

INSPECTION REPORT

TONWELL ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tonwell

Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117388

Head-teacher: Mrs J Newman

Reporting inspector: Mr M Newell
10638

Dates of inspection: 20-22 November 2000

Inspection number: 224560

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ware Road Tonwell Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG12 OHN
Telephone number:	01920 462894
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Boulton
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Martin Newell (10638)	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Mathematics Information technology Art Music Physical education	What sort of school is it The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further
Saleem Hussein (9981)	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
David Fisher (17520)	Team inspector	English as an additional language Equal opportunities English Science Design and technology History Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a Church of England Controlled school in the village of Tonwell to the north of Ware in Hertfordshire. At present there are 43 pupils on roll which includes 6 children that attend on a part-time basis. The school is smaller than most other primary schools. Only a small number of children start at the school each year. Assessment data shows that children's attainment when they start school covers a wide ability range and overall is at an average level. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is 26 per cent, which is above the national average. There are no statemented pupils attending the school. The vast majority of pupils in school are of white ethnic origin. The present head-teacher has only been in post for six weeks. There are two classes in the school and four teachers, three of whom work on a part-time basis, share the teaching.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school where the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. Standards in science are above average by the time that pupils leave school. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is a real strength of the school and the pupils make good progress. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and the pupils make steady progress. The school expects and achieves high standards of behaviour from all pupils. The newly appointed head-teacher has quickly and accurately identified the areas the school needs to address to improve further. She receives very good support from the Governing Body. Taking all factors into account, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve above average standards in science by the time they leave school.
- The good and often very good teaching at Key Stage 2 ensures that all pupils at this key stage make good progress and fulfil their potential.
- The standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to work are very good.
- The opportunities that are provided to enhance older pupils' personal development are very good.
- The provision the school makes for pupils' social and moral development is very good and good for their spiritual development.
- The school is very caring and supportive and ensures pupils' welfare is consistently provided for. Relationships between pupils and with adults are a strength.
- The school has worked hard to forge strong links with parents who are very supportive of the school and what it provides.
- With the strong support of the Governing Body, the head-teacher has quickly, astutely and accurately identified areas for school improvement and drawn up effective strategies to tackle the issues.

What could be improved

- The quality of the curriculum planning and learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage.
- More consistent challenge for pupils at Key Stage 1.
- Target setting procedures and the manner in which pupils' attainment and progress is tracked as they move through school.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning to have a bigger impact on raising standards.
- The standard of accommodation to produce a more effective learning environment.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection but there is still room for further improvement. The very small number of pupils that are tested at the end of each stage makes comparisons of standards between this and the last inspection unreliable. The quality of teaching has improved at Key Stage 2. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching identified in the school at the last inspection is no longer an issue. In terms of the specific key issues identified there has been an improvement in attainment in information technology, although there are aspects of the subject that need further development. The school now fully meets the requirements regarding teaching time at Key Stage 2. The school's priorities are more clearly costed and the Governing Body has become increasingly effective in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides. There are still minor omissions and errors in the Governors' Annual Report and the School Prospectus. The commitment that the head-teacher and Governing Body have to raising standards and improving the quality of education the school provides indicates that the school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The small number of pupils that are assessed each year means that the school does not publish its results. When only small numbers of pupils are tested, comparisons with national data are unreliable. Inspection findings show that at the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in science is above average and at an average level overall in English and mathematics. At this key stage, work and tasks that are set are consistently challenging and considerable emphasis is placed on independent study and research and on investigative and problem solving tasks. Pupils make good progress and achieve well at this key stage in English, mathematics and science. All pupils achieve at a level that matches their ability. Standards in all other areas of the curriculum are at an average level, apart from some elements of information technology.

Only a small number of pupils are in Year 2 at the present time. Inspection findings indicate that attainment in English, mathematics and science is at an average level. Although tasks and activities provided help to ensure that pupils get a sound grounding in the basic skills, there are occasions when work is not challenging enough and as a result pupils do not consistently achieve their full potential. The school is already addressing the issue. Attainment in all other areas of the curriculum is at an average level, with some weaknesses in information technology.

Learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage do not always relate directly to the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals but, during their time in this stage of their education, children make satisfactory progress overall and achieve at an expected level by the end of the stage in all areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are keen and eager to do well. They are very responsive and show an enthusiasm for all the activities they take part in.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils show a real sense of self-discipline and behave in a very good manner in the classroom, around the school and on trips outside of school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. The way the older pupils care for younger ones is impressive. The very good opportunities provided for older pupils to take responsibility and initiative around the school and for their own learning make a powerful contribution to pupils' personal development.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and pupils clearly enjoy coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall picture is that 28 per cent of lessons taught were very good, a similar amount was good and the rest were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. During the week of inspection the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory and occasionally good at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 teaching is good and often very good.

Strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy have been implemented appropriately and are having a greater impact on standards at Key Stage 2 because of the opportunities to write for a wide range of audiences and purposes and because of the practical and investigative activities that are provided in mathematics. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught appropriately at Key Stage 1.

The best teaching in school is characterised by a good degree of challenge and a range of learning opportunities and activities that stimulate pupils of all abilities. When such activities are provided pupils respond with great enthusiasm and this makes a valuable and important contribution to the progress that they make.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that ensures statutory requirements are met. Planning in the Foundation Stage does not make enough reference to Early Learning Goals. Insufficient opportunities are provided for all pupils in school to learn through practical and investigative activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils receive appropriate levels of support and make progress that is similar to their classmates. Progress is good when the targets that are set in their individual education plans are challenging but achievable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall the provision is good. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and moral development. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development and satisfactory provision for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring and supportive school. Staff and pupils are relaxed and confident in one another's company. This helps to create a harmonious family atmosphere throughout the school. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress and target setting are currently being reviewed because at present they are not good enough.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head-teacher and other key staff	Good. In a short time the head-teacher has gained the respect of staff, governors, parents and pupils. She has carried out an accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has set a very clear agenda for school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Under the astute leadership of the chair of governors, the Governing Body is becoming increasingly effective as a critical friend to the school and in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides. The Governing Body fulfils its duties well and gives strong support to the head-teacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is increasingly using the analysis of test data as a method of helping to raise standards. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes appropriate use of all its available resources and the Governing Body is becoming more proficient at applying the principles of best value when purchasing goods and services.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The internal accommodation is unsatisfactory and hampers pupils' learning. The school has to use the village hall for assemblies and indoor physical education. The nature and size of the hall makes it almost impossible for the older pupils to undertake physical activities appropriate for their age. The heating system in the hall is such that it often spoils the spiritual and calming ethos that is created within acts of collective worship. Space within the school is limited. There is no room for a suitably located library and the head-teacher does not have her own office. Despite these factors the school does all it can to produce and promote an effective learning environment.

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 fact that their children like coming to school. • The good progress that children make. • The good behaviour in school. • The good quality of teaching. • The expectations the school sets. • The manner in which the school is led and managed. • The way in which the school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information the school provides about how their children are getting on. • The closeness with which the school works in partnership with parents. • The range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspection findings agree with many of the positive views that parents hold about the school. However, there is a need for the school to ensure that the tasks and activities provided for pupils are consistently set at a challenging level. The school has rightly identified the need to provide more detailed reports of pupils' progress and to provide more information of what is taught so that the school and parents can form an even stronger partnership. Parents' perceptions about reports are accurate but they also feel that the quality and range of

information has improved since the start of this academic year. The school provides a limited range of extra-curricular activities but this is judged to be satisfactory for a school of this size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school only has a small number of pupils in each year group and attainment levels vary quite considerably among each cohort of pupils. When children start school, assessment data shows that there is a wide ability range and that attainment overall is at an average level. Inspection findings show that the present Year 6 pupils are attaining above average standards in science and average standards in English and mathematics. All the pupils are achieving at a level that is commensurate with their ability. At Key Stage 2, the tasks that are set are consistently challenging as a result of the consistently good and on occasions very good teaching. This, together with the great emphasis that is placed on investigative work, problem solving and independent study means that all pupils make good progress. The targets that the school has set itself for literacy and numeracy in 2001 are accurate and reflect the present attainment levels of the pupils. However, the head-teacher is keen to set more challenging targets and has identified the lower than average percentage of Level 3s and the lower level of writing standards at Key Stage 2 as areas for improvement.
2. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are at an average level in English, mathematics and science. The cohort only has four pupils. However, although standards are at an average level, higher attaining pupils are not always consistently challenged. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake investigative tasks in mathematics and science. There is an over-reliance on consolidating basic number skills and basic scientific knowledge rather than expecting pupils to put their knowledge to the test in challenging problem-solving tasks or in experiments and investigations. On the occasions such opportunities are provided, pupils rise to the challenge and make good progress. In writing, opportunities are missed to extend pupils' skills by providing a stimulating and varied range of writing tasks. Instead, the emphasis is too often placed on consolidating basic skills or completing worksheets when a more creative and stimulating stimulus would enhance pupils' learning. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress overall but would benefit from a more challenging range of learning opportunities that would extend their learning boundaries and have a bigger impact on levels of achievement for individual pupils.
3. A small number of children start school each year with varying levels of attainment. The children are taught in the same class as the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The satisfactory quality of teaching ensures that the children make a steady start to their educational lives and that they acquire basic skills of literacy and numeracy in an appropriate manner. However, the activities that are planned do not always relate to the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals or have a specific objective that children are to attempt to achieve. This means that learning sometimes lacks structure, challenge or fun and children do not make the progress of which they are capable and learning is unsatisfactory. Children, however, acquire knowledge and skills at a satisfactory rate and by the time they start Year 1 they have attained the recommended early learning goals in all areas of learning.
4. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies in an effective manner and these are having a positive impact on standards, particularly at Key Stage 2. Here, the emphasis on exploring strategies to solve problems and quick-fire mental agility tasks are proving successful as well as enjoyable for the pupils. The school does not carry out enough direct teaching of the necessary skills to enable pupils to write extended pieces of writing. This is preventing standards in writing from being

higher. When literacy and numeracy are promoted through other subjects, such as science, history and geography, this leads directly to pupils' learning being enhanced. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 2.

5. Although the head-teacher has only been in post for a short time, she has already started to analyse test and assessment data to identify strengths and weaknesses in levels of attainment in subjects and in different elements within subjects. She has rightly identified the lower than average percentage of Level 3s that are attained at Key Stage 1 and the lower level of writing standards at Key Stage 2 as areas for improvement. Further examination of data clearly shows that at Key Stage 1 pupils do not do as well in the using, applying and investigative elements of mathematics and science as they do in other aspects of the subjects. This is preventing standards from being higher. At both key stages there is a need to develop writing skills in a more systematic manner to improve standards. In the past, the school has not carried out a rigorous enough analysis of test data or made best use of target setting procedures to help raise standards. Under the guidance of the head-teacher, such an approach is to be embedded into school practice and is to include all staff and members of the Governing Body.
6. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is above the national average. The pupils are generally well supported and make progress at a rate that is similar to their classmates. The school during the last two years has tried different formats for writing individual education plans. One such format was computer generated and left very little space for specific targets to be articulated and for pupils' progress to be evaluated. The school has recently stopped using this format and adopted a more effective one. Although there is some variance in the quality of the plans, they are satisfactory. The better ones clearly identify challenging and achievable targets, and progress towards the targets is assessed and evaluated on a regular basis. Where pupils are assigned additional support time, the quality is good and makes a valuable contribution to their level of achievement and to their integration into the school as a community.
7. Inspection findings in English show that at the end of both key stages standards in speaking and listening are at an average level. The provision of more opportunities for pupils to take part in role-play or drama activities would enhance speaking and listening skills further. At Key Stage 2 pupils are confident to offer opinions in group, class or even whole school discussions. The manner in which they answer questions shows that they have listened attentively to the teacher or to the contributions of their classmates. Standards in reading are at an average level at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1, all pupils show confidence in their reading and do so with accuracy and understanding. Not all read with a high level of expression and early referencing skills are at an early stage of development. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2 and develop a love of literature. They have a good knowledge of authors and read with expression and fluency. The area that the school has accurately identified for improvement is the development of higher order reading skills that would enable pupils to skim and scan texts and to read beyond the literal level. Writing standards are at an average level at the end of both key stages. Pupils throughout the school pay appropriate attention to grammar, spelling and presentation in all their work. At Key Stage 2, the pupils are provided with many opportunities to write for a wide range of audiences and purposes but pupils are not adept at sustaining an idea, character or plot over a sustained piece of writing. At Key Stage 1, although pupils are confident in the technical aspects of writing, their further achievement is hampered by a lack of writing opportunities in terms of audience, purpose and in other subjects of the curriculum.
8. Standards in mathematics are at an average level at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils show a secure grasp of number and are benefiting from the greater

emphasis expected by the National Numeracy Strategy on the development of mental agility skills. Attainment is prevented from being higher because not enough practical and investigative tasks are provided for pupils to put their number, shape, and space and measures knowledge to the test. At Key Stage 2, pupils benefit greatly from the opportunities to test out their mental agility skills. They have a secure knowledge of all aspects of the subject, and work that is set always matches the ability of the pupils. In science at Key Stage 1, standards are at an average level and pupils show a secure knowledge of living things, forces, and electricity. Pupils are not provided with enough chances to carry out experiments and this impacts negatively on their attainment. The opposite is true at Key Stage 2, where the many opportunities to carry out investigative tasks mean that pupils use their good level of scientific knowledge to predict and hypothesise accurately. By the time pupils leave school, attainment is above average.

9. Standards in information technology are at an average level at the end of both key stages. Pupils have appropriate key board skills and by the age of 11 pupils know how to use the Internet, change fonts, insert graphics into text, interrogate databases and use computers well to support their work in other areas of the curriculum. The younger pupils in school know how to save their work and present data in different ways and show a satisfactory understanding of how computers are used in the wider world. The areas for development are in control and sensors and pupils need to use computers to their full potential through more regular use of the Internet and electronic mail. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. By the age of 7 pupils know and recognise Christian festivals and talk succinctly about events in their lives that have special significance. By the time pupils leave school, they compare Christianity to other world faiths such as Islam and Judaism and have acquired a far deeper understanding of Christianity and the importance that religious beliefs have in peoples' lives.
10. Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, and history are at an average level at the end of both key stages. In physical education, the small schools in the area visit each other on a rotational basis to ensure that pupils can compete against a greater number of pupils of a similar age and ability in small games and elements such as athletics. This, together with swimming tuition and the school's regular participation in inter-school competitions in a wide range of sports, helps to ensure that attainment overall is at an appropriate level by the time pupils leave school. The unsatisfactory accommodation of the school means that the older pupils are not able to take part in gymnastics activities safely because the village hall is inappropriate. This prevents pupils achieving the required standards in gymnastics. In music, standards are at an average level overall, with singing being of a good standard. A small but significant number of pupils are quite accomplished musicians by the time they leave school.
11. Standards in general have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. The small size of the school, however, does mean that comparisons of statistical data between then and now are unreliable. The head-teacher has already provided a sharper focus for what the school needs to do to raise standards even higher. The Governing Body, under the astute leadership of the Chair, is becoming increasingly effective in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides. These factors indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve and develop.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their very good behaviour and attitudes towards work. Relationships, personal development and attendance are good. The school has maintained high standards since the previous inspection. Parents recognise the positive attitudes, behaviour and personal development of their children to be a strength of the school.
13. Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly into school routines. They show appropriate levels of independence and are always ready to share resources. When provided with opportunities to learn through investigative and practical activities, they respond with a real sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment. At playtimes, the younger children enjoy being with older pupils who show care and sensitivity towards them. This helps to create an atmosphere in school of mutual respect that has a positive impact on learning.
14. At the start of the day, all pupils show eagerness to begin learning. They enter the classroom sensibly and settle quickly to tasks. They are pleased to discuss their work and activities. Older pupils describe the advantages of a small school in which they know everyone. They enthusiastically describe school productions, concerts and festivals in which they all participate. They respect teachers and support staff and show pleasure when their efforts are valued. They confidently answer questions in lessons and give opinions whilst respecting the views of others. In a religious education lesson, they handled Jewish artefacts with care and sensitivity. They recognised that each article was precious to the father of one of the pupils. In a science lesson, pupils were fascinated by a heart monitor and identified many ways that the equipment could improve fitness and performance. They recognise the need to handle equipment with care. They diligently practice their reading and learn weekly spellings. They are not, however, sufficiently involved in setting their own targets for improvement, which would provide greater incentives for learning.
15. Behaviour throughout the school is very good. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour and there have been no exclusions. Pupils quickly respond to their teacher and support assistants, and rarely have to be reminded about what constitutes acceptable behaviour. They enjoy working co-operatively and are willing to share resources. In science lessons, pupils help to measure and record each other's pulse rate using stopwatches. They work together to record the results onto a database using computers.
16. Relationships are good, both between pupils and between pupils and staff. Boys and girls work well together. In many lessons, pupils and teachers share a sense of humour. During a Key Stage 2 music lesson, pupils were asked to create a tribal dance. When a group completed their dance with a Maori type war chant, the whole class spontaneously showed their appreciation. During a singing lesson, two teachers worked enthusiastically together, ensuring pupils sang 'Land of the Silver Birch' in two parts.
17. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to be responsible for routine monitoring duties. The recently formed School Council has made a significant impact on pupils. They are enthusiastic for this to develop. Already they have discussed how playtime could be improved and have identified the type of resources that would make playtime more enjoyable. These have been provided and are appreciated by pupils. The older pupils in school are provided with many opportunities to carry out practical and investigative activities in mathematics and science. In addition much emphasis is placed on the need for these pupils to enhance their learning through independent study and research. The pupils seize these opportunities with great enthusiasm and evidence was seen during the inspection of pupils pursuing lines of enquiry at home that had originated in the

classroom. This was done without any prompting from the teacher. These opportunities and practices are not as prevalent at Key Stage 1, which prevents learning at this key stage from being more effective.

18. Attendance is a similar picture to that of the last inspection except that there is now some unauthorised absence. Pupils show a high level of enthusiasm for school and attendance is good. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average and authorised absence is below. Punctuality is satisfactory and registration periods are used as effective learning opportunities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 and good with some very good teaching evident at Key Stage 2. During the week of inspection, 28 per cent of teaching was very good and a similar amount was good. The remaining teaching was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. All the very good teaching was at Key Stage 2. The school only has two classes, but the teaching is shared between four teachers. Only two teachers were observed during the inspection because of timetabling arrangements. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is often stimulating and challenging and ensures that the pupils make good progress. At Key Stage 1, the teaching is satisfactory but the learning activities planned do not consistently provide pupils with opportunities to learn through the practical, investigative and problem solving tasks that encourage pupils to think things through for themselves. This means that pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. When such tasks are provided, pupils readily rise to the challenge and their learning is enhanced. Teaching at the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but planning does not always relate to specific learning goals or objectives.
20. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in an appropriate manner with the impact being greater at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, the basic skills of reading and writing are taught in a satisfactory manner and there is a satisfactory balance between word, sentence and text level work in lessons. The teaching provides pupils with the skills needed to tackle unfamiliar words and to write neatly with an appropriate understanding of grammar. An overuse of worksheets prevents pupils developing their creative and imaginative skills in writing and hinders their progress. At Key Stage 2, the teacher has higher expectations and the teaching is consistently good. The teacher ensures that the shared reading activity stimulates pupils' interest. For example, when reading extracts from 'The diary of Anne Frank', pupils are challenged to find words conveying meanings of fear and emotion and do so well. There is a need at both key stages to share what is to be learned with the pupils so that they can be more actively involved in their own learning.
21. In numeracy, teaching is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. The better quality teaching is characterised by lots of opportunities for pupils to learn through problem solving and investigative tasks that encourage them to try out different methods. This practice is more prevalent at Key Stage 2. Lessons throughout the school feature opportunities for pupils to test their mental agility through oral tasks at the start of the lesson. The pupils really enjoy these and look forward to them, particularly when there is a high degree of challenge. There is a tendency at Key Stage 1 to over consolidate previously learned skills by completing workbooks and sheets rather than pushing on with new learning. Inspection evidence clearly indicates that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed in other areas of the curriculum such as history, geography and science but that opportunities are missed at Key Stage 1 for this to happen as often as it could and this hinders pupils' progress.

22. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The children are taught in the same class as the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The children are provided with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities that help to ensure that they make steady progress during this stage of their learning. The children are managed well and the manner in which the classroom is organised means that they have access to a role-play area, water and sand facilities, computer as well as literacy and numeracy areas. The planning does not make enough reference to the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals and what children are to learn is not always clearly stated. As a result, children sometimes take part in activities but are not challenged or stretched enough. The children respond well to a challenge. This was evident when adult intervention at the "Opticians " play area resulted in a far higher level of expressive vocabulary being used by the children and in children making comparisons between the shape and cost of different lenses. The school is already examining the organisation of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage to ensure that teachers, support staff and learning opportunities can be best used to have the biggest impact on children's attainment. The nursery nurse provides good support, but not enough use is made of her skills with the older pupils in the class.
23. The school has an above average number of pupils on the register of special educational needs. These pupils are supported in an appropriate manner and teaching is at its best when work relates closely to the targets in pupils' individual educational plans. The school has tried different formats for such plans and has recently reverted to a previous one. This format is suitable because it requires targets to be clearly stated, steps towards the successful meeting of targets to be outlined and progress to be monitored. The needs of individual pupils are met in lessons and support is targeted to the areas of greatest need. The meeting of the needs of the higher attaining pupils is more variable. At Key Stage 2, the higher attaining pupils are provided with a range of challenging learning tasks that ensure that they are stretched and that they remain keen and motivated. At Key Stage 1, there are occasions when work is too easy or simply does not motivate the higher attaining pupils enough. When this happens, pupils complete tasks quickly and lose interest or become restless.
24. At both key stages, teachers have a secure knowledge of most subjects with specific strengths in music. In science, the emphasis that the teaching at Key Stage 2 places on exploratory and investigative learning is helping pupils to acquire inquisitive minds. Scientific knowledge is being used well to make accurate predictions. In a very good lesson at this key stage, the teacher had brought in a heart monitor to help measure heart and pulse rate. Unfortunately the monitor did not work. Undaunted, the teacher simply explained other ways of measuring heart and pulse rates. The pupils listened attentively and the experiment continued successfully. Teachers' own enthusiasm for subjects comes through in subjects such as history and music and this produces a similar level of response in the pupils whose learning is then enhanced. In a very good history lesson at Key Stage 2, the teacher made very good links between the pupils' study of Aztecs and dance. The pupils used their historical and musical knowledge very well to create a tribal dance that captured the culture and traditions of the Aztecs. In music lessons, teachers show great enjoyment and a high level of direct teaching that really moves pupils' learning on. There is a real air of anticipation when the school comes together for singing. The pupils know that they will have the chance to learn exciting new songs, that the quality of teaching will improve their singing skills, and that they will have a thoroughly enjoyable time. The school has recognised the need to ensure that teachers receive further in-service training in information technology to ensure that all strands of the subject are taught in sufficient depth to enable pupils to achieve at a high enough level.

25. The quality of relationships between the pupils and staff is good. This helps to create an atmosphere in school that is conducive to effective learning. Pupils are expected to value the contributions of their classmates and often they do. The balance struck between discussion time and recording time is usually about right. The quality of the written work often reflects the quality of the discussion. The overuse of worksheets at Key Stage 1 means that tasks are sometimes a little mundane whereas pupils would benefit from more stimulating and investigative learning prompts. The opportunities for pupils to undertake personal study and research at Key Stage 2 are good and make a powerful contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. The management of pupils is good throughout the school and teachers always make sure they have the full and undivided attention of the pupils before making important teaching points. The resources for lessons are well prepared, ensuring that lessons can get off to a prompt start. The best teaching makes sure that this pace is maintained. Good practice was observed where the teacher was constantly reminding pupils of deadlines within lessons. This kept pupils on their toes and also reminded them that they too were responsible for their own learning.
26. The teachers give plenty of verbal praise and constructive comments within lessons to increase pupils' self-esteem or to give pointers for improvement. When teachers mark pupils' work, they often pay sufficient attention to recognising what pupils have done well, but on occasions do not make sufficient reference as to what pupils could do to improve their work. When this is done well, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they are only too willing to take on board the comments and move on. The pupils are keen to do well but as yet the teachers do not actively involve the pupils in setting targets for themselves which would further advance their learning. Just over 90 per cent of the parents who responded to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection were happy with the amount of homework that is set. The parents' perceptions are accurate, as the amount and range of homework tasks that are set are similar to those found in the majority of primary schools.
27. Overall the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with a greater amount of good and very good teaching, although most of this is in Key Stage 2. The head-teacher has accurately identified what is necessary to improve the quality of teaching further. This includes evaluating the learning opportunities provided at Key Stage 1 and introducing more rigorous procedures to support, monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Most teachers are supportive of such developments and show a readiness to reflect critically on their work in order to improve.

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

28. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. The quality of curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage has not improved at a good enough rate since the last inspection because it has not kept pace with national developments in this aspect of children's learning. The learning opportunities that are provided do not consistently align with the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals and activities do not always have clearly defined learning objectives. The activities and learning opportunities that are provided do enable children to make steady progress, but progress is hindered because tasks and activities provided do not consistently provide enough challenge. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement and procedures are already in place to move the school forward.

29. There have been improvements in the curriculum provision since the previous inspection. The weekly teaching time has been increased to ensure an appropriate balance of time is allocated to each subject. Improvements have been made in the curriculum for information technology, music and design and technology. This has resulted in pupils' achieving the standards expected of their age in these subjects.
30. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been effectively implemented and are having an impact on raising standards, particularly at Key Stage 2. This is because opportunities are regularly provided for pupils to write for a wide range of purposes and for pupils to put their mathematical knowledge to the test in practical situations. At both key stages, the mental agility exercises at the start of each lesson are having a positive impact on pupils' mental agility skills.
31. Schemes of work and curriculum policies have been established for all subjects and are central to teachers' planning. The school is presently reviewing and updating its entire curriculum guidance and framework so that it closely aligns with the nationally recommended Curriculum 2000. This is appropriate practice to help ensure that pupils' prior attainment is systematically built on as they move through the school.
32. All pupils have equal opportunity and access to the full curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated in all lessons. Teachers and classroom assistants appropriately support them. This ensures they make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Their specific needs are recorded in individual education plans. The school has used different formats for these plans during the last two years and this has led to some variance in the quality and effectiveness of the plans. The plans are at their best when the targets that are set are clear, challenging and achievable, with the steps to achieving the targets clearly outlined.
33. A number of parents are disappointed at the range of activities offered by the school outside of lessons. The school offers netball and football after school and a French club operates at lunchtimes. A peripatetic teacher takes recorder groups regularly. Inspectors found that provision for extra-curricular activities is at a satisfactory level for a school of this size.
34. Educational visits make a positive contribution to the curriculum and help to further pupils' learning. They are effectively linked to termly projects. When studying Tudors, pupils visit Stevenage museum and a Tudor house to learn about the lives of rich and poor people during Tudor times. The residential visit to Derbyshire allows pupils to learn about the Peak District and the village of Eyam. They have a clear understanding of how the Plague spread from London to Eyam and how it affected every household. The school welcomes visitors to share their experiences with pupils. The vicar, school nurse and community policeman make positive contributions to the quality of learning.
35. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Class timetables include specific lessons in which pupils discuss school rules, safety and care for each other. Pupils have been fully involved in the formation of school rules. They appreciate how rules are important in school and society. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are taught sex education and the dangers of drug misuse as part of the science curriculum. Appropriate emphasis is placed on considering the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. They contribute to the village Harvest Festival and raise money to support the NSPCC.
36. The school continues to maintain links with the village community. Harvest gifts are distributed to members of the Valentine Club who are also invited to school productions. Pupils visit the parish church to participate in festivals and end of term services.

Satisfactory links are established with the local 'Cluster' schools. Pupils participate in a range of sporting activities including football, netball and cross-country. They visit the local secondary schools prior to transfer. Parents confirm their children are well prepared for secondary education. The school has established good links with a college of further education and effectively supports teacher training.

37. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. The ethos of the school promotes the development of self-esteem, good behaviour and respect for others.
38. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Assembly themes are largely of a Christian nature. They are effectively planned to incorporate aspects of other faiths, celebrations and moral issues and, as a result, pupils appreciate how important *The Bible* is to Christians and *The Qur'an* to Jews. Pupils visit the parish church and participate in services to celebrate Christmas, Harvest Festival and the end of term. Within lessons, pupils' attention is often drawn to the beauty of the world in which they live and there is a genuine sense of wonderment at advances in the scientific and technological world when pupils' attention is drawn to them. The great emphasis that the school places on music means that pupils recognise the impact that music can have in helping to create moods and atmospheres that have a spiritual nature. Spiritual development is reinforced in religious education lessons when pupils show sensitivity in handling religious artefacts. In English lessons, pupils are challenged to consider other peoples' feelings. Following the reading of the diary of Anne Frank, they reflect on how they would have felt if they had lived during World War Two.
39. The provision the school makes for pupils' moral development is very good. Teachers and other adults in schools set good examples and have high expectation of manners and behaviour. Adults are kind, supportive and encouraging. All pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and teachers often use the opportunities in texts they are reading to reinforce differing moral viewpoints. In geography, pupils are asked to examine the moral impact of issues such as flooding in Mozambique and how the Western world has reacted. The texts that are used in literacy lessons and religious education lessons allow the pupils to discuss issues such as prejudice and racism. The pupils have been fully involved in the establishment of school rules, recognising the need to work and play together. This has helped the pupils to recognise that they are able to play a very important part in helping the school to run as a caring, well-ordered community and this is shown in the high level of good behaviour.
40. Social development is very good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are a strength of the school. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively in lessons and be responsible for books and equipment. Pupils enjoy being given responsibility and are involved in the daily life of the school. The recently formed School Council has encouraged pupils to think of ways in which the school could be improved. The representatives take their responsibilities seriously and have already suggested ways to improve lunchtimes. Pupils' efforts, academic progress and helpfulness are recognised. They strive to become a school 'superstar'. The oldest pupils are given responsibility for tasks that they perform diligently. They arrange the hall for assembly, are responsible for resources and look after the youngest pupils at lunchtime.
41. Cultural development is satisfactory. Visits to museums and places of interest are valued and extend pupils' knowledge of their own heritage. They visit Stevenage museum as part of the Tudor project. Pupils speak enthusiastically of how they dressed up for a day and learned about life in the past. The school takes positive steps to promote pupils' understanding of other cultures through the study of world faiths and through listening to

and composing pieces of music from non-European countries. In history, pupils in Key Stage 2 have a clear understanding of the life of the Ancient Egyptians and Aztecs. Pupils in both key stages develop knowledge of other faiths, including Judaism. The weakness in this area is that pupils at Key Stage 1 are not always being provided with enough opportunities to develop their knowledge of authors and artists and this restricts their learning of the cultural diversity of art and literature.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school provides good quality, effective support to ensure pupils' health and safety. These provisions contribute significantly to the caring, family ethos of the school. Parents feel that the school's staff have the pupils' welfare at heart and that they work hard to enable pupils to achieve their best. This is a similar picture to that of the last inspection.
43. There are good arrangements for induction to the school. The parents and toddlers group is well established with many pupils moving from there to the school. The school takes advantage of the fact that the group is based in school and this allows children to find out about the school and gain confidence in staff at an early stage.
44. Arrangements for Child Protection are good and Local Authority procedures are fully followed. All staff receive guidance on how to deal with any problems. The designated officer is effective in dealing with any issues. The school also has a nominated and trained deputy.
45. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy. The governing body arranges for risk assessments and safety audits to be carried out on a regular basis. These are effective in identifying any problems and the necessary action is then taken. Arrangements are also made to ensure that equipment and appliances are regularly tested. Accident and emergency procedures are effective in dealing with problems. Seven staff recently completed 'first response' first aid training. Fire drills are carried out each term and are appropriately recorded.
46. The school works closely with several external agencies in raising awareness of health and safety matters. The school nurse is a frequent visitor and monitors pupils' general health and also gives talks for pupils on many aspects of healthy living and also sex education. The community police officer and the fire service give talks for pupils on safety. In most years, Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to receive training and take a test in cycling proficiency.
47. There are sound arrangements to monitor and promote pupils' attendance. Any absences are followed up quickly. Problems are identified at an early stage and this enables the school to give pupils support where necessary. There is a good partnership with the educational welfare service. The school regularly mentions the importance of good attendance in newsletters and certificates are presented at the end of each school year to pupils achieving high rates.
48. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. Since the last inspection, the school has put into place a good quality behaviour policy. Appropriately detailed records are kept of any incidents of bad behaviour and this allows the school to identify any worrying patterns and trends. Where there are problems, this information is used effectively to monitor and track progress. Staff have high expectations regarding behaviour and they work hard to maintain high standards. Very good use is made of a variety of rewards. 'Superstar' awards are made each week at

'achievement' assemblies for good work and behaviour. Cups are presented to two pupils at the end of the school year.

49. The school has effective procedures to assess pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. There is no formal assessment in other subjects. Pupils are assessed on entry and by statutory tests at the end of both key stages. Optional assessments and annual standardised reading tests are used to monitor pupils' progress. Not enough use is being made of test and assessment data to track pupils' progress or to set targets for pupils' development. This is having a negative impact on pupils' learning and achievements. Target setting is more precise at Key Stage 2. This is because there is a higher level of expectation of what pupils can achieve. The school does not make enough use of data relating to children's attainment on entry to the school to plan future work, set challenging targets and track progress towards stated targets. Many pupils in school are enthusiastic learners who are keen to do well. The school, however, does not involve the pupils in setting targets for themselves and discussing with them the progress they are making towards these targets. Procedures to monitor pupils' personal and social development are satisfactory. Much of this is done in an informal manner because the size of the school means that the teachers know the pupils well. The head-teacher, however, has recognised the need to put the arrangements on a more formal setting so that information is readily available to staff that are new to the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents mostly have positive views of the school. Replies to the inspection questionnaire, and responses given at the parents' meeting show that parents have a high level of confidence in the school and the quality of education provided for their children. Parents say that the new head-teacher has made a positive start at the school and they are confident that she will add to what they already feel is a good school. Most parents believe that the school is well led and managed. All twenty parents replying to the questionnaire said that teaching is good, and the school has high expectations for their children. Parents also hold positive views about behaviour in school and say that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Other points that please parents include children's academic progress and arrangements for homework. A small number of parents are disappointed by the range of extra-curricular activities available for their children. Although there are not a great number of activities provided, the number and range is similar to that found in schools of this size and is therefore judged to be satisfactory.
51. The quality of information sent out to parents is broadly satisfactory but the quality of reports on children's progress is unsatisfactory. The head-teacher and Chair of Governors have already identified this as an area for improvement and have put procedures in motion to address the issue through setting up a committee of governors. Parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection said that they had already noticed a difference in the quality, manner and presentation of information that was now being provided. The prospectus and governors' annual reports are well detailed about the school's policies and procedures. However, the prospectus does not give accurate figures for pupils' absence and there are minor omissions in the last governors' annual report. This was identified at the last inspection and although the school has improved the quality of these documents, these issues have not been totally addressed. The school provides useful newsletters each term and these effectively keep parents abreast of developments in the life of the school. Curriculum information sheets are issued from time to time, but not regularly. Pupils' annual reports provide much detail about the work undertaken by pupils. However, many lack details of what pupils know, can do and

understand. Although learning targets are sometimes set, they are not clearly stated and so cannot be reviewed effectively. Information technology and design and technology are not reported separately as required. The school is in the process of changing the format of reports and this is an opportune time to address these points.

52. The school's links with parents are highly effective and their involvement has a good impact on the work of the school. The contribution of parents to children's learning, at school and at home, is good. The school has successfully maintained the high quality of parental involvement since the last inspection.
53. The parents' and teachers' association (the 'Friends of Tonwell') organises a number of social and fund-raising events. A considerable amount of money is raised by the group each year for the school and this is used to buy additional learning resources or to support school activities. Parents have made a magnificent effort over a long period of time to raise money for a new learning area and these efforts continue. Some parents help with school activities on a regular basis. They support the parents and toddlers group, help in preparatory work for lessons, listen to readers and accompany school trips. Parent helpers are well briefed on their role. Home/school records show that parents are effectively involved in their children's learning at home. They give good support in listening to their children read and helping with homework tasks. The school plans to provide a mathematics workshop to inform parents about what is taught in school and how. All these factors contribute well to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The present head-teacher has only been in post since the start of the academic year. In a short period of time she has carried out an accurate assessment of the areas the school needs to address in order to improve and is already in the process of drawing up strategies to tackle identified issues. She is presently, in consultation with the staff and the Governing Body, writing a new School Development Plan that will provide a blueprint for school improvement over the next three years. The emphasis is clearly on raising standards by improving the quality of learning opportunities at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, more rigorous target setting and tracking of pupils' progress and a more focused approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning. Most staff and parents, pupils, and governors already recognise and value the quality of leadership and vision the head-teacher provides in order to move the school on further.
55. The head-teacher is committed to raising standards. She has already held numerous staff meetings and is seeking to develop a management structure and style where all staff are actively involved in discussing and then prioritising areas for development. Minutes are kept of meetings. These are effective procedures because they ensure that all staff are fully involved in the decision-making processes. Due to the short tenure of the head-teacher, she has not yet carried out formal observations of lessons. However, she is already in the process of drawing up a programme of observations to be carried out by her and co-ordinators to assess the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The programme also includes provision for the scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. These are important initiatives and should have a great impact on raising standards and disseminating the good teaching practice that is clearly evident, particularly at Key Stage 2. Although lesson observations have taken place in the past, they have not been sufficiently regular or formal with no constructive feedback given.
56. Appropriate provision is made for teaching and non-teaching staff to attend training courses and the head-teacher is currently discussing the individual training needs of staff. Equally, the head-teacher has highlighted the need to ensure that staff training and development links closely to the needs of the school to have a greater impact on raising

standards. An area that has already been identified is the need for staff training in information technology and in meeting the needs of children in the Foundation Stage. There is a need to ensure that all staff have up-to-date job descriptions that clearly outline the role and responsibilities for each individual at the school so that staff members know the contribution they can make in helping to bring to life the aims of the school.

57. The Governing Body is most supportive of the work of the school, meets regularly and has an appropriate committee structure in place. All committees have clear terms of reference and are clear about their roles. Under the astute guidance of the Chair of Governors, the Governing Body is becoming far more focused and rigorous in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides. Policy documents are discussed in detail before ratification. The Governing Body has a very good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and governors in key positions have set a clear agenda for school improvement after consultation with the head-teacher. Many governors visit the school on a regular basis with some working alongside teachers in the classroom. This is good practice because it gives them a good insight into how the school operates and also allows them to evaluate the quality of education the school provides. Plans are already in hand to instigate formal visits with a specific focus on observation in order to make the role of governors even more effective. The head-teacher has established very good relationships with the Governing Body and governors are impressed with the information she has already provided in terms of areas identified for school improvement. The regular meetings between the head-teacher and the Chair of Governors are providing an effective forum for school development planning and for keeping the Chair informed of ongoing developments. Governors attend training courses that provide them with a good insight into initiatives, both local and national, and with opportunities to set the school in a wider context. The Governing Body fulfils its statutory requirements in an effective manner although there are some omissions and errors in the Governor's Annual Report and the school's prospectus.
58. Following on from the last inspection, the Governing Body put together an appropriate action plan to address the issues identified and improvement overall has been satisfactory. The fact that only a small number of pupils are tested each year makes comparisons of standards between this and the last inspection unreliable. The quality of teaching has improved, with a higher incidence of very good teaching. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching identified in the previous inspection is no longer an issue. In terms of the specific key issues that were identified, there has been improvement made in the school's provision for information technology, even though there is scope for more improvement. The school now meets the requirements in terms of teaching time at Key Stage 2. The school's priorities are more clearly costed and the Governing Body is more effective in its strategic management of the school. Under the guidance of the head-teacher and the stewardship of the Governing Body, there is a renewed desire to move the school on quickly with all identified priorities being clearly lined to raising standards.
59. The School Development Plan is an effective working document to which the staff and governors make an important contribution. The head-teacher is currently reviewing aspects of the plan with key governors. As her audit of what the school is currently providing continues, the more important priorities are given the right prominence at the expense of less important ones. Once the audit is complete the plan will provide an effective tool for school improvement. The plan has clear time scales, accurate costings and success criteria linked to raising standards. The head-teacher has clearly recognised that there is a need to ensure that progress towards stated targets is clearly monitored. With this in mind, the head-teacher, staff and governors will all be involved in monitoring and evaluating progress. This is good practice.

60. Since her arrival, the head-teacher has started to carry out a more rigorous analysis of test and assessment data. Although analysis of data has taken place in the past, it has not been rigorous enough in terms of target setting, in using the findings to raise awareness of trends over time, or in tracking the attainment and progress of individual pupils. The head-teacher has prioritised the need for using test data to set challenging targets for the school and for individual pupils and to establish procedures to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Both the head-teacher and the Chair of Governors are keen to ensure that the whole process of target setting is used to its fullest potential so that it has the biggest possible impact on helping to raise standards. The targets that the school has set itself for literacy and numeracy are accurate at the present time but the head-teacher is keen to set more challenging ones once initiatives aimed at raising standards are in place.
61. The day-to-day finances of the school are managed well and the school secretary carries out her duties in a most efficient manner. The finance committee meets on a regular basis and is instrumental in helping to set the school budget and in monitoring patterns of spending. Both the head-teacher and the Chair of Governors are aware that the school has accumulated a significant carry forward sum of money which will be used for additional resources, additional support staff and improvements in accommodation. There is a clear link between the identified priorities in the School Development Plan and patterns of spending, but the school does not assess the impact on standards of any major spending decisions. All the recommendations of the latest auditor's report have been acted upon and implemented.
62. There are sufficient numbers of teaching and support staff to meet the needs of pupils and the curriculum. Support staff make an important contribution to the pupils' learning in school. Pupils with special educational needs receive sufficient support from staff in the classroom. The role of the special needs co-ordinator is to be reviewed and shared between a class teacher and the head-teacher. This is appropriate because there is a need to ensure that the format for writing individual education plans is consistent over time and across the school, and for assessment data to be used more purposefully in planning the next steps in pupils' learning. All staff in school are appropriately trained, qualified and experienced for their roles. The school has maintained similar staffing levels to those of the last inspection.
63. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall in meeting the needs of the curriculum. The school has not been able to address the deficiencies identified at the last inspection. Teachers work very hard to make an attractive learning environment for pupils. Indoor areas are bright, attractive and comfortable. Displays of pupils' work make a significant contribution to learning. Classroom space is sufficient for the number on roll. However, the Village Hall has to be used for assemblies and physical education and it is restricted by poor acoustics. Its size does not accommodate large gymnastics apparatus. Office space is restricted and the head-teacher does not have her own office for confidential meetings. Storage space is lacking. Outdoors, the school has a fair sized grass area for sports and a 'wildlife area' that can be used to study science topics. Hard play areas are small. There is no designated area for the Reception children and markings for games have deteriorated and need re-painting. The whole premises are well maintained, clean and tidy.
64. Learning resources are satisfactory, a very similar picture to that of the last inspection. The school has bought many new books recently for mathematics and English. The level and quality of textbooks in all subjects are satisfactory. There are sufficient computers for pupils to use in their learning. The school continues to make good use of the wider environment and community as learning resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to improve the quality of education further the Governing Body, head-teacher and staff should:

1) Improve the quality of the curriculum provision and learning opportunities at the Foundation Stage by:

- ensuring that teachers' planning relates directly to the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals;
- making sure that activities for the youngest children have specific learning objectives that push them on and extend their thinking.

(paras 3, 19, 22, 28, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73)

2) Provide more challenge for the pupils at Key Stage 1 by making sure that the teaching consistently:

- provides a wide range of tasks that involve the pupils in problem solving and investigative tasks that encourage them to think things through for themselves ;
- provides opportunities for pupils to write open-ended pieces of work for a wide range of audiences and purposes and does not rely too heavily on worksheets.

(paras 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 30, 75, 76, 77, 80, 82, 85, 87, 89, 93, 94, 97, 111, 114))

3) Make more rigorous use of test and assessment data and the involvement of pupils to:

- set challenging targets for the school, year groups and individual pupils;
- establish a system whereby the progress that pupils make can be tracked and any weaknesses tackled.

(paras 1, 5, 49, 60, 84, 90, 99)

4) A more rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning that includes the regular observation of lessons and the regular scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning.

(paras 55, 84, 90, 99, 102, 107, 112, 117, 123, 129, 133, 140)

5) Seeking to improve the standard of accommodation to help the school operate in a more effective manner and to produce a more effective learning environment. Particular emphasis should be paid to:

- facilities to enable pupils to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in physical education;
- providing adequate and suitable accommodation for the head-teacher to hold confidential meetings.

(paras 63, 72, 129, 132, 133)

In addition the school should consider the following less important weaknesses in the action plan:

Continue to seek ways to improve the quality of information for parents, particularly the quality of pupils' reports, and ensuring that the School Prospectus and Annual Governors' Report to parents meets all the necessary requirements. (*paras 51, 57*)

Ensure that the action plan for information technology is implemented and that particular emphasis is given to the use of the control and sensors and to using the full potential of the Internet and electronic mail. (*paras 118, 119, 120, 122, 123*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	28	28	44	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll(FTE for part-time pupils)		43
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

STANDARDS

National Curriculum test results are not published as there were fewer than ten children in the year groups.

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	34
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5
Average class size	21

Education support staff:YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	144302
Total expenditure	150454
Expenditure per pupil	3797
Balance brought forward from previous year	37251
Balance carried forward to next year	31100

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

31

Number of questionnaires returned

22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	68	23	0	0	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	23	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	36	4	4	1
The teaching is good.	91	9	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	27	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	14	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	36	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	69	19	12	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	50	46	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	32	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	48	10	12	5

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE.

66. The children are taught in the same class as the pupils in Years 1 and 2. Only a small number of children start at the school each year, although the intake this year is larger than in previous years. The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage has not consistently kept pace with developments nationally. There are strengths in the teaching and these relate to the management of the children, the manner in which the classroom is organised and the use of time and resources. The weaknesses are that teachers' planning is not always based on the Early Learning Goals, what children are to learn from the activities they take part in is not always made clear, and the individual skills of adults in the classroom are not always exploited to their fullest potential. These factors hinder children's progress. The school has already identified these as areas for improvement and procedures are already in place to move the school forward.
67. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching evident in the creative area of learning and in children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The class benefits from the support of a nursery nurse who makes a positive contribution to children's learning. The normal format in the lessons observed was that the nursery nurse works with the Reception children on activities planned by the teacher. Two teachers teach the Reception class, but only one was observed during the inspection week because of time-tabling arrangements. Assessment data provided by the school shows that there is a wide ability range evident amongst the children that start at the school. Overall attainment is at an average level when children start school. The school does not make effective enough use of assessment data to guide and inform teaching and planning. By the time pupils start in Year 1, the satisfactory quality of teaching and the positive attitudes shown by children results in the majority of them attaining the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development.

68. The children start school with differing levels of maturity and are by necessity placed in a class containing pupils that are older and more mature. These pupils provide good role models and are always ready to give a helping hand or friendly support to their younger classmates when provided with the opportunity. The youngest children quickly adapt to the routines of the classroom and the teacher involves them in the question and answer sessions that are a feature of many lessons. This allows the children to develop an awareness of the necessity to follow certain conventions of courtesy and politeness. Children share resources in an appropriate manner and show satisfactory levels of concentration when working on different tasks. On occasions children do not concentrate for a prolonged period of time, often because what they are to gain from the task is not specific or challenging enough. The adults promote children's personal development in an effective manner when they ensure that the equipment and resources that the children use are easily accessible to them and insist that children return resources after they have used them. This helps the children to become more independent and all children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning.

Communication, language and literacy.

69. Children enjoy listening to stories and listen attentively during literacy lessons and at story time at the end of the day. They are often ready to contribute experiences that have happened in their own lives. These instances, however, are not always picked up on by

the teacher and opportunities to extend children's speaking skills are missed. On other occasions the adults in the class are active listeners and show that they value children's efforts at communicating. The children take part in the whole class elements of the Literacy Framework and develop a sound awareness of phonics through effective word, sentence and text level work using well known stories or information books on topics such as insects. In these sessions, the children are beginning to develop an understanding of terms such as author, illustrator and that some books are specifically written to provide information. Children make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic literacy skills. When children go off into group work, the tasks are not always challenging enough. Insufficient opportunities are being provided to develop the writing skills of the higher attaining children and this restricts the progress they make. Too much emphasis is placed on completing worksheets rather than completing a writing task with a relevant purpose or focus. The classroom has a structured play area that is currently set up as an optician's. The opportunity is being used well to develop children's speaking and listening skills. The teaching and learning are effective when the adults enter into role-play situations and ask the children to make an appointment for them and guide children to clarify their thinking or explain why one pair of spectacles are better than others.

Mathematical development.

70. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress and the majority of children achieve the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. The children join in the whole class sessions for numeracy and benefit from taking part in the mental agility exercises that their older classmates undertake on a regular basis. The teacher and nursery nurse are keen to ensure that the youngest children are actively involved and the manner in which questions are specifically framed means that the children are kept on their toes and make a valued contribution to the lesson. This good start to lessons is not always built on. There are not enough practical activities provided for children to develop their mathematical skills. The satisfactory teaching makes sure that children consolidate their skills through paper and pencil tasks that involve them recognising numbers, sorting objects and the higher attainers successfully completing addition sums up to ten and sometimes beyond. The children are provided with some opportunities to play with sand and water but are not given the chance to compare different size containers, different shapes of containers or to make simple estimations of weight or volume. This prevents children developing the deeper understanding that mathematics is all around them. An example of this was seen when " At the Optician's " the children were asked to telephone a customer and were asked to compare and record the different price of spectacles. This provided a golden opportunity for the children to recognise and write numbers in a really worthwhile and fun manner and as a result children made better progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

71. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and this enables children to gain a deeper understanding of the world in which they live and to make satisfactory progress. Some elements of teaching are good when, for example, the adults provide children with the opportunities to study the area in which they live and then compare it to the nearby town of Ware. This enhances the children's ability to contrast and compare. The children have a secure grasp of how animals change as they get older and know that they need food, water and warmth to survive. In their studies of the locality, the teacher draws the children's attention to the different materials that are used to build houses and shops. This provides the children with an early understanding that some materials are more suitable for different purposes than others. When looking at photographs that children had brought in of themselves as babies and toddlers, the children were able to talk about the changes they noticed. The teaching, however, did not effectively explore with the

children the body changes and developments that had occurred that allowed them to do so many things now that they were previously unable to do. The children use the computer with confidence after the initial help and guidance provided by the adults and can already control the mouse and recognise letters and numbers on the keyboard. The children use scissors and small tools safely to construct and build. They know that there are different ways to join things together and complete tasks well when they are given a specific task to complete.

Physical development.

72. The children start school with average levels of attainment in this area of learning and make steady progress in the Foundation Stage of learning. The staff strive hard to make as many opportunities as they can to advance children's learning, but this is not helped by the fact the school does not have a school hall where the children can develop their skills. The school has to make use of the adjoining village hall, which just about enables children of this age to take part in an appropriate range of physical activities. Children take part in activities with their older classmates and learn the required rules of different activities by the good role models provided by the older pupils. When taking part in a lesson with a parachute, children showed appropriate levels of co-ordination and movement and an awareness of the needs of others. The school would benefit from an enclosed outside play area for the children with a range of large wheeled toys that would provide the children with more chances to develop their skills. Children show a satisfactory ability in using small tools and materials in their art, craft and building activities but would benefit from more direct teaching of specific skills to help them create more accurate finished products.

Creative development.

73. Children are provided with an appropriate range of opportunities to learn about colour and texture through their artwork. Children make steady progress. When activities are not over-directed, children show genuine excitement when they create a colour mix that they had intended or their finished piece of work shows clear evidence of individuality. The teacher has a talent for music and uses this well in singing and music lessons. She provides very good guidance on how children can improve and the children hang on her every word. As a result, the children sing well, with gusto and with a real sense of enjoyment. They look forward to singing and have no problem remembering a range of songs from memory. When listening to older pupils playing instruments, they recognise repeated sounds and patterns. The staff do provide role-play activities and these are at their best when the adults support and extend these opportunities. When supported or encouraged, the children use props such as the many pairs of spectacles in the opticians with imaginative skill and with a great sense of humour. On these occasions, children are able to sustain aspects of characters for longer periods of time. The use of role-play as an effective medium for learning is not always capitalised on as much as it could be.
74. The overall quality of provision at the Foundation Stage of children's learning is satisfactory and ensures that they make a steady start to their educational lives. The school carries out appropriate tests and assessments of children's attainment soon after they start school. The school has accurately identified the need to make more effective use of this data and ongoing assessments to guide future planning and to more accurately inform the next steps in children's learning.

ENGLISH

75. Inspection findings confirm that most of the present pupils are achieving standards expected of their age at the end of both key stages, but the higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1 are capable of achieving better in some aspects of the curriculum. Inspection findings indicate that by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are not consistently challenged to achieve above average standards in each strand of the curriculum. There has been a significant improvement in Key Stage 2 since 1999 when standards were very low in comparison to national averages. In the 2000 tests, all Key Stage 2 pupils achieved the standard expected of their age and over a half achieved above average standards. The present Year 6 pupils are expected to achieve the standard expected of eleven-year-olds but fewer pupils are likely to achieve higher standards. This does not reflect a fall in standards, as pupils are on track to achieve at a level that is commensurate with their ability. The very small number of pupils that are assessed each year at the end of both key stages means that any comparisons with national data are unreliable, as are comparisons with the standards achieved at the time of the last inspection.
76. Pupils in Key Stage 1, make satisfactory progress to achieve the standards expected of their age in speaking and listening. Pupils enjoy and explore stories, listen to explanations and instructions. They are confident in replying to questions and acting out a story. They develop their vocabulary and are able to talk to an audience but a lack of structured role-play activities means that pupils are not always provided with the opportunities to develop a more expressive vocabulary. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2 and, by the end of the key stage, pupils show confidence in investigating ideas from facts, sharing insights with others, and adjusting viewpoints in the light of discussion. In the plenary session of lessons, they give clear explanations of what they have learnt. For example, in a science lesson, they confidently explained how a heart monitor is more accurate than a stopwatch to measure a pulse rate. They recognise and describe how medical equipment helps maintain health. In all lessons, pupils listen attentively to explanations and show a high degree of commitment when completing tasks. Pupils have opportunities to perform in productions. This year's production of 'The Pied Piper' was enjoyed by parents who confirm pupils' confidence and clarity in speech. Pupils at Key Stage 2 do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills by preparing and participating in debates.
77. Standards in reading are average at the end of both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress and develop a secure understanding of letters and their sound. This helps them to tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. They show confidence in reading simple texts and distinguish between fiction and non-fiction. They follow a structured reading scheme and by the age of seven most pupils can read accurately and confidently. The pupils have clearly developed the mechanical skills of reading at a good rate but are not provided with enough opportunities to develop early referencing and library skills or to compare the work of different authors. This prevents pupils achieving at an even better level.
78. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress. They participate in whole-class shared reading of text and confidently express opinions on what makes a good story. They recognise how authors develop plot and characters to retain the reader's interest. Most pupils read fluently and with expression. They use appropriate changes of voice to depict different characters and situations. They know how to use an index and contents page to find information. Few pupils have developed skills of skimming and scanning for meaning. The literacy hour is effectively providing a structured programme of work to develop skills in reading and grammar. Teachers use the shared reading session effectively to widen pupils' knowledge of poetry, story and non-fiction.

79. Pupils throughout the school show enjoyment in learning and all respond positively to the wide selection of quality books used in the shared text session of lessons. These are supported by a good selection of group reading books that encourage pupils to research information. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. This ensures that pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning. The good balance of class, group and individual teaching provides the pupils with a good range of different learning situations, to which they respond well.
80. Standards in writing are average at the end of both key stages. Progress is satisfactory at both key stages but stronger in some aspects of writing at Key Stage 2. By the age of seven, most pupils are able to write simple sentences using full stops and capital letters correctly. A few pupils recognise the function of speech, question and exclamation marks, although they do not use them in their daily written work. Pupils in this key stage do not have sufficient opportunities to write for a variety of audiences and purposes. On occasions, too great an emphasis is placed on completing worksheets rather than a more open-ended writing activity. This impacts negatively on the progress made by the higher attaining pupils. Pupils show clear understanding of how to form letters and regularly practise handwriting.
81. In Key Stage 2, pupils show confidence in writing. They write descriptions, diaries and letters. They are not sufficiently taught the specific skills to write extended stories, reviews, poems, pamphlets and magazines. They develop skills in spelling by learning weekly words and recognising how a mnemonic can help to spell a difficult word. They use different forms of writing appropriately, for instance, when reporting on scientific experiments and when writing entries into a diary of their visit to Derbyshire. Pupils have a secure understanding of punctuation. They correctly use capital letters, full stops and speech marks. Few pupils show understanding of the use of the apostrophe to mark possession.
82. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, the teacher ensures that the basic skills of reading and writing are taught in a satisfactory manner and that this is done in a progressive and systematic way. The weakness lies in the fact that the higher order reading and writing skills are not taught in the same effective way to enable pupils to write for a wide range of audiences and purposes. This results in some pupils not achieving as well as they could. In Key Stage 2, the teacher has a high expectation of pupils and ensures that work is challenging, although there is a need to ensure that pupils are taught the necessary skills to enable them to complete extended pieces of writing that sustain character and plot. In Key Stage 2, the teacher skilfully adjusts the literacy lesson to cope with a wide age and ability range. She ensures the shared reading activity stimulates pupils' interest. For example, when reading extracts from 'The diary of Anne Frank' pupils are challenged to find words conveying meaning of fear and emotion. Teachers at both key stages have secure class management skills and relate well to pupils. This results in pupils showing a very positive attitude towards learning and an eagerness to complete tasks. Lessons are well planned and effectively follow the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers, however, do not consistently share the learning target for the lesson with pupils and so actively involve the pupils more in their own learning. The quality of individual education plans is variable and is satisfactory overall. They are at their best when targets are challenging and achievable. The pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate levels of support and make progress that is similar to their classmates. Computers are used in a satisfactory manner to support pupils' learning at both key stages, although it is more prevalent and effective at Key Stage 2.

83. Teachers use vocabulary effectively at both key stages to promote pupils' interest in new words. In a music lesson, pupils were asked to plan and perform a Maori haka. They described this as frightening, threatening and intimidating. Teachers skilfully develop pupils' understanding of spelling. They encourage pupils to try out spelling for themselves and teach common spelling patterns. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged to use weekly spellings in developing written work.
84. The school has rightly recognised the need to ensure that teachers carry out a more detailed analysis of test and assessment data to look for areas for improvement and to set challenging targets. There has only been a limited amount of monitoring of teaching and learning across the school or of scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. These are identified as priority areas in the School Development Plan and are accurate perceptions for the school to tackle.

MATHEMATICS

85. Standards at the end of both key stages are at an average level overall in numeracy, algebra, shape and measure and data handling. However, at Key Stage 1, not enough emphasis is given to the development of pupils' investigative and problem solving skills through challenging, practical activities which consistently put the pupils' mathematical knowledge to the test. This means that attainment in this area of mathematics is below average. When such opportunities are provided, the pupils rise to the challenge and achieve well but such opportunities are not frequent enough. The small number of pupils that are tested each year makes comparisons with national data unreliable. The previous inspection found standards to be at an average level at the end of both key stages but again comparisons based on such a small number of pupils need to be treated with caution. However, analysis of data over time does show a pattern at Key Stage 1. Although the percentage of pupils that reach Level 2 is often high, this is not matched by a high percentage of pupils achieving the next higher level (Level 3). There is a direct link between these results and inspection findings. Pupils do not achieve as well in the tests in the element of using and applying mathematics as they do in other elements of the subject and this was also the case in the inspection findings.
86. A stronger picture emerges at Key Stage 2, where investigations and problem solving activities are a much stronger feature of lessons. This is reflected in test results where in 1999 and 2000 a high percentage of pupils reached the required standard and the higher attaining pupils achieved at a higher level that was commensurate with their ability. The quality of teaching at this key stage would suggest that pupils consistently achieve their potential and that there is little evidence of under achievement. The differing natural ability levels of the small number of pupils that are tested each year can explain any differences in test results over the years. There are no marked differences in the attainment of boys and girls. In lessons at this key stage, teaching is consistently good and challenging. In one very effective lesson, the pupils were asked to examine different ways to solve problems mentally and then later to examine the numerical patterns they had discovered using pencil and paper and then, as the carefully planned patterns became more complex, the pupils were asked to use calculators. As a result, the pupils saw how different methods of calculation need to be used for different types of calculation as well as having great fun.
87. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1, but progress for the higher attaining pupils is not always good enough. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100 and, when provided with the right opportunities, a smaller number of pupils show the ability and confidence to handle numbers up to 1,000. Such opportunities are not as frequent as they could be and this hinders the learning of the more able pupils.

Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of standard and non-standard measures and estimate and measure with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They know some of the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and pupils have experience of handling data, such as graphs, to show how pupils travel to school. There is a tendency in this key stage to rely too heavily on worksheets or commercially produced booklets, rather than consistently providing pupils with the chance to explore and investigate numbers. This prevents learning from advancing at a faster rate in the area of using and applying mathematics.

88. Pupils of all abilities make good progress at Key Stage 2. By the age of eleven, pupils can work out calculations in their heads quickly, with the higher attaining pupils doing so with large numbers. All pupils measure accurately and calculate the area and perimeter of regular shapes. Pupils have a secure understanding of fractions and use and interpret a range of diagrams and charts. Pupils are adept at checking their results and making sensible estimations because it is an approach that is constantly encouraged by the teachers. The pupils see the benefit of this and recognise when answers cannot be correct. Pupils have a good understanding of probability and use the correct terminology when working in this area of the subject. Pupils use their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as, when carrying out accurate measurements in scientific experiments or when working out grid references in geography or how long a monarch reigned in a particular period of history. The pupils are encouraged to think of different ways of solving problems and of using their mathematical knowledge to solve real-life problems.
89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The teachers throughout school are familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy and it has been applied effectively, particularly at Key Stage 2. Here, the lessons have a real sense of challenge and the pupils are encouraged to use their mental agility skills at every opportunity. The three-part lesson structure is firmly established and questioning is used very effectively at the end of lessons to assess what pupils have learned. The teacher then uses this information to help guide future lesson content. This is good practice because it consistently ensures that work and tasks set match the ability and understanding of all the pupils. At Key Stage 1, the management of pupils is good and when pupils are challenged they show high levels of interest and motivation. However, there is on occasions too much practising of previously learned skills rather than pushing the pupils on. When this happens, progress is not good enough. The commercially produced booklets are followed too prescriptively rather than expecting pupils to solve practical problems in their own way and at the same time forcing them to think harder. Teachers at both key stages use an appropriate range of mathematical vocabulary and this results in pupils being able to explain their work using the correct terminology. Teachers' planning is at its best when there is a clear distinction between the learning objective of the lesson and the activities to help achieve the objective. At Key Stage 2, the teacher has started to share the learning objectives with the pupils at the start of each lesson. This is proving effective because the pupils become more motivated when they have to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils throughout the school are well behaved in lessons and show a desire to achieve well. They listen attentively in lessons and are always ready to ask or answer questions. Many pupils like to find things out for themselves and respond to the challenge when the opportunities are provided. Such opportunities are more prevalent at Key Stage 2 and this has a bigger impact on pupils' rate of learning at this key stage. The targets that are set for pupils with special educational needs are usually clear and this means that they progress at a similar rate to their classmates. Teaching for these pupils is never less than satisfactory and support is targeted to where the need is the greatest.

90. The school is increasingly using the analysis of test and assessment data as a tool to help raise standards. The head-teacher however has recognised that the information could still be used in a sharper, more rigorous manner to set targets for individual pupils and to put in place a system that would carefully track pupils' progress towards their stated targets. Teachers carry out regular mental tests to assess pupils' ongoing attainment. Pupils' work is marked on a regular basis but what pupils need to do to improve is not always made sufficiently clear. There has been limited monitoring of teaching and learning but again the head-teacher has rightly recognised the need for a more formal and structured approach that includes the regular scrutiny of pupils' work so that the process can have a bigger impact on helping to raise standards. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained, as has the quality of teaching. There is still a need to strengthen the co-ordination of the subject and to raise standards further by ensuring that work is always challenging enough.

SCIENCE

91. Inspection findings confirm that pupils achieve standards expected of their age at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are achieving above average standards.
92. There has been a significant improvement in standards at Key Stage 2 since 1999, when standards were very low in comparison to national averages. In the 2000 tests, all pupils achieved the standard expected for their age and over a third achieved above average standards. The present Year 6 is expected to achieve similar results. However, the very small cohorts of pupils make statistical comparison unreliable
93. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are not consistently challenged to achieve above average standards and, as a result, do not always make the progress of which they are capable. The reason for this lies in the fact that pupils are not given enough chances to learn through investigative and practical activities. The pupils develop a sound and secure scientific knowledge across the different elements of the subject but are not provided with the opportunities to put this knowledge to the test or to simply try things out for themselves. In Key Stage 2, the teacher ensures pupils have opportunities to develop scientific enquiry. Pupils are expected to plan an investigation, predict outcomes, carry out a fair test and record results. As a result, pupils make better progress and achieve higher standards.
94. By the age of seven, pupils have a clear understanding of how living things grow and reproduce. They are able to describe their growth from babies to the present. They have a clear understanding of the skeleton and describe the function of bones, joints and muscles. Most pupils are able to describe the importance of a healthy diet and explain how food helps growth. They describe every-day appliances that use electricity. They recognise a circuit is made when a battery, bulb and wires are joined together, but they do not show understanding of how switches are used to control an electrical device. Previous work confirms pupils are able to identify light sources and know how shadows are created. Pupils are able to sort materials into groups according to their properties. Pupils have a satisfactory level of scientific knowledge and all pupils make steady progress in this area of the subject. The weaknesses lie in testing out their knowledge and understanding in situations where they are expected to make simple predictions or to try and explain why things happen as they do.
95. By the age of eleven, pupils have a secure understanding of life processes and living things. They are able to name and describe the major organs of the body. They give clear explanations of how the heart acts as a pump to circulate blood through arteries

and veins around the body. They conduct investigations to measure the effect of exercise on pulse rate by using a heart monitor. They compare the accuracy of the recording with results obtained with a stopwatch. Information technology skills are enhanced by adding results to a database. In discussion, pupils give clear explanations of the effects on the body of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. They recognise the importance of exercise for good health.

96. Pupils develop their knowledge of electricity by constructing circuits. They are able to install lights in their design technology model cars. All pupils at Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and take care with recording results. Pupils enjoy practical and investigative activities including measuring the displacement of water by breathing.
97. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. In both key stages, teachers relate well to pupils and show secure class management skills. In Key Stage 1, opportunities are missed to develop scientific skills by giving pupils opportunities to experiment. The teaching of scientific knowledge at this key stage is secure and ensures that over a period of time pupils gain a secure grasp of the different strands of the subject. Evidence indicates that prior attainment is built on and reference is made to prior learning. Writing opportunities are sometimes missed at this key stage because of an over-reliance on worksheets.
98. The very good teaching in Key Stage 2 ensures that pupils are challenged to achieve high standards. Very effective use is made of resources that are well-organised and accessible to pupils. The teacher recognises when pupils are having difficulty and quickly gives additional support. When the heart monitor failed to work, she explained how pupils could locate their pulse and use a stopwatch to measure the rate. By the next lesson, she ensured the monitor was working and pupils thoroughly enjoyed using the equipment. They recognised how valuable scientific equipment is to doctors and athletes. The very good relationship between pupils and teachers in Key Stage 2 ensures that pupils show very good attitudes towards learning. This is reflected in the standard of presentation of their recorded work. A general weakness in teaching at both key stages is that teachers do not explain to pupils the learning target for the lesson or actively involve the pupils in setting their own targets and areas for improvement. Computers are used in an appropriate manner to support pupils' work in this subject.
99. There is a clear need for a more focused and rigorous approach to how the subject is monitored and how assessment data could be used to help raise standards. Not enough use is made of test data to look for areas of weakness or to set challenging targets that would act as a spur for pupils and teachers alike. Little monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place to help the school to spread the good practice and to tackle the areas of weakness.

ART AND DESIGN

100. Attainment in art and design is at an expected level for pupils' ages at the end of both key stages and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. At Key Stage 1 pupils have acquired satisfactory drawing skills and make accurate observations in terms of shape, shade and texture. Pupils are provided with opportunities to work with a wide range of materials such as paint, pastels and fabrics. Although pupils know the names of some famous artists such as Lowry or Van Gogh, they are not conversant with their lives or work. Examination of pupils' work shows that they can mix colours and produce lighter and darker tones to create the desired effect. On occasions, however, there is too much

adult intervention and guidance rather than leaving the pupils to experiment. Discussions with pupils show that they see the importance of discussing their work and looking for ways to improve it. The pupils do not have sketchbooks where they could practice and refine ideas before committing them to paper.

101. At Key Stage 2, the pupils continue to acquire knowledge and skills at an appropriate rate. As well as the specific teaching of skills, the teacher uses the opportunities in other subjects to promote pupils' learning. In their work on the Aztecs in history, the teacher has carefully exploited every opportunity to advance pupils' artistic knowledge, skills and understanding. The pupils have designed a sun calendar and tie-dyed materials using colours inspired by Aztec designs. This term, the pupils have designed and made Aztec funeral masks where they apply their knowledge of line, texture, colour and pattern to their work in an effective manner. Much emphasis is given to working with different materials, including clay, and in producing three-dimensional work such as sculptures, clay pots and jewellery. The individual skills pertinent to observational art are taught in a systematic manner and there is clear progression in the work of pupils of differing ages. Pupils have observed landscapes, buildings and smaller objects and show a developing eye for detail.
102. Teaching is at least satisfactory with some good features at Key Stage 2. Here, the systematic development of skills adds much to pupils' learning. The pupils use visual information from books and pictures to develop designs on the computer and then apply the design for sewing a book cover. The pupils cut and fold paper to make symmetrical and geometrical designs and, in the process, test out their mathematical skills. Pupils of all ages enjoy art and take pride in what they do. When the pupils are provided with the chance to show originality and creativity, they respond well. The teaching at Key Stage 2 obviously enthuses the pupils, who are then keen to find out additional information about the artists they are studying. The pupils know and recognise the work of famous artists, although this knowledge tends to centre on the work of European ones. The pupils have not benefited from visits to the school by artists or craftspeople or by visits to art galleries. Individual pupils have visited galleries in London with their own families and talk enthusiastically about the experience. Few opportunities have been provided for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school but she has looked at the quality and range of work on display on a regular basis and provided some informal observations and feedback to colleagues. A more focused approach to monitoring is already identified as an area for development by the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Pupils achieve the standards expected of their age at the end of both key stages. The standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
104. By the age of seven, pupils recognise the importance of design to make a product. They show skills in drawing and labelling but do not evaluate the success of their designs. When designing a shell for a tortoise and making a cover for their project book, they explore materials by cutting, tearing and joining. They have an understanding of simple mechanisms. They use card and split pins to make models of joints of the body to show movement. They do not extend understanding to a wider range of activities.
105. By the age of eleven, pupils show confidence in developing techniques of measuring, cutting and joining materials. Models of Tudor houses show attention to detail and finish. Following a visit to a Tudor house, pupils design and make their own models. They consider scale and materials required. Their models are celebrated and effectively

displayed in the classroom. Pupils speak enthusiastically of their model 'Buggy'. These show pupils have a clear understanding of structure. They use wood to make a rigid base and recognise how triangular shapes can strengthen the structure. They use their knowledge of circuits to provide lights to the model. Attention to detail and precision is shown in their making of kaleidoscopes and magic lenses in which they use their knowledge of mirrors and reflection. In history, they design and make Aztec headwear and masks. Pupils take pride in their work and in discussion confirm their enjoyment in learning.

106. Teaching in both key stages is satisfactory. Teachers plan to integrate the teaching of skills and knowledge within class topics. This is successful and effectively supports pupils' learning in science, art and history. Relationships between teacher and pupils are very good and this results in pupils showing a positive attitude towards learning. Teachers encourage pupils to work co-operatively. Since the previous inspection, a scheme of work has been adopted and this is central to teachers' planning. It is successfully ensuring that pupils develop understanding of mechanisms and structures. It does not ensure skills and knowledge in food technology are developed through the key stages and, as a result, attainment in this element of the subject is not at a satisfactory level.
107. There is no effective co-ordination of the subject. Planning, teaching and learning are not systematically monitored and, as a result, there is little opportunity to build on the good practice that does exist or to ensure that all elements of the subject are systematically and progressively developed.

GEOGRAPHY

108. The last time the school was inspected, standards in geography were above average in certain elements of the subject. Standards now are at an average level at the end of both key stages, with pupils' knowledge at a higher level within a restricted range of studies. The emphasis that the school has placed on literacy and numeracy means that geography is not taught in as much depth as was previously the case.
109. All pupils at Key Stage 1 make steady progress and by the end of the key stage the pupils have a secure knowledge of local places. Through their studies of the village of Tonwell and the town of Ware they get a good grasp of the differences and similarities of life in the different communities. They recognise the different facilities that are available and how these change according to the size of the communities. The pupils have acquired satisfactory mapping skills and draw simple maps of the area in which they live. Dialogue with pupils shows that they can describe the advantages and disadvantages of where they live and draw comparisons with places they may have visited on holiday. Opportunities have been provided for pupils to look at the different methods of transport used to get them to school and the effect that they have on the environment. Good links were made with mathematics as their results were recorded in a bar graph. The keeping of weather diaries gives the pupils an insight into climatic change on a short and long term basis and how symbols can be used instead of text to help them record their findings.
110. Pupils continue to acquire geographical knowledge and skills at a steady rate at Key Stage 2. The pupils have a good knowledge of terminology linked to their work on rivers. They explain terms such as confluence, source, delta and meander. The teaching ensures that pupils see geography as a subject that has local, national and international strands. When studying rivers for example, the pupils look at rivers both locally and around the world. In their work on the rivers in Mozambique, the pupils examine the

impact of flooding from both a geographical perspective and a moralistic stance in terms of what the rest of the world could and should do to help. Good links are made here with the development of pupils' writing skills. The pupils contrast differing localities in the United Kingdom in a satisfactory manner and point out the major differences through criteria such as suitability for tourism, range of facilities and physical features. Dialogue with the older pupils shows that by the end of this key stage they can locate different places of the world on a map and understand such terms as hemispheres. They state clearly how where they live differs from other places around the world. They recognise the importance of grid references on maps and how symbols are used to help locate and identify different physical features. The pupils' knowledge is secure and on occasions good in the topics they study but the areas of study are a little restricted and this prevents pupils from acquiring a wider geographical knowledge.

111. Teaching is satisfactory with evidence of good teaching at Key Stage 2. The better teaching is characterised by high expectations and a clear development of technical language to describe differing physical features. At Key Stage 2, the teacher often uses the subject to extend pupils' writing skills alongside the development of geographical knowledge and skills. An example of this was seen where the pupils had to write about the impact of flooding not only on the landscape but also on peoples' lives. At Key Stage 1, such opportunities are not always provided and there is an over-reliance on worksheets which the pupils complete with ease and consequently do not make as much progress as they could. It is clear from pupils' work and through talking to them that pupils enjoy geography. They are keen to talk about the locality in which they live and how it differs from other places around the world. Many pupils visit different places on family holidays and are more than willing to discuss differences in lifestyles, cultures and climate. The quality of teaching helps to engender in pupils a curiosity about the wider world and when older pupils are asked to carry out personal study and research about different countries or geographical features they do so with enthusiasm and with a keenness to share their findings with classmates. The pupils show a willingness to learn from their mistakes and when teachers assess pupils' work rigorously the pupils are only too ready to take on board the comments. On occasions, however, teachers do not make clear to the pupils what they should do to improve.
112. The management of the subject does not include the regular scrutiny of pupils' work or the monitoring of teaching across the school, although there are many informal discussion and planning meetings to discuss how the different strands of the subject are being covered. The school has already identified the need to put the monitoring of teaching and learning on a more formal and rigorous basis in order to have a bigger impact on helping to raise standards.

HISTORY

113. Inspection evidence confirms that the majority of pupils achieve the standards expected for their age at the end of both key stages. The standards identified by the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
114. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop satisfactory skills in historical enquiry. They find out about aspects from the past by using a range of sources, including artefact pictures and photographs. By the age of seven, pupils have a secure understanding of everyday life in the past. They recognise changes in clothing, houses, transport and everyday objects. They explain changes in their own lifetime. They lack confidence in telling stories from the past in their own words mainly as a result of the fact that not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to do this.

115. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed a secure sense of chronology. They show an awareness that the past can be divided into different periods, for example, the Romans, Tudors and Victorians. Scrutiny of work confirms that pupils have a good understanding of events and conditions during the Tudor period. They are able to describe the reign of Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth 1. Most pupils can describe everyday life in Tudor England and how crime was punished. They show understanding of time by drawing a family tree. The study of the Aztecs enables them to develop an understanding of the key features of a past non-European society. They recognise that historical sources can help find answers about the past. Most pupils are able to use library books to research information and are provided with some opportunities to carry out personal research on the computer. This practice is more prevalent at Key Stage 2.
116. Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers plan their lessons well and constantly challenge pupils to compare the past with the present. They establish good cross-curricular links, for example, in the Tudor project pupils use design technology skills to make attractive Tudor houses. In music, pupils devise a tribal dance in the style of Aztec warriors. In art, they recognise patterns and shapes in images and artefacts of other civilisations. Pupils enjoy sharing their historical knowledge and discussing previous work. They understand that old things are fragile and they treat resources and artefacts with respect and care. In Key Stage 2, they take care over the presentation of their writing and illustrations. Teachers make effective use of educational visits to enhance pupils' learning. The visit to Stevenage museum enriches pupils' understanding of life in Tudor times. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to develop skills in writing by producing stories, descriptions or narratives.
117. There is no effective co-ordination of this subject. Planning, teaching and learning are not systematically monitored to ensure continuity and the development of skills and knowledge as pupils move through the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

118. The standards achieved at the end of both key stages are at a satisfactory level overall but there are areas of the subject that are not at this satisfactory level. The pupils at both key stages show appropriate keyboard skills, use the computer to present data in different formats and use computers, particularly in Key Stage 2, to support work in other areas of the curriculum. The areas for further development lie in the strands of control and sensors and in exploiting the potential of computers as a means of communication through, for instance, electronic mail. The standards being achieved in this subject are at a higher level than at the previous inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. This improvement has come about as a result of an improvement in resources, greater staff knowledge, confidence and expertise and the exploiting of opportunities to use computers across the curriculum.
119. In Key Stage 1, the satisfactory quality of teaching ensures that pupils achieve satisfactory standards across most strands of the subject. The teacher can often be seen providing direct teaching and guidance to pupils when they are working on the computer. This teaching is not over-directed but allows the pupils to find things out for themselves and to learn by their own mistakes when trying to locate or input information. The pupils really enjoy using the computers and are always ready to help a classmate who may be struggling. When working, pupils show high levels of concentration and do not give up easily when confronted with a difficult task. As a result of the sound quality of teaching and the positive attitudes displayed, the pupils acquire knowledge and skills at a satisfactory rate. The basic skills are taught well and, by the end of the key stage, pupils

are familiar with the different functions of the keyboard and mouse. The pupils use different fonts, size, style and colour when word-processing. The pupils input information relating to how members of the class travel to school and produce the data in graph form. Discussions with the pupils show that they have a satisfactory understanding of how computers are used outside of school and how they can be used in many different ways to help us. The pupils are quick to point out that their teacher always helps them when they get stuck but that they are also expected to try and solve the problem themselves. Examples were seen of computers being used to support other areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics. Opportunities are sometimes missed where pupils would benefit from finding things out for themselves by using the computer as a source of information. Little evidence was available to indicate that pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of control technology or of pupils entering a sequence of instructions for a programmable toy or screen turtle and this element of attainment is unsatisfactory.

120. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show sound keyboard skills in combining text and graphics. The pupils are enthusiastic and clearly like using computers. They feel that they are given plenty of opportunities to use computers in all areas of the curriculum. The teaching at this key stage is often good because of this and the fact that the teacher directly teaches the skills that enable pupils to deepen their understanding and skills. The pupils recognise the potential of computers as a source of information. They carry out personal research and study in history, science and geography. The teacher has high expectations and pupils will often carry out such tasks at home with little or no prompting from the teacher. Often the research will then be shared with the rest of the class. Pupils are able to use the computer to edit and draft their work and do not use the computer to laboriously input completed work. The higher attaining pupils cut and paste and are conversant with using facilities such as spellchecker. The pupils make their written work come to life by importing graphics.
121. Evidence indicates that pupils are able to set up and interrogate a database and present their findings in a variety of ways, including graphs and pie charts. The teacher at this key stage has secure subject knowledge and this enables her to ask questions suited to the abilities of the pupils. This keeps the pupils on their toes and ensures they think about the tasks they are completing. When the pupils are working on the computer, they are engrossed in their work and behave very well. Pupils work really well together and are keen to help one another. Even though there are other activities happening in the classroom, the teacher is well aware of the needs of those working on the computer. She does not interfere unless help is needed and then supports those experiencing difficulties through careful questions which makes them think logically through their problem for themselves.
122. Computers are used particularly well at Key Stage 2 in other areas of the curriculum, such as reinforcing number skills in mathematics, presenting findings in science, composing in music or designing an Aztec mask in history. Dialogue with pupils shows that they have a desire to use computers at every opportunity and they are certainly aware of the impact that computers have on modern day life. They have satisfactory knowledge of using scanners and digital cameras and of the many uses there are for the Internet. The areas that the school has rightly identified for further improvement are control and sensors and increasing the school's use of the Internet and electronic mail because at present these areas are unsatisfactory. These are appropriate as pupils are not conversant with, for example, using a temperature sensing device to record temperature or in writing a sequence of commands to control a light bulb, buzzer or motor with a control box. The school has also yet to tap into the full range of learning experiences on offer through regular use of the Internet and electronic mail.

123. The school has recently put together a good quality scheme of work that should ensure the systematic acquisition of the necessary skills for pupils as they move through the school. The action plan rightly identifies the need to ensure the continued purchase of computers and software to keep the school in touch with the rapidly developing initiatives in this area of the curriculum. There is also a need to ensure that staff training continues to match these developments. The role of co-ordinator is not focused enough on how standards could be improved by a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning.

MUSIC

124. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment in music is at an expected level for pupils at both key stages. The standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the weaknesses identified at Key Stage 2 have been tackled well. The quality of singing is good and a significant percentage of pupils leave the school as accomplished musicians. Music is seen as an important element of the curriculum and the school benefits from teachers with good subject knowledge and infectious enthusiasm that really help the subject to come to life. The good quality teaching, together with the enjoyment that is engendered in pupils, means that pupils of all abilities acquire skills and knowledge across all elements of the subject at an appropriate rate. The direct teaching of how to improve singing skills means that progress in this element of the subject is good. A number of pupils benefit from private lessons in the playing of musical instruments. This often shows itself when pupils are asked to play in assemblies or at events within the local community, such as, performing for the elderly in the village or in the school productions that are, according to parents, " a joy to watch." The school also provides opportunities for all pupils to have the chance to play a recorder during their time at school. This enhances pupils' musical knowledge and also develops a greater confidence in performing.
125. At Key Stage 1, pupils are provided with opportunities to sing both within assemblies and in music lessons. They sing well and show good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. Pupils sing songs from memory and sing in rounds with ease and confidence. Pupils know the names of many instruments and use untuned instruments to accompany the songs they sing. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that the pupils are given the chance to compose their own music and recognise that music can evoke many different moods and feelings.
126. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their enjoyment of music. The pupils' ability in singing is good because as they get older they are expected to sing more complex compositions. Pupils learn to create percussion parts to songs and compose simple melodies to accompany text. They listen to their own and classmates' efforts and then assess how they can improve what they have done. Very good links were made during the inspection between music and history. The pupils were studying the Aztecs and were asked to compose a tribal dance. The pupils composed a repeating rhythm using a variety of instruments from around the world. The pupils showed a clear recognition of the relationship between sounds and how they can be put together to create an effect. The pupils talk excitedly about music and show an awareness of music and instruments from different cultures. They are knowledgeable of the work of composers such as Beethoven and Strauss and pupils are able to talk about contemporary music and say why they like or dislike different artists or pieces of music. Pupils have visited London and seen musicals and ballet productions and use these experiences to compare pieces of music they hear in school.

127. It is clear that throughout the school pupils enjoy listening to and making music. There is an air of anticipation and excitement when the whole school comes together for singing lessons. The good choice of songs, which lend themselves to differing musical devices and ways of singing, enthuses the pupils who invariably rise to the challenge. Pupils are always very well-behaved in lessons; treat musical instruments with care and show a willingness to take on board comments that will help them to improve their level of performance.
128. The pupils benefit from the good quality of teaching that is provided for them at both key stages. The teachers are clearly secure in their subject knowledge and this shows in the way in which they always use correct musical terms. The pupils quickly adopt these in their own work and discussions. There is a good emphasis on the direct teaching of specific skills in both singing and composition which enhances pupils' learning. Teachers, however, are equally adamant that pupils should be creative in their own compositions by using a wide and varied array of instruments and then assessing one another's work. The whole school singing session works well. The skills and talents of the individual teachers, together with the peripatetic pianist, combine together very well to provide a dynamic and thoroughly enjoyable learning experience for the pupils. Both teachers have very good singing voices and use them well to demonstrate the sounds they are trying to create. One teacher concentrates on the singing aspect while the other concentrates on developing pupils' percussion skills. By the end of the lesson, pupils' skills in both elements have audibly improved. In a very good lesson taught by the Key Stage 2 teacher, the pupils put together an impressive tribal dance based on the Aztec culture. Not only did the pupils learn much about rhythm, musical notation and tempo, but they also gained a deeper understanding of the Aztecs' way of life. Such was the level of fun and learning that when the lesson had to come to an end there were groans of disappointment. In all lessons, the management of pupils in the differing activities is very good and the quality of relationships between pupils and staff add to the quality of learning.
129. Pupils and staff value music as an important part of the curriculum. The fact that some music making takes place on a whole school basis means that the co-ordinator has some opportunity to evaluate standards across the school but does not always have the same opportunity to see individual class music lessons. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to perform at concerts and productions and is currently examining the possibilities of bringing in more visiting musicians to further develop pupils' musical experiences. The music lessons take place in the village hall that is next to the school. This is a far from ideal venue with poor acoustics and a heating system that on occasions makes more noise than the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Standards in physical education are at an average level in most elements of the subject at the end of both key stages. The small size of the school and problems with accommodation present the school with a series of complications that it strives very hard to overcome. At the last inspection standards were identified as being high. Swimming standards have been maintained but problems with accommodation have restricted pupils' progress in gymnastics.
131. There are only a small number of pupils in each year group at Key Stage 2 so, in order to provide learning experiences that enhance pupils' physical skills, the school joins three other local small schools on a weekly basis for games lessons. The venue changes on a termly basis. The arrangement means that pupils get the chance to work with a larger number of pupils and the full range of ability is present within each session. Each lesson

is carefully planned with the teachers from each school taking a group of pupils to develop games' skills in sports such as football, netball, hockey or rugby. No lessons were observed during the week of inspection but planning clearly shows that the emphasis in all these games lessons is on the specific development of skills appropriate to each game. Skills that are appropriate to all games such as marking, passing, receiving or dodging are all given equal prominence. Teachers' planning shows that over the year pupils receive a good diet of different sports at Key Stage 2. These include tennis, cricket and athletics. The pupils rotate around the sports on a weekly basis and this ensures that they experience the full range of activities on offer. Discussions with the oldest pupils at Key Stage 2 shows that they clearly enjoy taking part in physical education lessons and they feel that the arrangements for games are good and that they develop good knowledge and skills across a wide range of sports. The dialogue also showed that the pupils recognise the importance of physical exercise in helping them to keep fit and healthy. They know the impact of exercise on heart rates and the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after exercise. This is reflected in teachers' planning which shows that appropriate attention is placed on these elements in each lesson.

132. The teaching of gymnastics is more problematic. The school does not have a school hall and so has to use the village hall that is situated next to the school. The size of the hall makes it an unsatisfactory venue for the development of pupils' gymnastic skills particularly at Key Stage 2. There are difficulties in storing appropriate equipment and, because the hall is also used for other purposes such as dining, equipment cannot be stored in the hall. The only opportunity the pupils have at Key Stage 2 for gymnastics is for floor activities to take place in the school playground when the weather is suitable. This is clearly an unsatisfactory state of affairs and has a negative impact on pupils' attainment in gymnastics. During the inspection, the pupils at Key Stage 1 were observed in a physical education lesson using a parachute. Here, the pupils had to control the parachute by moving their bodies in different directions. The emphasis was on working together, which the pupils did well. The lesson had an appropriate warm up activity but the pupils were not physically active throughout the lesson. The management of the pupils was good and clear instructions were given throughout the lesson to help improve the quality of pupils' movement. The activity had to take place outside in the school playground in far from ideal weather conditions. This was the only lesson observed but the scrutiny of planning indicates that teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. The school partakes in a wide range of inter-school activities in sports such as football, netball, swimming and athletics. The pupils talk about these competitions with great enthusiasm and reveal that the enjoyment of taking part is as important as the level of success. The school, however, does achieve well in all the competitions it enters.
133. There is considerable emphasis given to the development of pupils' swimming skills. All pupils attend swimming lessons each week and by the time pupils leave school standards are at an above average level. Qualified instructors provide the teaching and, once pupils have acquired basic water skills, attention is paid to developing better stroke technique and building up stamina levels in order to swim greater distances. The school runs an appropriate number of extra-curricular activities for a school of this size that include sports which differ on a seasonal basis. The clubs are run by staff and on occasions benefit from parental help. The clubs are well attended and are clearly valued by the pupils who attend. The pupils are also provided with the opportunity to attend a residential outdoor pursuits centre every four years. This gives the pupils the chance to take part in activities such as canoeing, abseiling and a range of other activities as well as adding much to their personal and social development. The co-ordinator has not had many opportunities to assess the quality of teaching and learning across the school but, because of the small size of the school, has a good grasp of the standards that are being achieved. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has tried hard to ensure

that pupils receive their full entitlement across the physical education curriculum. Despite these efforts, the restrictions caused by the quality of accommodation means that the deficiencies identified at the last inspection remain.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. By the end of both key stages, standards of attainment are in line with the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The subject continues to make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Teachers ensure that pupils are aware that different groups of people celebrate faith in different ways.
135. Boys and girls of all ages, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in understanding specific terminology relating to different religions. Religious education makes a positive contribution to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Writing skills are not as effectively developed at Key Stage 1 because too often pupils' are only required to complete a worksheet.
136. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop an appropriate awareness of how people care for each other. They recognise how Christians celebrate festivals such as Easter and Christmas. They learn stories from the old and new testaments. Pupils' learning is enhanced when they are given opportunities to discuss events in their own lives that have special significance.
137. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to compare Christianity to other religions. They learn of the birth, baptism and crucifixion of Jesus. They recognise that the Christening ceremony is welcoming a new person into the family of God. They understand how Muslims take new babies to the Mosque so that the child will be brought up in their faith. Pupils appreciate there are rules to guide one's moral behaviour. They give examples of the Ten Commandments and the Laws from Deuteronomy, which are central to Judaism. They compare the significance of the Christian Sabbath to the Jewish Shabbat. They recognise the importance of the shared meal to a Jewish family.
138. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They ensure they create a suitable learning environment in which pupils think of their own feelings and are mindful of those of others. Pupils develop attitudes such as respect, open-mindedness and consideration. These skills not only support learning but also contribute significantly to the development of social skills. In Key Stage 2, the teacher presents the subject in a lively and interesting way. For example, in a school assembly on Judaism, she invited all pupils to share plaited bread as a member of the school family.
139. Teachers are well supported by the contributions made by the vicar and a visiting lay-preacher who take regular assemblies. These assemblies make a significant contribution to the teaching of religious education and are followed up by class discussion. Pupils show a very positive response to learning and respect other people's faith and traditions. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher skilfully explained the use of Jewish artefacts belonging to the father of a pupil. Pupils were fascinated by the design of the kapper. They learnt how a Jew wears this to constantly think of God.
140. Co-ordination of this subject is not effective. Planning, teaching and learning are not effectively monitored in order to help raise standards further and to spread the good practice that exists across the school.

