both the infants and the juniors.
95. The emphasis placed on pupils' learning about different places is a significant strength. As well as the European links, Tynsel Ted, the school mascot accompanies pupils on their holidays. These holidays are then tracked and recorded. Information is collected about where he is and his exploits in new places and this provides pupils with knowledge of other places both in this country and abroad.
96. This work and many other aspects of the geography curriculum strongly reinforces skills learnt in literacy lessons and provide pupils with many opportunities to explore and extend their language.
97. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and enjoy their work. Planning files show good knowledge of the subject by the teacher, which enables them to make effective use of resources both locally and further afield and to plan imaginative work for the pupils.
98. The leadership of the subject is good. Resources are audited and curriculum plans monitored for work planned to fulfil the requirements of the different strands.

HISTORY

99. A close examination of teachers' planning and interviews with pupils show that there is good provision for history and that pupils, including those with a special educational need, are gaining a sound knowledge of historical facts and the necessary skills to carry out investigations.
100. Teaching and pupils' learning are good throughout the school. The curriculum is well planned. Pupils in Year 1 engage in activities with their teachers that help them to understand the passage of time and how to put in order a series of events. This is done by looking at how transport has changed over the years, by looking at models and photographs or by sequencing events in their own families from grandfather and grandmother to their own birth. They quickly begin to understand things that are in the past and those that belong to the present. Teachers choose

interesting characters and events in history to tell them about, such as Guy Fawkes and the Great Fire of London. In telling them about the Great Fire, pupils recall that teachers select the most interesting parts of the story and tell it in a way that ensures that pupils will remember the important events. The pupils' pieces of writing and illustrations show that they have clearly remembered and enjoyed the lessons about that particular topic. Later in the infants, teachers make good use of a visit to Shugborough Hall where children explore the lives of everyday people at the time of the 2nd World War. Pupils experience what it was like to shelter from a bombing raid and to milk a cow by hand. By now they are able to make time-lines and use different sources of information such as artefacts, pictures, photographs and books for research purposes.

101. Teachers make very good use of involving pupils in real experiences. Older pupils in the juniors have vivid memories of the study of Ancient Greece. Teachers organised a very successful Greek day in which pupils experienced drama, art and sports typical of that period. These experiences helped them to remember facts about the Greek theatre and the plays, the heroes of Greek legends and how the Greeks used to live. A similar experience where they enjoyed a Victorian school day gave them a clear insight into how life changes over time. This good teaching clearly has a positive effect on pupils' learning.
102. Teachers place a strong emphasis on the use of correct historical language encouraging pupils at an early age to talk about, 'a long time ago'. Later on pupils use terminology like BC and AD correctly and carry out mental calculations of the number of years between dates. This makes a valuable contribution to the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. At the time of the previous inspection, one of the key issues was to raise standards in information technology in the juniors. Insufficient skill in word processing by older pupils was highlighted. These issues have been addressed since the appointment of a new co-ordinator for the subject. There has been much development since then and now standards, by the time pupils are nine, are higher than would be expected for their age. The first step was to increase teachers' confidence in using computers and this has been achieved by good training. An excellent computer suite has been set up to allow the direct teaching of computer skills to classes of pupils and the second phase of improving the application of computer skills within the classroom is now under way. The standard of word processing is now much higher throughout the school and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching and pupils' learning is now good in the juniors and satisfactory in the infants where pupils do not have regular access to the computer suite.
104. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to represent information in a variety of ways. They are able to produce it in a graphical form, communicate it using text and are able to print it. Pupils make sound progress due to the fact that when they are using the computer, or learning about control technology, the teachers work with them guiding them through the necessary steps and improving both their confidence and skill. When younger pupils are learning how to use the tape recorder they produce their own information sheet giving details about what steps are needed to work the machine. This not only consolidates their learning, but also provides them with a point of reference for the next time they need to use it. Standards are as they should be by the time pupils are seven. They are not as high as those in the juniors because younger pupils do not use the computer suite for their lessons.
105. Older pupils make very good use of the computer suite. Well-planned lessons are given on different aspects of computing which are then systematically practised and consolidated. These

lessons have a positive influence on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve. A good example of this was a well taught lesson to Year 3 and Year 4 pupils on cutting and pasting skills. The pupils were taught in small groups giving ample opportunity for questions and discussion and then they were able to test their skills while being supported by a teacher. This very well organised teaching made pupils very keen to show what they could do on the computers. They were full of enthusiasm, eager to contribute and very helpful to each other. It is quite apparent that by the time they reach the top of the school they have gained considerable knowledge of computers and have made good progress towards attaining high levels of competence.

106. The co-ordinator now has a scheme of work that will ensure progression both in the Foundation Stage and through the rest of the school and an assessment grid that will help teachers to track pupils' progress and guide teachers in planning their lessons. Despite the plans for better use of computers in classrooms, the opportunities for pupils to practise their skills are limited. Teachers often miss opportunities to plan for the use of computers in subjects such as literacy and numeracy. This affects the learning of all pupils, but particularly those who are capable of extra work in the form of research or problem solving.

MUSIC

107. The pupils are making very good progress and the standard of work is now better than that in other schools. This is a good improvement since the last inspection report when standards were satisfactory and pupils were making satisfactory progress. This has been achieved by specialist teaching, most of which is carried out by the co-ordinator with very good support from two nursery nurses. Pupils have a very positive approach to the subject, particularly in singing and using instruments in groups largely due to the well organised and exciting teaching that they receive.
108. By the time they are seven, pupils are very confident at singing. This results from the very good teaching they receive. They can experiment well in trying to find out the many ways in which their voices can be used to make sounds. They can keep the beat well and respond positively to being told how they could improve their performance. This is achieved in the context of very well planned lessons that drive along at a fast pace. The co-ordinator's musical ability has a very strong influence on the rate of pupils' learning. For example, they did well at singing and clapping the beat because they received such a good unaccompanied demonstration. Pupils are frequently reminded about the purpose of the lesson and encouraged to say how well they thought they had succeeded in relation to it. This causes good progress in understanding how well they are learning. A nursery nurse, who is well supervised by the co-ordinator, leads music lessons for pupils in Year 1. The pupils are very well organised and particularly enjoy the singing where they show confidence and enthusiasm in talking about the rhythm of different songs.
109. This very organised approach is continued in the juniors and standards continue to be high. By the age of nine, pupils can use correct musical vocabulary, sing a round unaccompanied, combine sounds sensitively when composing and comment on their own and their work. The time allowed each week for music is slightly less than is found normally in schools, but the brisk and effective teaching easily makes up for this. Crisp organisation of musical instruments and the movement of pupils create the optimum conditions for very good achievement. For example, in one lesson in a relatively short time the pupils had; learnt, practised and sung a round; created a percussion accompaniment to a poem about flying; and talked about their homework which was to find out more about Scheherazade and the Arabian Nights. Pupils acquired new skills with every activity and showed high levels of application to the tasks.

110. The subject is very well managed. There are plenty of musical activities outside lessons in which pupils can be involved; including a scheme for the teaching of violin and brass instruments by trained teachers paid for by a new government grant. The co-ordinator has made good use of the national scheme of work to augment the school's own plans. The subject is reviewed well. The project to purchase more musical instruments and resources is appropriate given the gaps in provision that exist.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. All pupils are making satisfactory progress and they achieve standards that match those found in other schools for pupils of this age.
112. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the lessons seen teachers were careful to emphasise the need for exercises to warm up the muscles before pupils began more vigorous activities. They also emphasised the need for pupils to work carefully and to be aware of their own and other people's safety. As pupils practise rolling in different ways teachers encourage them to improve their performance. Good practice by pupils is highlighted and teachers invite pupils who are doing well to demonstrate their skills to their friends. Teachers also show pupils how to perform some movements, especially in gymnastics lessons. Nevertheless pupils are encouraged to refine and improve their own performance rather than copy others. The main spur for pupils to improve is the timely praise they receive. Teachers' planning is good because it includes much detail and this enables pupils to build well upon previous skills and attempt rolls and jumps, which might otherwise be beyond them. Pupils have some opportunities to evaluate their work and suggest ways in which they can improve, but it is not a strong feature of lessons. The good relationship, which exists between teachers and pupils, in most of the lessons seen, ensures that pupils concentrate well and work hard. Occasionally, where relationships are not so well developed, pupils are not prepared to listen to their teachers carefully or to perform movements within the acceptable bounds of safe practice. Under these circumstances, pupils' learning is limited and lessons quickly lose their momentum.
113. The scheme of work gives little help to the non-specialist. There is a good section for teaching dance but otherwise lesson planning relies too heavily on the individual knowledge of teachers. The scheme of work is not yet matched with the new National Curriculum programme of study. Pupils, especially juniors, have good opportunities to extend their sporting interests in after-school clubs when enthusiastic teachers and specialist coaches lead activity sessions. Resources are generally adequate except for the youngest children, but this need is highlighted in the school's planning for the future.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

114. The standards for seven-year-olds in the infants and the oldest pupils in the juniors are in line with the expectations set out in the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus. The school has maintained these standards well since the last inspection. Pupils generally make sound progress learning about Christianity and other religions because lessons are well planned to the syllabus.
115. Achievements in spiritual matters have progressed more quickly since 1996, due to the training that some staff have received. It is a strong feature of pupils' work that they are now able to think and write more confidently about what the world is like from their viewpoint and speculate on the meaning behind things and events. For example, pupils in the infants were debating where God lives and many offered the Church or the sky, but some were confident enough to suggest

that God lived in our hearts. Teachers work hard at noting down these snippets of conversation that act both as a record of what pupils are saying and as a spur to provoke further debate. In a Year 2 art lesson, where pupils had to make three-dimensional images out of natural materials, one pupil stated, in wonder at the differences between trees, 'It's amazing because most trees are rough, but I found one that is smooth and rough.' The links between religious education and collective worship are strong in this Christian school. Good debates are promoted in collective worship that result in pupils' comments being recorded and placed alongside their suggestions in religious education. This promotes standards of reflection that are stronger than in most schools.

116. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, but there are some lessons where more is demanded of the pupils. The difference between satisfactory lessons and those that stretch pupils thinking lies in the way that the religious stories are taught. In several classes, in both the infants and the juniors, the pupils gather knowledge from the stories and record this knowledge in their workbooks. They experience a wide range of stories, covering Christianity, the Jewish faith and Islam. In some classes, where teaching is more vigorous, pupils are asked to consider challenging questions like, 'Do you think it is fair that Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden?' In another, well structured, lesson for older pupils, they had time to reflect on their lives while thinking about peaceful places. Several pupils mentioned prayer time in school as a good time for reflection showing maturity on their part and the school's good provision. However, on balance, there is not enough of this more interesting work undertaken throughout the school. This affects the achievements made by those capable of higher attainment and more flexible thinking. All too often the same task is set for all pupils and there is a lack of extra challenge for some pupils.
117. The subject is generally well managed. The lessons are well organised in line with the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus. The co-ordinator is clear about what needs to be achieved and has developed the spiritual side of the curriculum very well. The assessment of pupils' learning has not yet been fully organised and computers are not often used for research and communication purposes.