

INSPECTION REPORT

NEW SWANNINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Coalville

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119917

Headteacher: Mrs White

Reporting inspector: Mr P B McAlpine
21552

Dates of inspection: 25-28 September 2000

Inspection number: 224775

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane
Whitwick
Coalville
Leicestershire

Postcode: LE67 5DQ

Telephone number: 01530 832656

Fax number: 01530 832656

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Harden

Date of previous inspection: 10/10/94

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr B McAlpine 21552	Registered inspector	English Information and communications technology	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? English as an additional language. Special educational needs.
Mr R Watts	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Finance and efficiency
Mr G Timms	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Pupils under five.
Mr D Grimwood	Team inspector	Science Geography History Music Religious education	Equal opportunities.

The inspection contractor was:

PBM Inspection Services Limited
PO Box 524
Cheadle
Staffordshire
ST10 4RN

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33 Kingsway
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is below average size and growing. The number of pupils has almost doubled since the previous inspection, mainly because of new housing in the locality. Expansion led to extensive rebuilding of the teaching accommodation, which was completed in January 2000. Three quarters of the teaching complement have been in their present posts for one year or less; 40 per cent have been at the school three weeks. The 188 boys and girls aged from four to eleven years are organised into seven classes. A second intake of pupils is planned for January 2001, when the number on roll is expected to rise to 200. Prior to 2000, pupils were admitted to the reception class each term. The reception year and the younger Year 1 pupils are taught together. All of the other classes contain a single year group, which is the first time in the history of the school that the majority of pupils have been organised in this way.

Fewer than five per cent of the pupils are eligible for a free school meal, which is only one third of the national average but higher than at the previous inspection. The backgrounds of the pupils are socially and economically very mixed. The attainment of pupils on entry, once individual differences are smoothed out, is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than most schools and has more than doubled over the past four years. A few pupils speak English as an additional language but none need extra support. There are more pupils with statements of special educational need than is typical for the size of the school but the proportion on the special needs register is about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective and improving school. Standards overall are above average by the age of eleven and rising. The pupils' long term achievements in English, mathematics, and science are good between the ages of seven and eleven. Learning is good overall. The teaching is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. There is clear educational direction to the work of the school, a strong sense of common purpose, and a collective desire among senior management, teachers and governors to raise standards. Value for money is good.

What the school does well

- Standards among eleven-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science are above average.
- The achievements of the pupils between the ages of seven and eleven are very good in reading and good in mathematics and science.
- The teaching is good throughout the school.
- The attitudes of the pupils to learning and their behaviour throughout the school are good.
- Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are very good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The involvement of the governors in shaping the direction of the school is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards among seven-year-old pupils are below average in English and mathematics.
- Standards in writing among the seven to eleven age group are much lower than in reading and below average overall.
- Standards in physical education are below average between the ages of seven and eleven. Swimming, which is a statutory part of the curriculum for these pupils, has not been provided for two years.
- The personal, social and health education programme of study is not taught in full.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. When the school was last inspected in October 1994, standards among the oldest pupils were broadly average in English, mathematics and science but the high attaining pupils were underachieving because of shortcomings in the teaching; standards in information and communications technology, design and technology, music and physical education were unsatisfactory. Test results declined after the previous inspection, the school went through a difficult period with staff changes, and most classes were housed in temporary accommodation. The present teaching has improved significantly compared to that time and standards in English, mathematics and science at age eleven have risen. The test results for 2000 are above average for the oldest pupils in these subjects, as is the work of pupils currently in Year 6 apart from writing. Standards in design and technology are much better than they were. Standards in information and communications technology and music have improved but standards in physical education have not improved enough.

The response of the headteacher and the governors to the issues for improvement identified in the previous report has been positive and thorough. Each subject has now a policy and a scheme of work. Curriculum planning at all levels is well coordinated. Roles and responsibilities of key staff are well defined and understood. The arrangements for assessment and

self-evaluation are much improved. All those with governance of the school have helped bring about the improvements to the teaching accommodation. The school has now a hall for physical education and all classes are taught under one roof. Most of the mobile classrooms have been removed and none are used for teaching.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. Not all of the comparative national data is published for 2000, making the standards shown for that year provisional and this is why they are in brackets.

Performance in:	compared with				
	all schools				similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	2000	1999
English	D	C	B	(B)	B
mathematics	D	A	D	(B)	E
science	D	D	C	(A)	D

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

The 1999 results are the most recent that are published with complete national data. The 2000 results for eleven-year-olds were an improvement on the results in 1999 in each subject tested; they were well above the 1999 national averages in English and science and above average in mathematics. In English, the eleven-year-olds did significantly better in reading than in writing. Compared to similar schools, the 1999 results were above average in English, below average in science and well below in mathematics. Taking all core subjects together, and smoothing out annual variations, the four-year trend in results between 1996 and 1999 is broadly in line with the national trend at age eleven. The 1999 results show that girls' attainment was significantly higher than boys' and the difference, amounting to about one year overall, was much greater than is found nationally. During the 1999-2000 school year, good use of additional national grants to target specific attainment groups, together with intensive support from the local authority, helped support the progress of both boys and girls in literacy and numeracy and contributed to the good increases in standards in 2000. The school's targets for English and mathematics were exceeded in 2000. Those for 2001 and 2002 are challenging but achievable. At age seven, the 1999 results were average. In 2000, the results in reading, writing and mathematics were below the 1999 national average.

The standard of pupils' current work at age eleven is well above average in reading and above average in mathematics and science; standards in writing are below average. Standards in this age group are good in design and technology and satisfactory in all of the other non-core subjects except physical education, where standards are below average. The current standard of work at age seven is below average in reading, writing and mathematics; it is average in science. Standards at age seven in the non-core subjects are good in design and technology and satisfactory in all of the others. In the reception year, overall standards are below average in each of the areas of learning. The below average standards among the four to seven year old pupils do not reflect shortcomings in the teaching. Throughout the school, the pace of learning is generally good and, in about one quarter of lessons, is very good. The achievements of pupils over the longer term are broadly in line with national expectations between the ages of four and seven but this has not been enough to raise the below average standards on entry to average standards by age seven. Between the ages of seven and eleven, the achievements in reading, mathematics and science are at least consistent with expectations for nearly all pupils and, for a significant minority, they are better than expected, making their achievements good overall. In writing, about one quarter of the pupils only just attained the national standard at age seven but did not manage to repeat their achievement in 2000 at age eleven and this is unsatisfactory. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good in relation to their difficulties. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is the same as their peers.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils generally are keen to come to school, well motivated, and willing to join in with activities. This is because lessons are interesting and teachers take time to explain the purposes of the work.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good throughout. No oppressive behaviour, bullying, or racist behaviour was seen. The children reported none. The teachers dealt with the very few incidents reported by parents to their satisfaction. A very small number of sexist comments from boys were overheard. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is generally good; relationships are very good. The pupils accept the daily routines and contribute effectively to them. Levels of respect for others and courtesy to adults and other children are very high.
Attendance	Good. The rate of attendance is above average and the level of punctuality is better than is typically found.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is good overall; 98 per cent is satisfactory or better, including 61 per cent that is good or better and 18 per cent that is very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and better than the picture nationally. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching, 2 per cent, one lesson in physical education, is very low; the one lesson is not typical of the teacher concerned. There is good teaching in every year group and no significant differences in quality throughout the school. There is no poor or very poor teaching. The teaching of mathematics is best, with 88 per cent that is good or better, including 38 per cent that is very good. In English, 63 per cent is good or better. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is effective.

The previous inspection found that the teaching did not always meet the needs of pupils with different attainment in the same class. This has now been remedied in the planning in all classes and, in nearly every lesson, the work is well matched to the learning needs of all pupils. Where there are occasional exceptions, it is in the four to seven age groups in English. The more able pupils are appropriately extended by the teaching and make good progress. Boys and girls are equally represented in the higher attaining groups, in the main, but boys considerably outnumber girls in the low attaining and special educational needs groups. This is the case from the age of four, reflecting gender differences in attainment on entry. Good use is made of learning support assistants to target the needs of specific groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4; this is quickening the pace of learning for these pupils in these subjects. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally good. About 30 per cent of pupils on the special needs register, mostly boys, remain there for less than three years, having either caught up with expectations in reading or begun to make enough progress to no longer need additional support. There is no significant difference in the learning of pupils from different backgrounds; some of the pupils for whom English is an additional language have received extra teaching in the past but none of them need this now.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The National Curriculum and religious education are implemented in full except for physical education, where swimming is omitted and statutory requirements are not met for seven to eleven year olds. The planning for personal, social and health education is undeveloped. Extra-curricular provision is typical of most schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Planning to meet the special needs of pupils is effective. Learning support assistants are well prepared and efficient. Individual education plans are of good quality. The record keeping systems are very good. However, the identification of pupils with special educational needs is not backed up with tests to screen all pupils. Several pupils who were one year or more behind in reading were not on the register, though teachers were meeting their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	No extra teaching from specialists deployed by the local authority is necessary. The learning needs of these pupils are well met by class teachers.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The arrangements for collective worship and religious education meet statutory requirements. Good provision is made to teach pupils right from wrong, help them understand the consequences of their actions on others, work as a member of a community and learn about their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Appropriate child protection systems are in place. Day-to-day health and safety awareness is good. The arrangements for assessing attainment, academic progress and personal development are satisfactory. Support systems are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher and the governors are planning effectively to develop the school. Aims and targets are appropriate and fully supported by all of the staff and the governors. The teachers are building into a high performance team. The roles and responsibilities of key staff are fully documented and understood.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Under the leadership of the current chair of governors, the needs of the school have been systematically reviewed and prioritised. The governors well understand the main strengths and areas needing improvement and together with the headteacher are instrumental in bringing about change. All relevant statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory arrangements are in place. Test results are monitored by a joint teacher and governor committee and the findings influence school development. The teaching is checked each term by the headteacher. The pupils' work and the teachers' planning are scrutinised.
The strategic use of resources	Typical of most schools. Financial planning is broadly linked to educational priorities and is suitably forward looking. There is a philosophy of shopping around for best value with expenditure and significant developments are put out for tender.

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 good behaviour of the pupils. The generally good standards in core subjects. The much improved accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inconsistent homework provision for pupils aged four to seven years. The limited information for parents about how children are getting on. Working closely with parents. The narrow range of extra-curricular activity, including sports.

The inspectors agree with parents' views about the good behaviour, generally good academic standards and the improved accommodation. No evidence was found to support the parents' views about homework. The arrangements for the younger pupils are typical of most schools. Those for older pupils are better than most schools and the provision is good. The amount and type of information provided for parents about pupil progress are satisfactory. Links with parents are typical; the headteacher and her staff and the governing body aim to do more to involve parents in decision making. The range of extra-curricular activities is typical most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards among eleven-year-old pupils are good or better in all core subjects except writing, where standards are lower than they should be and below average overall. Writing aside, the long-term achievement of pupils, which is a measure of the educational value added that compares attainment when starting school with that on transfer to secondary education, is good overall. Standards among seven-year-olds are below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. When individual differences are smoothed out among the four-year-olds, attainment is below average. Generally, girls do better than boys, reflecting differences in their attainment on entry. There are no significant differences in attainment or progress between pupils from different backgrounds. Most of the pupils with special needs experience difficulty with literacy and numeracy, being one or more years behind the others in their age group; progress for these pupils is generally good in relation to their difficulties.

2. The school's results at age eleven have improved in all of the core subjects. In English, the results were below average in 1997, average in 1998 and above average in 1999. The results for 2000 are not officially published and do not have national comparative data; the early indications are that they continue the trend of improvement in English and are well above the 1999 national average. The school participated in a local authority pilot project to implement the National Literacy Strategy. The National Strategy is implemented effectively and this is the main reason for the rising standards. The results in reading have been much better over the past few years than in writing. While strong emphasis is placed on reading skills, knowledge of the language and basic grammar, not enough priority is given to sustained, independent writing for specific purposes across a range of subjects or to effective teaching of spelling. It is these latter shortcomings that are the main reasons for the unsatisfactory standards in writing. Analysis shows that about one quarter of the pupils, equal proportions of boys and girls, who attained the expected level in writing at age seven did not make enough progress over the junior year groups to repeat their success at age eleven. The headteacher has identified this aspect as a priority for development and is using national grants effectively to target these pupils for additional literacy support.

3. In mathematics, the trend in results at age eleven has been very variable. The results in 1997 for eleven-year-olds were below average, they were well above average in 1998, and below average in 1999. The early indications for 2000 are that the results are above average. These oscillations partly reflect the small size of cohorts, where variations in pupils with special educational needs can have a much greater effect than is the case nationally. In 1999, more than one quarter of the pupils tested at age eleven had not attained national standards when aged seven, which was more than in reading and writing. Nearly all of these low attaining pupils made average amounts of progress over the four junior years but this was not enough to catch up with the expectations for their age. The senior management thinks that ineffectiveness in past teaching is also a reason for the low results in 1999; many of those with the higher levels of knowledge at age seven underachieved in the 1999 mathematics tests at age eleven. To remedy this problem, the school has received intensive support from the local authority and teaches the pupils in attainment groups in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. The good improvement in results in 2000 indicates that these strategies are successful. The effectiveness of the teachers' implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, one year later than the Literacy Strategy, is good.

4. In science, the trend in results among eleven-year-olds is one of steady improvement. By 1999, standards were average; the early indications for 2000 are that they are well above the 1999 national average. Appropriate priority is given to the subject and to the teaching of basic skills and this is why standards are rising.

5. The targets for eleven year olds take into account their earlier attainment, nationally expected amounts of progress between the ages of seven and eleven, and increases expected after effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The targets for English and mathematics were exceeded in 2000. Those for 2001 and 2002 are challenging but achievable and the school is on course to achieve them.

6. The trend at age seven has not shown the same improvement as the trends at age eleven. Indeed, the early indications for 2000 are that the results are below average compared to 1999 in all subjects tested. This largely reflects the below average standards on entry. Between the ages of four and seven, nearly all pupils in the 2000 cohort made broadly average amounts of progress but this was not enough for the lowest attaining 25 per cent to catch up on national expectations. The remaining 75 per cent, in broad terms, successfully attained the standard of a typical seven-year-old but very few exceeded it.

7. The standard of current work at age eleven is well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and science; but below average in writing. When standards in reading and writing are combined, and the differences between them smoothed out, the overall standard of work in English is above average. With almost a full school year remaining for further progress, about nine in ten pupils in this age group read at a level that is consistent with the national expectation for their age, including about four in ten who are two or more years ahead of the national expectation. They are independent readers with

the skills to tackle unknown words competently. In writing, only about half the pupils are easily in reach of the national expectation by the end of the school year. They can write confidently for different purposes, with the content organised appropriately and grammar, spelling and punctuation rules followed accurately. A further quarter of the year group is not far behind but will struggle to reach the expectation without improving the accuracy and consistency of their spelling and punctuation and increasing their ability to sustain writing at length. In mathematics, nearly all of the pupils have an appropriate knowledge of place value and can add, subtract, multiply and divide competently. The substantial majority have appropriate knowledge of decimals and fractions, are developing a broad mathematical vocabulary, and acquiring knowledge across the full range of the National Curriculum programme of study. Spelling of mathematical words, however, is unsatisfactory. In science, almost all of the pupils have expected levels of knowledge in the topics studied so far and a sizeable proportion are on course to exceed expectations by the end of the school year.

8. Among eleven-year-olds in other subjects, the standard of work is good in design and technology and satisfactory in all of the other non-core subjects except physical education, where standards are below average. The last inspection found that standards were unsatisfactory in design and technology. Since then, an appropriate curriculum has been implemented in that subject and teachers' expertise improved; these developments are responsible for the very good teaching and good standards now found. In art and design, the standard of current work is satisfactory in investigating and making, although there are shortcomings in the range and challenge of three-dimensional work. The standard of artistic knowledge and understanding is good and work on famous artists is taught successfully by teachers. The present standard of work in art and design represents a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. In geography, the significant majority of pupils have appropriate knowledge of places around the world, good mapping skills, satisfactory understanding of how human and physical features affect the lives of inhabitants, and can use various sources of evidence effectively. In history, pupils have extensive knowledge of the periods studied, such as Ancient Greece, and satisfactory knowledge of British history. They can describe appropriately some of the characteristics of past periods and attribute causes to the changes identified. The standard of work in information and communications technology was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection but has now risen to satisfactory levels. About three-quarters of the oldest pupils have appropriate knowledge of computers, computer programs, control and communications technology and can use the technology to support learning in subjects such as history and geography. In music, eleven-year-olds are able to compose their own lyrics, follow a melody, and perform confidently. In religious education, standards are consistent with the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus.

9. In physical education, the new facility of the hall has not been in place long enough for its impact to be felt on standards. The attainment of the oldest pupils is below average because of past and present shortcomings in the provision and standards have not improved enough since the previous inspection. The facilities and the equipment have improved significantly and are now typical of most schools. Teachers' knowledge of the subject, however, is variable and, in some instances, not developed enough. No swimming is provided and has not been for two years; this fails to meet statutory requirements and should be remedied quickly. The length of lessons timetabled in the hall is often too short to extend the pupils fully.

10. The standard of current work at age seven is below average in reading, writing and mathematics; it is average in science. Standards at age seven in the non-core subjects are good in design and technology and satisfactory in all of the others. In the reception year, the Foundation Stage, current overall standards are below average in each of the nationally agreed areas of learning but the pupils are making good progress in each area except physical development, where progress is slow. In physical development, progress is slow because the pupils lack daily access to planned physical activity involving large equipment.

11. The below average standards among the four to seven year old pupils do not reflect shortcomings in the teaching. Throughout the school, the pace of learning is generally good and, in about one quarter of lessons, is very good. The achievements of pupils over the longer term are broadly in line with national expectations between the ages of four and seven but this is not enough to raise the below average standards on entry to average standards by age seven.

12. Between the ages of seven and eleven, the achievements in reading, mathematics and science are at least consistent with expectations for nearly all pupils and, for a significant minority, they are better than expected, making their achievements good overall. In English, 80 per cent of those tested in 2000 increased their attainment by two levels over the four years between the ages of seven and eleven, which is the amount expected of a typical child nationally. The proportion is consistent with the national picture. When achievements in reading and writing, the two components making up the English test score, are examined separately, every child made the expected progress in reading, with one in five exceeding expectations, but only 70 per cent did so in writing. This shows that underachievement in writing is reducing overall standards in English. In writing, about one quarter of the pupils who attained the national standard in 1996 at age seven, mainly with a low pass score, did not manage to repeat their achievement in 2000 at age eleven and this is unsatisfactory. In mathematics, 92 per cent of the pupils tested in 2000 had increased their attainment by two levels since the age of seven, with 16 per cent doing better than this, which is good achievement overall. In science, every child tested at age eleven in 2000 had increased their level of attainment by the expected amount, with 60 per cent increasing their attainment by more than this; this, too, is good achievement.

13. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good in relation to their difficulties. School records show that

the progress of pupils with special needs is checked regularly against the targets in their individual plans. The records show that in many cases, the extra support provided is effective and pupils are taken off the special needs register because they have improved enough to keep up with class work. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is no different to that of their peers. A small proportion of the pupils join or leave the school each year at other than usual dates. This pupil mobility is not having a significant impact on standards; the pupils are appropriately supported, quickly settle and make appropriate progress.

14. Comparisons with similar schools, which provide a guide to the educational value added, are not straightforward. The very low eligibility for free meals places the school in the same category as others serving relatively advantaged communities but this is not consistent with the very mixed range of backgrounds of pupils attending the school. A local authority survey shows that the broad district in which the school is located is one with high overall levels of social and economic disadvantage where children may not be eligible for a free meal but their parents nevertheless receive supplementary benefits because of low incomes. The below average standards on entry measured by baseline assessments are more in keeping with the local authority survey than with the statistical assumptions based on the proportion eligible for a free school meal. Compared to similar schools, based on free meals, the 1999 test results for eleven-year-olds were above average in English, well below average in mathematics, and below average in science. Statistical data for 2000 is not yet available, but the improved results for that age group in 2000, especially in mathematics and science, are better than the 1999 averages for similar schools in all subjects tested. Comparisons of work standards in age groups from four to eleven, together with school records, test results, and taking all core subjects into account, shows that the educational value added overall is good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. The pupils' attitudes to school are good. Virtually all parents answering the questionnaire agree that their child enjoys school and this is evident in the pupils' upbeat demeanour in the mornings when they arrive. They make their way to the classrooms without fuss and are ready to start the day promptly. Children in the reception year, after just a few weeks in school, are already showing how much they enjoy the experiences offered by participating enthusiastically. When stimulated by good or better teaching, as is the case in most lessons throughout the school, pupils display great keenness to participate and enjoyment of challenge. Only in a small number of lessons, when some of the pupils are not given enough opportunity to find things out for themselves, do one or two become restless. In the substantial majority of lessons, pupils are generally very attentive and start work quickly when asked. Pupils show pride in their work. A good example was a group of special needs pupils leaving a literacy lesson who were delighted to be able to show the headteacher what they had achieved. Pupils participate enthusiastically in extra-curricular activities and in the educational trips provided.

16. Pupils behave well, confirming the view of parents. In lessons, they are obedient and work conscientiously. Most are disciplined in putting up their hand to answer questions and refrain from interrupting others. There are a few pupils who have behavioural problems; their special needs are managed effectively by the teachers. On the few occasions when teachers need to remind pupils to pay attention, pupils respond well. Pupils move around the school carefully, giving way to others when necessary. They behave well in the dinner hall and in assemblies, listening carefully to the music and those who are speaking. Pupils generally play well together in the playground and take care that their games do not interfere with others' enjoyment. No bullying was seen and, in discussion, pupils said that this is not a problem. One or two boys were overheard making sexist comments to girls; neither pupils nor parents have expressed concerns about sexist behaviour and none has been brought to the attention of teachers. The very few pupils from minority ethnic groups are well integrated; no racist behaviour was seen and none is reported. No pupils were excluded last year. Many pupils start school with below-average social skills and these are well developed as they progress through the school.

17. Personal development and relationships within the school are good. Rapport between teachers and pupils in most classes is already good and is developing well at the start of the new school year. This has the positive effect of motivating pupils, getting the most out of them. Relationships between pupils are generally very good; disagreements and anti-social behaviour are very rare. Pupils show that they have absorbed the ethos promoted by the school of caring for others and personal responsibility for one's actions. They are very polite to each other and to adults, taking the initiative to hold doors open and generally behaving in a mature way for their age. Pupils discuss their own feelings through their religious education lessons and show they are very tolerant of others' beliefs. Pupils show clearly that they know the difference between right and wrong in their approach to their peers and to adults. Pupils take appropriate advantage of the opportunities given them around the school to take responsibility and use the school council well as a means of expressing their opinions. They work constructively together in pairs and older pupils collaborate closely to achieve a common task.

18. Pupils' attendance is good. Overall attendance last year was above the national average and there is little unauthorised absence. Very few pupils are late and this allows a prompt start to the day. Good attendance and punctuality is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and contributing to the rising standards. Overall, the findings in relation to pupils' attitudes, standards of behaviour, personal development and attendance are consistent with those at the time of the previous inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The teaching is good; 98 per cent is satisfactory or better, including 61 per cent that is good or better and 18 per cent that is very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and better than the picture nationally. Two per cent, one physical education lesson, is unsatisfactory; this quality of teaching is not typical of the teacher concerned. The very good teaching is in the Reception Year and Years 1, 3 and 6. There is good teaching in every year group and no significant differences in quality throughout the school. There is no poor or very poor teaching. The teaching is good overall in English, mathematics and science. More than one third of the teaching in mathematics is very good and this is higher than in the other core subjects. The teaching of information and communications technology is satisfactory. The few lessons seen in design and technology were all very good. The quality of teaching in these latter two subjects is an improvement compared to the previous inspection. In physical education, the teaching of pupils aged four to about eight is good but the teaching of older pupils is not always challenging. The teaching is satisfactory in the remaining non-core subjects and in religious education; the evidence of teaching in art and design is limited.

20. The very good teaching occurs in English, mathematics, design and technology, geography and history. Where teaching is of this high quality, it inspires the pupils to try hard and give of their best. Such teaching arises out of a teacher's strong subject knowledge and expertise. Their ability to frame questions that elicit particular responses from specific pupils is of a high order. In literacy and numeracy lessons, for example, questions with varying levels of challenge are targeted at pupils with different attainment. The teaching is organised so that new knowledge is built from knowledge and understanding acquired in previous lessons. A very good numeracy lesson in Year 1, for instance, began with simple counting on and counting back, which the children were already familiar with, and then used this knowledge to solve simple subtraction situations. Other ways of subtracting mentally were then explored, with pupils encouraged to explain their methods. In high quality lessons, independent group work is very well matched to learning needs and extends the knowledge taught during shared work.

21. There is good or very good teaching in all subjects except art, where only one lesson was seen, which was satisfactory. Where teaching is good, lesson planning is detailed and specific and the teaching closely follows the plans. Preparation is thorough, good use is made of resources, and the teaching maintains a brisk pace. The work meets the learning needs of all pupils sufficiently for everyone to be adequately challenged. Learning objectives for the lesson are shared effectively with the pupils, used during the lesson to keep pupils on course to achieve the objectives, and returned to during plenary sessions to help acknowledge success and evaluate learning.

22. All teachers have good questioning skills and explain new knowledge clearly and accurately. Phonics and other basic skills are taught competently. Teachers' knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy is generally good. All of the teachers employ methods contained in the Literacy Strategy Framework effectively in the main, although the emphases on word level work, especially the teaching of letter patterns in spelling, and on shared and guided writing, are not consistently strong in every class. Knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy is good and the methods are followed closely by all teachers. In science and all other subjects, except information and communications technology and physical education, the teachers show good subject knowledge. With information and communications technology, subject expertise is satisfactory. In physical education, teacher expertise is sometimes limited.

23. Weekly planning is consistent in format throughout the school and teachers are conscientious in completing their plans. The quality varies between the teachers but is never less than satisfactory; overall, the effectiveness of the planning is good. At its best, the weekly plans contain specific learning objectives that can be achieved within the lesson or the week. Such planning is commonly the basis for the high quality teaching seen in certain classes and for the good teaching. Occasionally the planning concentrates on what pupils will do but is imprecise about what they will learning, leading to lessons that are partially but not totally effective for all pupils. In literacy and numeracy, the planning identifies separate tasks for pupils with different levels of attainment. Even though separate tasks might be provided, very occasionally the separate tasks are not well matched to learning needs, do not stretch every child sufficiently or are too hard for some.

24. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies teaching methods are appropriately implemented, in the main, by the teachers and this is the main reason for the rising standards in these subjects. The methods are being adapted and used in science, history, geography and information and communications technology and this is leading to improvements in learning in these subjects.

25. Classroom management skills are generally good. The teachers are organised and prepared for their lessons and this leads to good use of time and resources, other than information and communications technology. Computers are sometimes used effectively to support learning in other subjects but the practice is not yet consistent through the school. Planning to extend computer knowledge and skills at times other than the whole class sessions is insufficiently detailed or clear about what pupils will learn and this is why there is inconsistency. Class assistants and adult volunteers are used effectively by teachers to support pupils in literacy and numeracy and this is making a significant contribution to learning, especially for those pupils who might otherwise struggle to keep up without the support. Teachers check the pupils as they work and remedy misconceptions effectively. Systems are in place for assessing pupils regularly. High standards of behaviour are maintained in

every class. Homework arrangements are satisfactory for the four to seven year olds and good for seven to eleven year olds. The homework is regularly planned and is used to extend what is learned in school.

26. The teaching is having a good impact on pupils' learning. It is leading to almost every pupil gaining knowledge quickly in reading, mathematics, science and all of the other subjects except writing and physical education, where progress is slower than it should be. Taking all subjects and year groups together, and smoothing out individual variations, the present overall pace of learning is good. In the current school year, there are no significant variations in learning between any of the key stages and none shows up in the work saved from the previous school year. Nor are there significant variations in learning between the classes and year groups.

27. In nearly all lessons, the pupils concentrate on their work and give maximum effort. Work is generally completed on time; exceptions are few. Levels of interest are good. Cooperation is good. The children understand what they have to do because in almost every lesson the teachers share the objectives for the lesson with the children. Individual target setting in English and mathematics is becoming established in some classes. Pupils generally have an accurate sense of their own capabilities and what they must do to improve.

28. The teaching successfully meets the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs. Where pupils with special needs are taught in the classroom, the planning in most instances identifies work at an appropriate level of difficulty; there are only a few lessons where this is not the case. Learning support assistants work effectively with small groups of pupils, rigorously guiding them through the tasks in literacy and numeracy. Where pupils are withdrawn from the classroom, the work is tightly specified and based on individual education plans. Additional literacy support is targeted at certain pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 to help them attain relevant national expectations. The additional support is well planned, with specific learning objectives for each lesson, and makes good use of resources. Booster classes for pupils in Year 6 are planned for later in the school year and were not seen by inspectors. Extra curricular classes are provided for able and gifted pupils but were not taking place during the inspection. Pupils with English as an additional language are fluent speakers of English and do not need extra provision.

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

29. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant to the needs of pupils and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The absence of curricular policies identified at the time of the previous inspection has been remedied. Statutory requirements are met in a planned and organised way, except in physical education, where the requirements for swimming for pupils aged from seven to eleven are not met due to difficulties over local provision. A number of governors form a development group that oversees curriculum provision and the school development plan; this is good practice. This group discusses new policies and review their effectiveness; this is helping to shape the educational direction of the school and raise standards. Governors with a responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs have been appointed and carry out their duties correctly.

30. The planning for personal, social and health education, and citizenship, which is nationally recommended but not a statutory requirement, is undeveloped. This is leading to gaps in the provision; in particular, the teaching does not include sex education, personal safety, dealing with bullying or abuse, or the misuse of drugs, and this is unsatisfactory. The school has recognised this and has plans to review the present position in the near future.

31. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage for reception children is up-to-date and prepared for the latest national changes. All the areas of learning are represented in the plans and appropriately linked to the National Curriculum. This is reflected in the quality, range and organisation of resources in the classrooms, which are appropriate for the children. However, four and five year old children do not have daily access to an outdoor area, or to the hall, for planned physical activity that has appropriate learning objectives, and this is unsatisfactory.

32. About half the teaching time is set aside for literacy and numeracy, and this is typical of most schools. However, the length of the taught week for seven to eleven year olds is well below the minimum recommended nationally, amounting to a shortfall of more than one hour a week or up to eight days in any one year. Non-core subjects taught in the afternoon are most adversely affected. Physical education and music are squeezed into half-hour lessons, which is not long enough for pupils' knowledge and skills to be properly developed. The half-hour lesson pattern to the afternoon timetable is leading to too many subject changes, sometimes making it difficult for teachers to fit all that they need to into their lessons. Because of this, lesson time in one subject is sometimes reduced so that work in another can be finished. To add to this pressure, the hall is not always ready for lessons at the start of the afternoon because midday supervisors have not been able to clean up on time after lunch.

33. All subjects have an appropriate policy and this aspect of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The school is trialling the nationally recommended schemes of work and evaluating how they can be amended to be more appropriate and specific to the school. This is resulting in some deep thinking about aspects of the curriculum planning,

especially in subjects such as art and design. There is an overall curriculum plan for each subject outlining what topics will be covered each term. The planning for literacy and numeracy is effective and, for numeracy especially, is resulting in marked improvements in standards. Arrangements for continuity of the curriculum within the school, and with the next schools to which the pupils transfer, are effective in preventing gaps and repetitions in the pupils' learning.

34. Each subject is led by a co-ordinator, many of whom are very new to the school and have only recently been appointed to their role. They manage a budget for their subject and nearly all have now prepared an action plan of what needs to be done to improve the school's provision in that subject. This aspect of leadership and subject management has improved since the last inspection. The school has had to plan a curriculum for a rapidly expanding school over the last few years. In addition, the changes to the National Curriculum and the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have all meant that there has been a great deal of change recently, which the school has managed successfully. The co-ordinators' individual action plans are helpful but currently lack the rigour of timed targets and ways in which the effectiveness of the improvements can be monitored and evaluated.

35. Good provision is made for the older high attaining pupils, through setting in Years 5 and 6 in mathematics, and through two after school clubs for high attaining pupils in English and mathematics. This is having a positive benefit in challenging and enriching the curriculum offered to them. A number of higher attaining pupils also take part in a week's course at a local secondary school. In recent years this has involved them in extension and enrichment activities in mathematics, writing and geography. The school does not yet have a scheme of target setting for individual pupils, but this is identified in the development plan.

36. The school is part of a local network of small schools that organises events to enable pupils from different schools to meet and work together. For example, pupils in Year 2 have taken part in music activities at local secondary schools and Year 3 and 4 pupils have taken part in joint nature study work with children from other small schools. This work has extended pupils' horizons and their social development. The school benefits from the involvement of the local community in the curriculum. A large number of parents, grandparents and other volunteers help in classrooms. They provide a very good quality of support for teachers and the school relies on them heavily. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich a number of the topics covered in different classes. For example, pupils have performed carols in a local hospital and invited elderly people to dance events. The local emergency services and a drama group are regular visitors and during the inspection an expert visitor was used to enhance provision for design and technology in Year 6. A good system of residential visits undertaken by Year 5 and 6 pupils provides good outdoor and adventurous activities as well as extension work in information and communications technology and environmental studies. These activities and events play a significant part in extending the pupils' knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal development. In addition, the school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities. These are well attended. Each term Year 6 produce a good newsletter on the computer, using contributions from each year group.

37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Their needs are suitably met, mainly in the classroom but partly through appropriate individual and small group withdrawal. Pupils at the earliest stages of special needs assessment are withdrawn from their main classes primarily to form smaller additional literacy support and booster classes. Their curriculum needs are tightly specified by teachers and well met by experienced learning support assistants. Pupils at the more advanced special needs assessment stages work individually or in very small groups with special needs teachers. Their curriculum is identified in detail in individual education plans and the teaching in withdrawal groups concentrates very effectively on meeting the needs identified in these individual plans.

38. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school has a systematic approach to learning in these areas and has highlighted ways in which each subject on the curriculum can contribute to pupils' development. The school is a caring and happy community that has high aspirations for its pupils. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and their behaviour. Parents are convinced that the school is helping their children to develop in a mature and responsible manner. The school has maintained the same good standards in this aspect of its work that were found at the time of the previous inspection.

39. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Regular assemblies, in which pupils are involved, incorporate collective worship appropriately and offer periods for reflection and prayer. Assemblies are thoughtfully planned around weekly themes, such as sharing, remembering, or forgiveness. Care is taken to create a tranquil atmosphere, with a choice of suitable music to which the children enter and leave the assembly hall. Pupils respond to this with quiet and respectful behaviour throughout the assembly. In religious education lessons, older pupils are given the opportunity to consider the nature of worship and what makes things sacred. They undertake sensitive and thought-provoking assignments. Pupils in Year 4 gasped when they saw pictures of what Howard Carter, the archaeologist, found as he entered the tomb of Tutankhamun and learned about the beliefs of people at that time. Pupils have had an opportunity to learn about wartime evacuees in role playing situations and reflect on the thoughts and feelings of youngsters caught up in challenging lifetime experiences. They were moved, even slightly disturbed, by the experience of having to do a jigsaw without using their sense of sight, deepening their insight into the complexity and variety of human experiences and emotions.

40. The school's efforts to promote pupils' moral development are good. The school's six positive 'golden' rules of behaviour, which stress the correct response to others, are prominently published throughout the school and are referred to by all staff. These rules are a focal point for discussion of the underlying values of truth, honesty and fairness, principles of conduct and behaviour, and the teaching of right from wrong. Pupils are rewarded for observing the rules and this is helping to motivate the younger pupils to remember and follow them. These rewards are less important to older pupils, who have a strong sense of fairness and justice acquired from the teaching over time. Opportunities are taken in different subjects to explore different values, including environmental issues. Adults in school provide good role models and this is the main means whereby pupils' learn the reasons for behaving well and begin to understand the impact of their actions on others. Day to day social and behavioural problems that arise between children, are used effectively to extend pupils' awareness of the consequences of one person's actions on another and how best to manage similar situations should they occur again. Pupils are very appreciative of the efforts of others, sometimes making spontaneous complimentary remarks, and throughout the school listen carefully when another child is speaking.

41. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Older pupils are given responsibilities such as taking the registers around to each class at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and taking turns to help supervise and play with the reception children at lunchtimes. Annual events, like craft day and sports day, involve small teams of children from all age groups working together, with the older pupils having the responsibility of ensuring their group arrives promptly for each activity. Elected representatives get opportunities to act as members of the newly formed school council. Pupils are made aware of the contribution they can make within the school community and how it requires everybody to play their part. Pupils are given daily opportunities to work in pairs and small groups, to act as classroom monitors and to play their part in tidying up operations. They generally collaborate and co-operate very well. The good number of educational visits, some of which, for the older pupils, are residential, provide useful opportunities for pupils to mix together in the wider community. Christmas productions and carol concerts, in which every pupil in the school has an involvement, are occasions for pupils to work together for a common goal. Pupils are encouraged to think of those less fortunate than themselves through their good support for several charities. Special assemblies are organised to introduce and explain the work of national charities.

42. Cultural provision at the school is good. Pupils gain an appropriate understanding of their cultural heritage through their work in history and geography and the visits they make to local museums and historical buildings like Beaumont Hall and Donington Le Heath Manor. The school has a strong tradition of dance and each year has a festival of dance with maypole, country and morris dancing in which every pupil is actively involved. The event includes the selection and crowning of a May Queen. Other traditional events include egg rolling at Easter. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to see a demonstration of shoe making as part of their work in design and technology. Musical themes in assemblies introduce pupils to a wide range of composers, including works by Beethoven and Elgar. Visiting poets, writers and theatre groups, the latest production has been Alice in Wonderland, provide a wide range of cultural experiences. Another visiting company provides opportunities for pupils to learn about the Greeks, Ancient Egyptians or Victorians in role playing exercises. Pupils get the opportunity to study the festivals and teachings of other faiths in their studies of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. They study other cultures in their work on Pakistan, which is supported by talks and demonstrations from Pakistani parents.

43. The school has a strong ethos of equal opportunities and employs appropriate strategies to help all pupils attain their potential. Each pupil, including any with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language, has full access to all subjects of the National Curriculum. In literacy lessons, classroom support for pupils with special educational needs is concentrated in the group work sessions, so that the pupils do not miss the shared or plenary phases. The school is aware of differences in attainment and progress between boys and girls. Although only one or two strategies to improve boys' performance have been introduced, the 'booster' lessons aimed at supporting pupils on the borderline of expected standards in literacy and numeracy have been of benefit to boys. This is because more boys than girls are in this group, and recent results suggest the gap in attainment is narrowing. In physical education, the policy of equal opportunity and access is fully implemented; boys and girls are able to participate in and enjoy all available activities. One result of this policy has been the large number of boys who are interested in dance. The English folk dancing society was so impressed with the participation of boys that they chose to photograph dancing activities at the school with the intention of including them in their brochure.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. There are good procedures for ensuring that pupils work in a secure and happy environment. Appropriately trained staff look after pupils who are ill or who have accidents at school, although there are occasions when there are insufficient adults supervising younger pupils at dinnertime. The school has adopted local child protection procedures and the designated teacher and the staff are appropriately trained. Appropriate support is given by external agencies such as social services. Health and safety risk assessments of the premises are regularly carried out and equipment is properly checked for safety. However, although there are few hazards, the procedure for rectifying risks identified by teachers and others is not totally effective.

45. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring academic and personal development. This is an improvement since

the previous inspection. Some of these systems have only recently been developed and there is still some inconsistency in their application. Their use for raising attainment of individual pupils is satisfactory and has the potential to be even better once plans for the increased analysis of test data and progress tracking are successfully implemented. Children are assessed when they start in the reception class and during that year. This enables good evaluation of learning to take place. In the rest of the school, teachers assess the level achieved in each subject at the end of each year. This is recorded in a summary record for each pupil and allows teachers in succeeding classes to have a good general view of their standards. As well as the statutory tests at seven and eleven in English, mathematics and science, pupils are given similar nationally prepared tests at the end of years 3, 4 and 5. There is no formal testing at the end of Year 1 and this is making it difficult to check on the progress of pupils before the age of seven. Assessment data is used to predict statutory targets to be attained by the age of eleven and to identify those pupils who are marginally below the expected level and will need extra help.

46. Teachers have recently started implementing the school policy on the written assessment of groups and individuals in English and maths at the end of each topic or key objective. These link well to the planning of national teaching strategies. Where they are well used, they provide a good means of linking assessment to planning further lessons and grouping pupils. The procedures are still bedding down, however, and there is some inconsistency in their use. On a day-to-day basis, teachers regularly assess progress through observation. Except in one or two classes, the marking of work does not give pupils sufficient detail to enable them to improve. Teachers have started using a system of written records of pupils' personal development, which provides a good foundation for recording informal knowledge and building up a picture for all staff. Pupils' personal records contain past reports but the section on attitudes and social development is not included in the copy retained, which limits its usefulness. All pupils understand and respect the red and yellow slip system for improving behaviour and this is very effective. Anti-bullying procedures are very effective and rest securely upon the caring ethos promoted by the school. Registers are generally completed correctly each day and attendance is well monitored and promoted.

47. The statutory requirements for pupils with special educational needs are met. Progress, and the effectiveness of the provision for these pupils, are reviewed appropriately each year; relevant documentation is well maintained. The code of practice for pupils with special needs is followed fully in spirit and substantially in practice. The register of pupils with special educational needs is scrupulously maintained. The progress of pupils on the register is closely observed. Records of termly meetings with parents to discuss the progress of pupils from Stage 2 of the assessment procedures onwards are accurate and appropriately detailed. The quality of individual education plans for these pupils is generally good. They are used diligently by teachers and support staff when planning and providing work in lessons and checking progress. Pupils' special needs are generally identified early in the Reception Year and Year 1. However, the arrangements for identification rely solely on teacher assessment and are not backed up by checks against standardised test scores and this has the potential for some children to slip through the net, particularly those whose early progress is not maintained in later years. Analysis of reading test scores shows that a few pupils in classes throughout the school are one year or more behind with their reading but are not on the special educational needs register. This begs the question whether they should be on the special register and raises doubts about the appropriateness of the definition of special educational needs used by the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Generally parents are well satisfied with the school and raise only a few minor concerns. They think that standards and teaching are good; that the headteacher and her staff are approachable and listen to any concerns parents raise; and that the teachers have high expectations. They say that their children like coming to school, behave well and are helped to become mature. However, a minority is concerned over the lack of extra-curricular activities; the curricular information for parents; the extent to which parents are involved; and inconsistencies between teachers when using the rewards system.

49. The inspection team supports the parent's positive views and finds that the concerns that the parents raised are largely unfounded. There is a typical range of extra-curricular sporting and other activities which pupils enthusiastically participate in. The system of rewards is working well. Pupil reports are satisfactory. Links with parents are also satisfactory, although the school itself admits it might do more to involve them in future decision making.

50. The school has effective links with parents, who give good support, particularly by helping in classes. Parents of children starting in the reception class receive sound information about the school and how to help their child's learning at home. The school has held meetings for parents to learn about the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and their role in them. The school has good plans well in hand to improve information about what is being taught and how parents can support this. Parents receive appropriate, regular letters about the routines of school life and, once a term, an interesting newsletter put together by pupils about school life as they see it. Parents of pupils with special educational need are consulted regularly about their child's progress. They are encouraged to approach the school with any concerns as soon as they arise and are fully informed about any changes to the support their child receives. The school prospectus meets requirements but there are minor omissions from the governors' annual report. Parents are kept satisfactorily informed about their child's progress through formal meetings with teachers and through pupils' annual reports. These meet requirements to report progress in all subjects. Whilst generally satisfactory, the comments are sometimes too bland, particularly for the less able pupils, and do not give a clear view of how well a child is doing compared to national expectations. This information is given orally to parents who ask

for it, however. The home-school agreement has been issued and returned by the majority of parents. The school does not, as yet, seek the views of parents sufficiently on the way they would like to see it develop. The school is aware that it should consult parents more in longer-term decision making.

51. Many parents hear their children read at home and some write short comments in the reading record. This support helps raise standards in reading. A good proportion of parents and other adult volunteers give good assistance within lessons, particularly for younger pupils. They are usually well integrated into the teaching and their help is invaluable. Parents have played a vital role in supporting the school against possible closure and in lobbying for the new teaching accommodation. The 'friends' organise social events and raise funds for the school. They help make the more formal occasions such as information evenings more enjoyable by providing refreshments and this adds to the family atmosphere of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The educational direction for the work of the school is clearly established by the headteacher. The school vision to raise the aspirations of pupils, and for them to attain high academic standards, respect for themselves, confidence and self-responsibility, are thoroughly supported by the teachers, non-teaching staff and the governors. The policies of the school are relevant and the actions taken over the past few years are leading, step by step, towards the full achievement of this vision. Overall, the leadership and the management of the school are good.

53. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The senior management and the governing body have a strong vision of the school they wish to create and are concentrating their efforts on raising standards above those of most schools and into line with those with pupils from similar backgrounds. The school has participated in pilot projects in literacy and numeracy, has received intensive support in numeracy from the local authority, and is using specific grants to raise the reading, writing and number skills of particular groups. The improved test results among the oldest pupils show that these actions are successful. All those with governance of the school have helped to improve significantly the fabric of the building and the teaching accommodation. Appointment procedures are thorough. The new teachers bring good levels of expertise into the school to complement the skills of those already in post and all of them work effectively as a team. This has improved the quality of teaching significantly since the previous inspection. Teaching methods from the national strategies have been successfully implemented. Because of these actions, standards are now rising beyond the targets set by governors.

54. Response to the issues for action identified by the previous inspection has been very positive. The curriculum is now planned appropriately. All subjects have policies and manageable schemes of work in place. Resources in history, geography, design and technology, physical education, and information and communications technology are now satisfactory. Weekly planning now clearly identifies the work for high and low attaining pupils. The use of assessment information in lesson planning has been improved and the analysis of test information is used to identify development priorities, which is good practice.

55. The roles and responsibilities of key staff are clearly identified in job descriptions and the teachers with responsibilities understand what is expected of them. However, the expansion of the teaching establishment together with the high turnover of teachers in recent years means that the headteacher has only recently had the opportunity to delegate a full range of leadership roles to others.

56. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities very well. The governors are deeply committed to the school and are fully involved in shaping its direction. The development committee of the governing body has fully reviewed the work of the school, established appropriate aims and objectives for improvement, set measurable targets, and regularly reviews progress. The governors and senior staff have a good understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and are taking the necessary action. The school development plan, as a document, is of good quality but limits itself to the curriculum and many significant developments, such as the changes to staffing and to the management structure, are not incorporated into the document.

57. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school are satisfactory. A committee of the governing body, with teacher representation, monitors test results and the findings are used to identify priorities for development. The difference in attainment between boys and girls in English has been highlighted in this way. Inviting a male poet to teach pupils about poetry was one of the actions taken to provide a positive role model for boys and increased purchases of reference books were made to promote boys' interest in reading. The analysis is not yet of sufficient depth, or thoroughness, to evaluate separately the progress made by different year groups, or link pupils' performance to the work of individual teachers or specific curriculum developments. The headteacher and key teachers check the quality of teaching with reasonable regularity and have appropriate procedures for feeding back to teachers on the quality of their work. Recently, for example, monitoring in mathematics identified the need to challenge pupils at different levels of attainment during shared mental number work and to return to lesson objectives during plenary sessions. The inspection found that these shortcomings had been remedied. Checks are made on the attainment of pupils in English and mathematics. Last year, with the help of national grants, additional support was provided in Years 3 and 4 to boost the attainment of those pupils who needed

it in literacy and numeracy. This year, support has also been provided in Years 1 and 2. The needs of more able pupils have been recognised through the monitoring arrangements and two extra-curricular activities are provided now specifically for a small number of very high attaining pupils.

58. The management of the finances and the strategic use of resources are satisfactory. The policy of having a deputy headteacher and two key stage coordinators was introduced for the first time this year after careful consideration of the costs and the ability of the school to sustain this management structure in the future. The staffing is sufficient for the needs of the school. Professional development is well managed. The governors are implementing appropriate policies for the performance management of the headteacher and other teachers. The accommodation is good. Resources are sufficient in quality, quantity and range in all subjects except large outdoor equipment for physical development in the Foundation Stage, where provision is unsatisfactory.

59. The school makes satisfactory strategic use of its financial resources. Over the past few years, the steadily increasing number on roll has been a major factor and the financial planning for this has been successful, if somewhat informal. In the recent past, spending decisions have been clearly related to national initiatives such as Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the need for better computers. These decisions have been well planned and implemented. The current school development plan, as a document, has no elements other than curricular ones and this restricts its use as a development tool. The bulk of the school budget, together with additional funds when they become available, is spent well, but there is no formal link to strategic priorities. Nevertheless, budget setting is carefully done, with full consultation of governors. Once funds have been allocated, financial control is good. The headteacher and governors monitor the progress of expenditure against budget to ensure financial propriety. Most of the recommendations of the most recent audit report have been implemented but the governors have not yet registered the school fund as a charity. The funds allocated for specific purposes have been properly spent for those purposes.

60. The school is satisfactorily aware of the need to provide best value in the allocation of resources. Governors seek good value for money spent on resources and maintenance using appropriate tendering. Decisions about increases in the number of staff have been made with due regard to the best interests of pupils in keeping classes as small as possible whilst minimising disruption. The support provided by the education authority in implementing the numeracy strategy has been well used. However, the school does not yet consult parents about what they would like in the future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. Standards have successfully been raised at age eleven, apart from in writing and physical education. Without jeopardising the improvements already made, or slowing the momentum to improvement that is necessary to keep up with standards in similar schools, the teachers in the junior year groups should now raise the overall level of attainment in writing and physical education. Greater priority should be given to writing, reflecting the national priority, and the teachers should aim to raise standards in writing to the same level as those in reading. The statutory requirements for swimming should be met. The governors and the teachers are aware that standards at age seven in English and mathematics need to be raised to at least the national average. By reorganising the classes to reduce the amount of mixed age teaching, by bringing in new teachers, and by targeting additional literacy support at specific pupils, they believe that they have already begun the process of improvement. The inspection findings support this view, especially in relation to mathematics, but show that more needs to be done to meet the specific needs of reception age pupils and the high attaining Year 1 pupils in literacy.

62. **Key issue 1:** to raise standards in writing among seven to eleven year olds, the headteacher and her staff, with the support of the governing body, should:

- set measurable targets to raise standards in writing to the same level as those in reading;
- improve teachers' knowledge of shared and guided writing methods and strategies for teaching spelling, together with their expertise in using them; check the effectiveness of teaching regularly, share good practice and remedy shortcomings;
- identify those pupils who successfully attained the expected national standard at age seven but did so with a low pass score, as well as pupils who did not attain the expectation, and check their progress regularly; provide additional support to help them keep up with the learning of the others where this is necessary;
- increase the levels of interest and motivation among the minority, mainly boys, who are reluctant writers by targeting work and resources specifically at their learning needs;
- identify clearly in the medium term planning sufficient opportunities for sustained independent writing in English and in other relevant subjects to promote knowledge of a broad range of genres and develop the ability to write at length for different purposes; the planning should specify in each year group the time allocated, the actual weeks during the academic year when sustained independent writing will take place, and the precise learning objectives;
- regularly check on progress towards achieving the targets and report periodically to the governing body.
(Paragraphs 1, 2, 7, 12, 19, 20, 22, 77-92)

63. **Key issue 2:** to raise standards in the four to seven age groups in English and mathematics, the headteacher and her staff, with the support of the governing body, should:

- check the effectiveness of teaching regularly, share good practice and remedy shortcomings;
- monitor closely the progress of individual pupils, and attainment groups, and set specific targets for their improvement aimed at all of them catching up on, or exceeding, national expectations by the age of seven; report regularly to the governing body on progress towards achieving the targets;
- check regularly that the learning needs of pupils with different levels of attainment are fully met in the planning and the teaching.
(Paragraphs 1, 2, 6, 19, 20, 22, 77-92)

64. **Key issue 3:** to raise standards in the seven to eleven age group in physical education, the headteacher and her staff, with the support of the governing body, should:

- raise teachers' knowledge of the subject, where this is necessary; check the quality of teaching, share good practice and remedy shortcomings;
- modify the timetable so that lessons are of appropriate length;
- ensure that the statutory requirements for swimming are met.
(Paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 19 144-150)

65. **Key issue 4:** the headteacher, key teachers, and the governing body should write and implement a policy for personal, social and health education and citizenship and check regularly that their policy is implemented in full.

66. In addition to the key issues for action, the governors should consider including the following in their action plan:

- the annual use of standardised tests to check for pupils with special educational needs in each of the year groups (paragraph 47);
- improving the outdoor provision for physical development of pupils in the Foundation Stage (paragraph 31);
- increase the length of the taught week to at least the average nationally (paragraphs 32);
- improve the quality of marking (paragraph 46, 102, 114, 131).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	18	43	37	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	188
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	28

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest and the previous reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999 (2000)	10 (11)	15 (8)	25 (19)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8 (9)	9 (8)	9 (8)
	Girls	13 (6)	12 (7)	13 (6)
	Total	21 (15)	21 (15)	22 (14)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (79)	81 (79)	76 (74)
	National	82 (83)	83 (84)	87 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	9
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	22	23	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88	92	88
	National	82	86	87

Percentages in brackets refer to the early indications for 2000.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999 (2000)	11 (13)	11 (14)	22 (27)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7 (8)	5 (9)	6 (11)
	Girls	10 (12)	8 (13)	10 (14)
	Total	17 (20)	13 (22)	16 (25)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (78)	59 (81)	73 (93)
	National	70 (75)	69 (72)	78 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	9	8	10
	Total	14	13	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64	59	73
	National	68	69	78

Percentages in brackets refer to the early indications for 2000.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	183
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	93

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-00
	£
Total income	279635
Total expenditure	276299
Expenditure per pupil (based on 188 pupils)	1494
Balance brought forward from previous year	17362
Balance carried forward to next year	20698

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	188
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	44	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	43	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	54	9	2	3
The teaching is good.	54	45	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	41	16	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	32	7	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	39	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	45	12	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	52	42	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	49	3	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	33	27	7	14

Other issues raised by parents

All issues raised by parents are identified in the summary section of the report.

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

67. The reception children form part of a mixed Reception Year and Year 1 class. They begin school at the start of either the autumn or spring terms, depending on their age. At the time of the inspection, there were only eight reception children in the class, all of them under five. The entry arrangements are satisfactory and ensure a happy and smooth start to children's schooling. The attainment of the majority of children when they enter the school is below that expected for their ages. Baseline assessments show that there has been below average attainment on entry for the past few years. In some years, such as 1997, attainment on entry has been well below average. The baseline assessment results are consistent with the inspection findings.

68. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children who are under five are generally good. The systems and procedures followed are ensuring that the majority of children make good progress but most will still not fully achieve the nationally agreed early learning goals by the time they transfer to Year 1. There are effective methods for teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, adapted from the national strategies and appropriate for the children's ages and abilities. Assessment procedures are good, thorough and result in effective lesson planning. The teacher takes careful note of children's responses to the activities in order to extend and build on these effectively. The quality of teaching is good.

69. The classroom is of an appropriate size but there is no access to an appropriate outdoors or undercover area for daily physical activity and this is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this and there are plans to develop the outside space. Indoors, the teacher has created a bright learning environment that includes a range of interesting and relevant activities for the children. The resources are appropriate for the ages of the children but, although the school benefits from a lot of good quality voluntary help, there is not enough trained classroom support provided for the under fives to give them more individual attention and to increase their rate of progress.

70. The leadership and management of the early years' provision are good. There is a commitment to providing an effective learning environment in which all children are valued and given the opportunity to achieve their potential. The children take a full part in the daily life of the school and are well cared for by older pupils as well as adults. Links are built with other pre-school provision in the area.

Personal, social and emotional development

71. Children have settled quickly and are making rapid progress in relating to each other and to adults. Standards are below average but the provision in this area of learning is very good. The pupils come eagerly into school at the start of each session. When they are unhappy or unwell, the staff look after them sympathetically and observantly. Children feel secure and confident with adults and follow the routines of the day with good behaviour and concern for each other. They are beginning to understand what is right and wrong and they are clear about the way they are expected to behave in the class. Children sustain concentration well and sit through lengthy teaching sessions attentively. The teaching gives children many opportunities to experience wonder and excitement through activities in science or, for example, through the teacher's role-play.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Children are making good progress but, due to their low attainment on entry, the majority are unlikely to achieve the expected level by the time they transfer to year 1. This finding is consistent with the standard of work from pupils in this year group last year. Children are not very articulate but good speaking and listening opportunities are provided to develop these skills. Opportunities are taken by all adults to discuss work and engage children in conversation. Children listen attentively to stories and in assemblies. They regularly take books home to read and clearly enjoy handling books and listening to stories. The teacher effectively uses the weekly text that is part of the literacy hour for a variety of activities including developing phonic skills, for example by teaching the initial sounds of words. The reading diaries provide a good link between home and school. Pupils learn to write using a variety of copying and tracing methods. The teaching is generally good but because reception pupils are taught with year 1 pupils, the work is not always well matched to their needs, especially when the teacher does not have classroom support.

Mathematical development

73. Children are making good progress but their attainment is lower than expected. The knowledge they have is appropriately growing out of their daily experiences. The teaching is good and the pupils are on course to attain standards that are higher than last year. They can name a number of two-dimensional shapes, and they can sort them using colours and other attributes

such as numbers of corners. They know a variety of counting rhymes, such as 'ten green bottles', and take part in these with enjoyment and accuracy. They can use the shapes to make pictures and develop this into repeating mathematical patterns. A scrutiny of work from the previous year shows that children learn to count and write numbers accurately, and they can correctly use money in practical exercise. The teacher ensures that numbers have a high profile in the classroom, in displays and for use in lessons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children are making good progress but their attainment in this area is below that expected for their age and they are unlikely to attain all of the goals for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The teaching is good. This area of learning provides a sound foundation for historical, geographical and scientific learning. In one lesson, the children showed that they can distinguish between different smells and they are able to describe why they prefer one to another. This forms part of scientific work that is developing into a full project on the senses. In another lesson, the teacher provided opportunities for children to experience blindness and they responded to this with a real sense of understanding the problem and how much they rely on their sight. In a third lesson, they learn about aspects of the Jewish faith and some of its celebrations. Part of the programme of work includes educational visits, such as a visit to a farm where children are able to hold and learn about a variety of animals.

Physical development

75. Children are making unsatisfactory progress due to the lack of outdoor activities and their attainment is also unsatisfactory. However, they are developing satisfactory control skills of tools such as scissors and paintbrushes and they enjoy cutting and sticking activities. The new hall has improved the accommodation available to them for physical education. Their co-ordination is developing appropriately as they clap along when singing songs and counting rhymes. They build models with a variety of tabletop and floor construction toys. The quality of teaching is good.

Creative development

76. Children make satisfactory progress but their attainment is below average. They learn to express their feelings and ideas in creative ways through art and imaginative play. They take part in role-play with confidence and respond to the support of an adult by taking on roles from the class text. The teachers' role-play as Goldilocks enabled children to devise imaginative responses to questions based on the story. In an art lesson, work by Picasso was used very effectively to inspire discussion about 'blue moods' and paintings of people in that style. The quality of teaching is good.

ENGLISH

77. Standards are above average overall, mainly because of significant strengths in reading. The attainment of eleven-year-old pupils is very good in reading. Currently, about 90 per cent are at an appropriate level for their age, including two thirds who have already attained the national standard expected by the end of the school year. About one in five pupils are very advanced in their knowledge and read at the level of a typical fourteen-year-old. Standards in writing are lower and below average overall. About 50 per cent are attaining a standard that is appropriate, which is fewer than typical, including between one quarter and one third who have already acquired the knowledge expected of a typical eleven-year-old by the end of the school year. Standards of speaking and listening are broadly average.

78. Nearly all of the pupils with special educational needs are one or more years behind in literacy but make good progress in relation to their difficulties. The few pupils with English as an additional language speak English fluently and do not need extra support. The differences in attainment between boys and girls are much greater than is typical nationally. The 1999 National Curriculum tests showed that by the age of eleven, the average boy is almost one year behind the average girl. The pupils' work shows that this is mainly because of differences in writing. Individually, there is equal representation of boys and girls in high attaining reading and writing groups throughout the school. In those groups that have expected levels of age related attainment, there are more girls represented than there are boys. In lower attaining groups, boys form the largest proportion, with very few girls. This pattern of attainment is consistent with the pattern found among pupils on entry.

79. The findings for current pupils in Year 6 are consistent with the results of the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds, who have recently transferred to secondary education. The test results between 1996 and 1999 improved annually for eleven-year-olds, rising from below average to above average in the space of three years. The extent of improvement is significant. Standards increased again in 2000. The test results are based on a composite score from separate reading and writing tests, with well above standards in reading compensating for lower standards in writing. Standards are rising because of the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and a strong emphasis on reading. The school participated in a local authority pilot of the strategy prior to national implementation and this has helped strengthen the teachers' knowledge of the

subject and improve the teaching of basic skills.

80. Among the seven-year-olds, current overall standards are below average in reading and writing. The 2000 test results were also below average; these pupils are now in Year 3 and the standard of their current work is consistent with the low results. Standards at age seven have fallen over the past two years. The low standards are not a reflection on the quality of work of teachers presently in Years 1 and 2, who have been teaching these classes only a few weeks. The main reason is the below average attainment of pupils on entry, especially boys. Nearly all of the pupils aged seven who were tested in 2000 had made average amounts of progress compared to their attainment when aged four but this was not enough for all of them to catch up on national expectations.

81. Taking into account attainment throughout the school and the differences between reading and writing, the educational value added by the teachers in the subject overall is good, with standards rising broadly from below average on entry to above average when pupils transfer to the high school. The long-term achievement of the pupils between the ages of seven and eleven is very good in reading compared to the national picture. Every eleven year old pupil who was tested in 2000 had increased their knowledge of reading by the nationally expected amount over their four junior years, and one pupil in five did significantly better than this. Achievement in writing is not as good as reading; only 70 per cent of pupils tested in 2000 had increased their knowledge of writing by nationally expected amounts, including 13 per cent who did better. Many of the pupils who did not reach the national level in writing at age eleven had successfully done so when aged seven, although their pass marks at that time were relatively low; this means that their progress in the junior years had slowed. Those with low pass marks at age seven are now targeted for additional literacy support in Years 3 and 4 and this is helping them keep up with the acquisition of basic skills. In the curriculum as a whole, including other subjects, too few opportunities are provided for sustained independent writing. This is a significant factor contributing to the underachievement in writing in the seven to eleven age group and should be remedied.

82. Almost every pupil in Year 6 can read independently, using a range of methods to identify the sound and anticipate the meaning of unknown words. All of those spoken to about their work had chosen challenging books, such as the Harry Potter series or John Masefield's 'Box of Delights', out of keen interest and sense of expectant pleasure. They read fluently, with expression that revealed good levels of comprehension. In discussion, they showed a clear grasp of the main themes, characters and events and readily referred to the text to support their answers. High attaining pupils can tackle material of an adult level of difficulty.

83. On entry to Year 1, the average pupil is able to read a small number of familiar words, recognises the majority of letters, but needs constant adult support when reading. Skill in identifying individual sounds and letters when combined in simple words is below that expected for their age and reading standards overall are below average. From this low starting point, skills improve by typical amounts over the course of Years 1 and 2. Currently in Year 2, at the beginning of the school year, about two thirds of the pupils can read very simple text independently. In shared reading of stories such as 'Funnybones', they demonstrate satisfactory understanding of the content. About 40 per cent of pupils in Year 2, mainly boys, still have difficulty blending three or four letter sounds together to make simple words, which is low attainment even when the earliness in the school year is taken into account. By Year 3, the substantial majority of pupils are adequately launched into reading and beginning to read silently. The average pupil, however, is still not as confident as they should be when tackling unfamiliar words and still needs more than expected levels of adult support. Only one pupil in six in Year 3 has higher than expected reading attainment, a proportion that is well below the norm. About 40 per cent of the year group either had a low pass score in the tests at age seven or did not attain the national level. Year 3 has more than usual numbers of pupils with special educational needs. While reading standards in Year 3 are well below average overall, the pace of learning is quick and pupils are catching up on expectations. In Year 4, reading standards are broadly average, with nearly all pupils able to read a range of straightforward texts independently and accurately. Optional national tests in this age group showed that at the end of the last school year, three quarters of the pupils had attained the expected national level, including 15 per cent who were two years or more ahead of expected standards. The others, bar one, were no more than about six months behind. By Year 5, reading standards are above average, in optional tests at the end of the previous school year, about two thirds of pupils were reading at a level that was one year or more ahead of national expectations and nearly one in five pupils were three years ahead.

84. In writing, about half the pupils now in Year 6 have attainment that is appropriate and they are on course to achieve or exceed the expected national standard by the end of the school year. Their writing is well organised, often lively, with interesting detail about characters' thoughts and feelings and appropriate use of dialogue. Sentences are often complex in structure, with a comma sometimes used to separate clauses. A full range of punctuation, however, is not always used accurately or consistently and the standard of spelling varies widely. The latter shortcoming reflects the absence throughout the school of a coherent, effective policy to promote appropriate knowledge of spelling patterns and rules. Good use is made of adverbs and adjectives. A further one-quarter of the year group is not far behind the majority but needs a boost with spelling, punctuation and grammar, and with sustaining the logic and organisation of their work when writing at length, to attain national expectations on time. The remaining quarter of the year group is almost two years behind in almost all aspects of writing.

85. The majority of pupils in Year 1 can write letters and familiar words independently but only about one quarter of the year group currently attain the first level of the National Curriculum, which is a much smaller proportion than is typical nationally. The most able one-quarter can compose and write short sentences. A satisfactory emphasis is placed on writing in the teaching and the pupils extend their skills steadily in Years 1 and 2. About two thirds of the pupils in Year 2 are attaining appropriately for their age, which is a below average proportion. They write short sentences. Letters are broadly accurate in shape and uniform in size. Full stops and capital letters are evident but not used consistently in independent writing. In Year 3, about 70 per cent of the pupils, which is below average, organise the content of their writing logically. Stories, for example, have appropriate beginnings, middles and ends. Many of them are able to write relatively long sentences, mostly joined with "and". The more able pupils make good use of adjectives and adverbs but most pupils' use of punctuation and capital letters is more inconsistent than it should be. At the end of Year 4 last year, optional national tests showed that only half the pupils had managed to attain the national standard for their age, with a further quarter not far behind; such standards are much lower than they should be. Their work showed that although attainment was low, their rate of learning was good and they were catching up on national standards. The standard of work of pupils currently in Year 4 is better than last year and closer to expectations. About three-quarters are working within the correct national level and on target to achieve the national expectation by the end of the year. Year 4 pupils are, for example, successfully learning to construct sentences with clauses and separate them in a sentence with commas. About half the pupils in Year 5 have attainment that is appropriate for their age, which is a below average proportion, although they are learning at an appropriate pace. In a literacy hour lesson, for example, they learnt to use speech marks correctly and to identify the difference between reported and direct speech.

86. The low standards in writing partly reflect low attainment on entry. However, low attainment on entry is also common to reading and yet achievements are much better in that aspect because of the stronger overall emphasis on reading in the curriculum. In writing, the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is leading to pupils quickly extending their basic knowledge of the language. The pupils' work contains regular opportunities to write short passages of text that concentrate on character descriptions, for example, or the use of adjectives, adverbs, similes or some aspect of punctuation, which is good practice. There is, in most classes, a satisfactory emphasis on shared and guided writing in the literacy hour and the work includes writing poems, short plays, letters and stories. However, the range of genres that pupils are taught about is not broad enough and too few opportunities are provided for writing independently at length, using specific genres, especially in other subjects. In addition, standards in spelling are generally low. There is an absence of a consistent approach to teaching spelling and this aspect of the National Literacy Strategy is less effectively implemented than most other aspects.

87. Attitudes to the subject are mainly positive. The majority of pupils enjoy reading and are well motivated when they write. The oldest pupils choose reading material because they are keen to read more books by particular authors or more of a particular type of story. When writing, they concentrate on their work, think hard about the choice of words, or the events they are recounting, and take pride in their finished product. A minority, predominantly boys, are reluctant readers and writers. A male poet in residence, funded by a local business, spent time working in the school last year to help provide a positive male role model and boost boys' interest in literacy. Together with the purchase or reference books designed to capture the interests of boys, the measures taken by teachers to increase boys' motivation have had a modicum of success but more needs to be done.

88. All of the teaching is satisfactory or better; 63 per cent is good or better, including 13 per cent that is very good. This range of quality makes the teaching good overall. The very good teaching is in Year 3 and is the work of the subject coordinator. Teaching of this high quality is motivational. In a very good lesson in Year 3, for example, teaching pupils to write questions or statements using grammatically correct sentence structures and either question or exclamation marks accurately was managed in such a way that it deeply interested all of them and made them eager to write their own. Questions asked by the teacher during shared work were at different levels of difficulty and cleverly targeted at pupils with different attainment. Independent group work was very well matched to learning needs and extended skills taught during shared whole-class work. By the end of the lesson, the pupils' confidence and accuracy in framing questions and using appropriate punctuation had been extended quickly, efficiently and effectively for everyone.

89. Where teaching is good, the planning and preparation are thorough. The teachers' use of questions keeps pupils' minds focused on the learning objectives and prompts them to draw conclusion. Teachers' explanations and teaching of basic knowledge are clear and effective. In a good lesson in Year 6, well thought out progression to the teaching of rhyming couplets began by clarifying the term "syllables". The pupils then shared the task of identifying syllables in lines of Shakespearean poetry. Next, they looked for the rhythm created by placing a stress on particular syllables; they then sought stress patterns. The teaching ended with the chance to write lines of poetry that conformed to a specific structure.

90. Where teaching is satisfactory, the basic organisation of the lessons conforms to the methods of the National Literacy Strategy. Basic skills are taught effectively and the majority with typical levels of attainment learns at an appropriate speed. However, as occasionally happens in the Reception Year and Year 1, pupils attaining a higher level find the work easy, finish quickly and their knowledge and skills are not stretched enough. Pupils with lower levels of attainment find the work too hard to tackle without close adult support and struggle to complete it. This is mainly a factor in writing, and partly reflects teachers not knowing children's abilities well enough at the start of the school year; but it also reflects insufficient detailed awareness of methods and strategies to teach writing effectively.

91. Teachers' knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy is good overall. Shared text level work is well managed. Word level work, however, does not have an equally strong emphasis in every class, especially the teaching of spelling. Shared and guided writing featured appropriately in the majority of lessons seen but did not always maximise opportunities for pupils to act as authorial scribes, which reduced the effectiveness of the work on occasions.

92. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The present post holder has only recently taken responsibility for the subject. The quality of her teaching is high and she leads well by example. The work of others who held responsibility before her has been effective in training teachers in the methods of the National Literacy Strategy and, through this work, raising the overall standard of teaching. Curriculum guidance is satisfactory. The basic curriculum is well organised but planning to make better use of writing opportunities outside the literacy hour and in other subjects is underdeveloped. Termly and weekly planning are consistent in format and mainly good in quality throughout the school. Resources have been appropriately increased to meet the demands of the National Literacy Strategy. National grants to help improve resources and boost learning for those who need it have been used wisely.

MATHEMATICS

93. By the age of eleven, standards are above average. Pupils' overall standard of attainment on entry to the Reception Year is below the national average. They make good progress in the Reception Year but standards remain below average when pupils transfer to Year 1. By the age of seven, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected national level for their age is below average. However, due to the good progress now being made between the ages of seven and eleven, standards rise to average levels by the age of nine and, by the end of the junior key stage, increase to above average levels overall.

94. These findings are reflected in the results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests, which showed a significant improvement on the 1999 results among eleven-year-old pupils. The 2000 results are not yet published with full national data. In 1999, although the amount of high attainment at age eleven was better than that found nationally, not enough pupils attained the expected level and this is why the results were below average. In 2000, the proportion attaining the expected national level has increased dramatically by more than one third to 89 per cent, which is well above the 1999 national average. The previous inspection reported that standards were in line with the national at that time; current standards show good improvement compared to that time. The 2000 results for seven-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was well below the national average for 1999.

95. This picture of improving attainment, especially at the age of eleven, is backed up by the achievements of pupils when compared to their previous attainment. Comparing the below average standards in 2000 at the age of seven with the same pupils' well below average attainment on entry to the school in 1997 shows that their attainment has increased by expected national amounts and that achievement over the longer term is satisfactory. Comparing the 2000 test results for eleven-year-olds with their results in 1996, when aged seven, shows that their long-term achievement has been good. The good standards now evident by the end of the junior key stage are partly based on the good foundations in basic skills being taught throughout the school and, particularly, the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. In addition, 'booster' classes have helped improve the attainment of pupils of average ability, and there is a variety of extra provision for higher attaining pupils, which is enriching and extending their mathematical skills. Numeracy skills are extended in other subjects, for example, in geography, four figure coordinates are used in Year 6, while in science, pupils use computers to produce line graphs from pulse rate data.

96. When the 1999 results are compared with eleven-year-old pupils at similar schools they show that standards were well below those in similar schools. The much-improved results in 2000 bring standards significantly closer to those of similar schools. The trend in results over time shows a dip in standards at age seven from a 1996 high point. At age eleven, results have varied widely but the four-year overall trend is broadly in line with that found nationally. There are no significant differences between boys' and girls' achievements in their present work, although girls performed much better than the boys in 1999. The pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds make the same progress as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

97. By the time they are eleven, pupils of all abilities have a sound knowledge of place value to at least thousands, and can add, subtract, multiply and divide competently. The higher attaining pupils are able to interpret data and draw up frequency graphs. All pupils have an appropriate mathematical vocabulary, an understanding and appreciation of number pattern and measures, and awareness and knowledge of shapes and their properties. However, the spelling of some mathematical words is not always corrected. Most pupils can perform number operations using decimals, and use calculators to convert whole numbers to decimals and fractions. Lower attaining pupils have a sound understanding of improper fractions. Year 5 pupils understand simple equivalent fractions. By the end of Year 5, they use percentages accurately and are familiar with negative numbers. In Year 4, attainment is below that expected at the start of the year and they demonstrate a very basic knowledge and understanding about two- and three-dimensional shapes. By the end of Year 4, past work shows a sound understanding of fractions and the use of a variety of techniques for multiplication. Year 3 pupils understand what a right angle is and how to

recognise them in the real world. Other work shows a basic understanding of measures and money.

98. Year 2 pupils do not reach the expected levels of attainment although they make good progress during the year. For example, at the start of the year most of the pupils are able to add coins up to twenty pence. They can compare the length of pencils and cubes. By the end of the year, they are able to add three digits to make a total up to fifty. They can divide simple shapes into half and have a sound knowledge of the three times table. Year 1 pupils are able to use money in problems involving giving change to ten pence. They develop sound addition skills up to twenty.

99. The majority of pupils display very positive attitudes to work. They behave well and respond positively to teachers who provide challenging work. They concentrate well and work hard to complete their tasks. They have good relationships with teachers, listen with attention and respond eagerly to questions. These positive attitudes to learning have a beneficial effect on their attainment and progress. The presentation of work is not always sufficiently careful, partly due to the wide use of worksheets, which are not always stored appropriately by pupils or teachers.

100. The teaching is good overall; all of it is satisfactory or better; almost 80 per cent is good or better and 33 per cent is very good. The best lessons are well prepared and structured, with clear aims based on the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most lessons are characterised by a lively presentation and good pace. In the most effective lessons, teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils' attainment and behaviour. They effectively build on pupils' knowledge and understanding from previous lessons. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson on factors, the teacher's skilled questioning encouraged pupils to recall earlier work and then to extend and consolidate their multiplication skills. Classroom management skills are generally good and this enables teachers to use a range of teaching styles including whole class, group and individual tuition. The best lessons are those where teachers provide a variety of tasks for pupils of different abilities, and where the tasks provided are appropriately challenging and based on previous learning.

101. Lessons usually begin with a lively and effective session of mental work, to which pupils respond with enthusiasm. Whole class teaching is used effectively and teachers frequently involve pupils in explaining their ideas and demonstrating to the rest of the class. Group or individual tasks are then completed and the best lessons have a lively pace to which pupils respond well. Teachers make effective use of a plenary session at the end of the lesson to review and reinforce pupils' learning.

102. Teachers make good use of questioning to assess and develop pupils' understanding and provide support as necessary. Pupils receive good feedback on their work through verbal comments, although written marking is not always used to the best effect. Good practice is found in Year 2 where the marking provides pupils with a clear understanding of how they need to improve and also forms a useful record for the teacher of progress and in some cases the time taken to complete tasks. There are regular assessments of pupils' attainment and progress.

103. The National Numeracy Strategy is now used as an effective framework for planning and is clearly having a beneficial effect on standards, especially in mental work and the development of mathematical language. There is a clear framework for medium term planning and teachers' weekly planning clearly indicates the provision being made for the different abilities within the class.

104. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and provides useful guidance to support colleagues in the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy. She recognises the need for a closer analysis of test data to provide more detailed evidence of where there are weaknesses that the teaching can address. This is particularly important for data handling and the application of mathematical skills, which are weaker areas of the school's work. There are effective systems in place to monitor the quality of planning, teaching and learning, and also intensive support given by the local authority. These have contributed to the recently improved standards of attainment. A good range of resources is available to support teaching and learning in the subject. However, information and communications technology is not used effectively to support work in mathematics.

SCIENCE

105. The standard of work among eleven-year-olds is above average overall. Levels of knowledge, for nearly all pupils in the age group, are already consistent with national expectations in the aspects studied and a sizeable proportion are on course to exceed expectations by the end of the school year. All pupils achieve well compared to their attainment when aged seven. The standard of work among seven-year-old pupils is broadly average; nearly all are on course to attain the expectation for the age group but only a handful will exceed it.

106. The trend in the national test results for eleven-year-olds between 1996 and 2000 is one of improvement. Between 1996 and 1998, the results were below average. In 1999, when full account is taken of individual test scores at different levels, the results were average. In 2000, more than 90 per cent of the pupils attained the expected national level, half the year group attained a higher level, and this is well above the 1999 national average. The 1999 results, compared to similar schools, were

well below average; the 2000 results are much better than the 1999 average for similar schools but accurate comparative data is not yet available.

107. Girls have performed significantly better than boys over the last four-year period, whereas nationally the difference is negligible. In 2000, more girls than boys attained the higher levels and no girl attained below national expectations. In current work, differences in the performance of girls and boys are detectable and these are consistent with past test results. The differences mainly reflect variations in attainment on entry, especially in literacy skills, which have an impact on reading and writing tasks in science.

108. Teacher assessments in 1999, for pupils aged seven, showed that the number of pupils achieving the expected national level was average compared to all schools, but well below average when compared only to the results of similar schools. The proportion of pupils working at a higher level was below the national average and well below that of similar schools. Teacher assessments for 2000 showed the school's results to be below average when compared to the average for 1999.

109. Pupils throughout the school use correct scientific terminology. Year 6 pupils use words like "evaporation" easily and correctly, while Year 4 pupils, discussing the flow of liquids, use words like "viscous", and this good technical vocabulary helps them comment on their work efficiently and effectively. Year 6 pupils are able to discuss their findings in appropriate depth, for example, what causes the change of matter from one state to another. They are able to separate mixtures using processes like filtration and can predict when changes are reversible or irreversible. Higher attaining pupils understand the principles and importance of classification. They can carry out investigations into the reasons for changing pulse rates and use their mathematical skills in recording these changes using line graphs. They can identify key factors in fair testing. Less able pupils can nevertheless identify thermal insulators and investigate conditions in which micro-organisms will flourish. Year 4 pupils know and recognise the effects of gravity and can carry out investigations into the effects of friction upon movement.

110. Pupils in Year 2 are able to differentiate between the forces of squashing, stretching and bending and how materials respond to these forces. They understand which materials are likely to be permanently changed by these forces and they are able to distinguish between man-made and natural materials. Higher attaining pupils are able to give scientific names for the main organs of the human body and know their positions. They are able to carry out experiments on water passing through plant roots, using terms like hypothesis. Younger pupils are able to talk about foods that are healthy and why they are good for you. They use terms like "vitamin" and they know that food is a source of energy.

111. Almost all pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress and many, particularly higher attaining seven to eleven year old pupils, make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs, helped by work that is matched to their abilities and by the good level of well briefed classroom support, some of which is voluntary, generally make good progress. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is the same as that of other pupils.

112. Standards of attainment have risen since the previous inspection. It was reported at that time that there was underachievement among those who were seven to eleven years old, particularly amongst pupils of above average ability. This is no longer the case. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted a nationally recognised scheme of work. This has resulted in a more coherent approach to science and work being more closely matched to pupils' abilities. This, allied to an improvement in the quality of teaching, which previously had shortcomings, has resulted in the rising standards. The upgrading of the accommodation since the last inspection has assisted the improvement. Conditions are no longer cramped and do not hinder practical and investigative work. Assessment records are kept but there is not yet a standardised form of recording progress and assessments tend to be based on topics that have been covered without giving an indication of the level at which the individual pupil is working.

113. Pupils show good attitudes to the subject. They take a keen interest in their work, attending well to demonstrations and collaborating well during group work. They are often appreciative of others' efforts. "That's smashing, that is", said a Year 2 pupil when another was asked to show his work. The care with which pupils present their work is another positive indication of pupils' good attitude.

114. The quality of teaching is good overall; it is never less than satisfactory throughout and, in half the lessons, is good. Using the new scheme as a basis, teachers plan their work carefully listing clear learning objectives and, in some cases, planning work for pupils of different abilities. In good lessons, teachers focus steadily on the learning objectives and return to these regularly. They use questioning effectively to bring all pupils into the lesson and challenge their thinking. "Why do ice cubes melt when you run cold water over them", Year 6 pupils were asked. Marking of pupils' work varies in quality. Although all work is marked, some marking merely consists of a series of ticks with the odd encouraging remark whilst some teachers comment constructively on how work might be improved and challenge pupils to think more deeply about what they have written. Teachers in all lessons show good management skills, encouraging attention from all pupils and so helping to extend their learning. By preparing resources and organising pupils for group work quickly and efficiently, they maximise time to be spent on learning. Good demonstrations engage the interest of the pupils and give guidance for their own practical and investigative work. Teachers generally display work well, encouraging pupils' self esteem and helping to consolidate learning.

Particularly good displays of work occur in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2, for example an interactive display that allowed grouping of materials according to various criteria. Another on the senses was enlarged and developed as each sense was studied.

115. The co-ordinator has been in post for a very short time and has had little opportunity to have an impact on learning but she has a clear idea of future developments for the subject. She has formulated an action plan and has money for teaching cover to allow her to monitor teaching and pupils' learning. Resources are sufficient in amount, of good quality and support the curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

116. Standards overall are average. Progress in investigating and making is satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in progress in three-dimensional work. Progress towards knowledge and understanding, is good and a lot of work to introduce pupils to famous artists and their work is carried out successfully. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. The overall progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority groups, is broadly satisfactory. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. This is due to the timetabling arrangements that meant that most teachers were teaching design and technology in the shared time given to the two subjects. In addition, little evidence of work from the previous year was available, which reflects the low profile that art has had as a subject in the school recently. Pupils and teachers were spoken to about their work.

117. The pupils' progress reflects a curriculum that generally provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to use a variety of materials and media, and this is evident in the planning. Most of the pupils enter the school with below average creative skills. By the age of seven, pupils can draw still life objects fairly accurately and they are learning to represent three-dimensions through shading. Year 3 and 4 pupils used the painting 'The Scream' as a starting point for artwork using a variety of coloured pastels. In Year 5, paintings and collage work in appropriate colours enhance a good display about water. The lesson in Year 4 used the work of Magritte to inspire work with charcoal and crayon. In discussion with pupils, they revealed that they remembered studying surrealist art in a previous class.

118. Good use is being made of computers to support the subject, with a variety of appropriate software being used. In Year 2, for example, the abstract work of Jackson Pollack is used to inspire pupils to create similar works using a variety of computer graphics and good, imaginative work results.

119. In the one lesson seen, pupils' attitudes to the subject were satisfactory. They were interested and keen to begin the task provided. The teaching was satisfactory and enabled pupils to build a sound understanding of the work of other artists and to practise their drawing and painting skills. The teaching also extended their art vocabulary. Where appropriate, very good use is made of parental and other volunteers' expertise, especially with the younger pupils.

120. The curriculum is satisfactory and appropriately planned. The pupils' work shows that a satisfactory range of experiences are included in the teaching programme. These are built on appropriately over time, although not enough opportunities are provided for three-dimensional work, such as the use of clay. There is little evidence of multicultural art being used as a stimulus. The curriculum coordinator has only had the post for three weeks and there have been few developments in the subject recently. However, the school is now trialling the nationally recommended scheme. The coordinator is bringing together a portfolio of work to help teachers make accurate judgements about the standards attained throughout the school. This has led to some detailed consideration about the art curriculum, and changes to the scheme have already been introduced. Two-dimensional resources are appropriate but a wider range of three-dimensional and printing materials is required for the older pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. At the last inspection, standards were unsatisfactory. Since then, the school has worked hard to develop an appropriate curriculum and improve teachers' expertise. This work has been successful. Standards are now good throughout and the teaching is very good.

122. Six-year-old pupils are able to make good models with axles and turning wheels. They can design and create small pictures with moving parts, such as eyes. They show good sewing skills when learning to use a variety of stitches. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils who had earlier designed houses began to build them using cardboard boxes and a variety of other materials. They produced good, carefully made models, with only minimal support from a number of adult volunteers. In addition to making the models, they could transfer their designs accurately and effectively onto the computer using an art program. Seven-year-olds have increased knowledge of constructing joints and can, for example, use paper fasteners to make wheels that turn. They have the ability to design a puppet, making a tracing paper pattern which they cut out and transfer onto felt before sewing it to make a good quality finished model.

123. In the seven to eleven age range, pupils' designing and making skills are extended through a variety of projects; they can evaluate their work well, suggesting improvements they would make in the future. In one very good example, Year 3 pupils completed a picture frame topic. They designed and made their frames, in which they then mounted photographs. They created two designs, one of which they then discarded after evaluating which was the better; and made prototypes to test out how they would hold up a photograph and stand. In one very good lesson Year 6, pupils worked on a slipper project under the guidance of an expert who has worked in the shoe-making industry. They designed slippers and used proper lasts to make a paper pattern. These were then cut out and transferred onto felt. They learned about a variety of slipper shapes and types, selecting the one they wanted to make. This work gave pupils the opportunity to develop a variety of technology skills.

124. The pupils are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy the subject. They use tools and materials sensibly and safely. The teaching is very good. Teachers have very clear plans and prepare a good variety of resources appropriate for the tasks. Lessons are well managed and the teachers use other adults effectively to support pupils' learning. Resources are good but more shaping materials are needed, together with more sophisticated construction apparatus for older pupils. The coordinator is a recent appointment but is aware of the needs of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

125. Standards of attainment for pupils aged seven and eleven are in line with those typically found in most schools. Pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry. Pupils in Year 6 know about the water cycle, for example, and understand basic differences between the climatic regions. They have satisfactory knowledge of the features of rivers and use terms like "tributary", "meander" and "delta" correctly. They can use their information and communications technology skills to find information about mountains by using CD-ROMs and the Internet. They have sufficient knowledge of e-mail to send and receive information from pupils in Blaye near Bordeaux about topics such as climate and locality. They have generally good mapping skills and can use Ordnance Survey maps, identifying symbols, locating places and features using four figure co-ordinates, and measuring distances using the scale of the map. Pupils in Year 4 are able to carry out a survey of the school, although their understanding of scale is not yet complete. Year 3 pupils can use atlases to help them research into weather conditions around the world. Pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory knowledge of the British Isles and of localities such as Blackpool, which are different to their own, and can compare the human and physical features in these localities. They can think about how different their lives would be if they were to live on a small island, for instance, and can empathise with inhabitants of small islands, extending their mapping skills by planning an island of their own. Fictional characters, Bertie and Basil Bear, accompany pupils on holiday and trips to other locations and send back photographs, postcards and letters telling the class about the places they have visited and the pupils can locate these places on maps.

126. The standards noted at the previous inspection have been maintained and the quality of teaching is at least as good. There have been improvements in the curriculum and resources. There is now a comprehensive policy and a nationally prepared scheme of work is used. This has increased the emphasis on map work. Resources, which at the last inspection were in short supply, have improved both in quality and quantity. They include a good supply of Ordnance Survey maps and orienteering compasses. The school has a particularly good supply of newspapers with articles reporting on developments in the locality. The management is effective. The co-ordinator has successfully made the scheme of work relevant to the pupils, introducing the study of particular countries to make good use of the first hand knowledge of parents and friends of the school.

127. Pupils' attitudes are good. They are interested in the subject and very attentive in lessons. They work well on practical tasks of mapping, collaborating well when working with others. The teaching is always satisfactory and, in a good proportion of lessons, the quality is very good. In the very good lessons, teachers plan thoroughly, are clear about the learning objectives and arrange children's activities to achieve these objectives. They adopt a logical approach, consolidating pupils' learning before introducing new ideas. They skilfully use illustrations to support what they are saying and by using atlases, develop children's sense of wonder about the world. They use questioning well to challenge pupils to extend their learning. The teaching promotes pupils' use of information and communications technology to extend knowledge. Teachers make good use of the local environment to give pupils first hand learning experiences. They were able to make good use of the recent building at the school and there are regular visits to a local field centre. Quarrying is a local industry and the school makes good use of the facilities provided by local firms at their interactive information centres. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about visits to the Severn Trent water museum and to the National Forest, and were able to recount details of things they had learned.

HISTORY

128. Levels of attainment are satisfactory at the ages of seven and eleven. The current pace of learning is good. The pupils' achievements by the age of eleven are good compared with standards on entry. Older pupils have an extensive knowledge of life in Ancient Greece and use associated language, such as words like "hoplite", "greave" and "phalanx", when writing about

the Greek army. They try to understand the thoughts and feelings of ordinary people such as the messenger who brought the news of the battle of Marathon, can consider the battle from the Spartan perspective, and make comparisons between life in Athens and Sparta. They have knowledge of the religious elements of Ancient Greek life and have a broad knowledge of gods and goddesses that were worshipped, their attributes and symbols. From their study of life in Tudor times, the pupils have acquired a good, detailed knowledge of the life styles of people from the period. They know, for example, about the diseases that affected Elizabethan sailors and that these were caused by their unbalanced diets. Pupils in Year 4 are fascinated by accounts of Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. From their studies, they have developed the skills to use artefacts, pictures and newspaper reports from the period to make inferences and deductions about life in Ancient Egypt. They can engage in sophisticated dialogue and appreciate the need not to draw too many conclusions from limited evidence, as when a pupil stated that slaves would be whipped if they didn't work hard enough and others pointed out that there was no actual evidence that slaves were whipped.

129. Seven-year-old pupils are acquiring a satisfactory knowledge of the lives of famous people such as Mary Seacole and Alexander Graham Bell. They know about important events such as the Great Fire of London, and are developing the type of knowledge that enables them to make appropriate comparisons between aspects of life then and now. The more able seven-year-old pupils know, for example, what it was like to be an early medieval monk on the island of Lindisfarne, or what a Viking might need on a sea journey. They can use their research skills to investigate whether Vikings had horns on their helmets.

130. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. It was noted then that fieldwork and visits to museums added to the curriculum; this continues to be the case. Pupils get several good opportunities to extend their learning in role playing activities on well-organised visits to various centres. Year 6 pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about their visit, in the previous year, to the Black Country Museum, when they dressed as Victorians and had a series of experiences including a Victorian school lesson. Years 2 and 3 pupils have visited a local Tudor manor house where they practised writing with quill pens and cooking the Tudor way. Year 4 pupils, dressed as evacuees, have experienced a World War II day at a local hall. These visits are supplemented by trips to places of interest in the immediate locality, like the nearby War Memorial. The lack of a history policy reported at the previous inspection has been remedied and the school has adopted nationally prepared materials. The quality of teaching has improved. The resources have improved and good use of these resources is a feature of the very good teaching.

131. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall; all of it is satisfactory or better, including 50 per cent of lessons where the quality is very good. In the very good lessons, teachers plan thoroughly and have clear learning objectives. Good subject knowledge helps them respond to pupils' questions and extend learning with interesting detail that engages pupils' imaginations. Teachers stimulate interest by the use of well-chosen relevant visual aids and artefacts in lessons and as parts of displays. A good example was the display about Victorian children, incorporating, amongst other objects, blackboards, finger stocks and toys. To help develop chronological understanding, teachers use time lines, which increase in sophistication through the school. The quality of marking is variable, sometimes being little more than ticks and the occasional encouraging remark. However, there are many examples of good marking, consisting of constructive criticism and suggestions for further study and, in some cases, homework assignments. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to make suitable progress by these comments, by the good level of classroom support, some of which is voluntary, and having work specially planned for them.

132. Pupils' attitudes are good and are instrumental in developing their learning. They are productive and many pupils, throughout the school, take considerable care with the presentation of their work. They are keen to answer questions and to ask questions themselves to help further their knowledge. They can become enwrapped in the subject matter, an example being the collective gasp of some eight and nine-year-old pupils when they saw a picture of what Howard Carter had seen when he entered Tutankhamun's tomb.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

133. The standard of current work is typical of most schools at ages eleven, seven and on entry to Year 1. The standards among the seven to eleven-year-olds are a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The achievement of pupils over the long term is broadly satisfactory, as is their current rate of learning in lessons. There are no significant variations in attainment or progress between pupils of different gender or background. Pupils with access to computers at home generally know more about the subject and are more confident users than pupils without such access. Pupils with special educational needs mostly have the same levels of knowledge and understanding as their peers and their learning is similar in pace.

134. About three-quarters of the eleven year olds in Year 6 have appropriate knowledge for their age. In a satisfactory lesson, they showed that they could access information using two different commercially produced data base programs. They knew that their search for information was more efficient and effective if they framed questions carefully. They could switch between text, pictures, and sounds to view the search findings. Many pupils have knowledge of control programs, such as logo, and can make a screen turtle move in predetermined directions and distances. A group of high attaining pupils, all of whom had access to computers at home, demonstrated very fluent keyboard skills when creating a story that combined text,

pictures and sound. When using text, they had knowledge of a broad range of editing tools. They could, for example, cut, copy and paste text easily and use a spellchecker. They knew how to enter information into a database program and had a working knowledge of spreadsheets. Knowledge of e-mail and the internet is satisfactory.

135. In Year 2, about 80 per cent of the pupils have knowledge and skills that are consistent with national expectations for the age group. They can enter, save and retrieve work, understand basic terms such as mouse and keyboard, and have the skills, for example, to use the right or left mouse button to access program menus and select options. They are learning to use a range of graphics and word processing programs to create and amend work. In a good lesson in Year 2, the pupils learnt how to use a graphics program to draw straight lines, enclose and fill spaces, varying the thickness of the line and choosing the fill colour. When talking to these pupils later, they had remembered what they had been taught and were aware that the fill procedures would not work if the space to be filled were not fully enclosed.

136. All of the pupils spoken to are well motivated and keen to use and learn from computers. The teaching is satisfactory in the main, with occasional lessons that are good. The methods are constrained by the deployment pattern of computers, which is one per class. Weekly whole class teaching is combined with a rota system where individuals use computers to consolidate what is taught to the class. Where the direct teaching is good, clear explanations and effective demonstration lead to basic knowledge and skills being efficiently communicated to the pupils. In a good lesson in Year 2, the explanations were reinforced with key words and commands printed on flash cards, which were used to promote understanding of the order in which operations took place. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 6, some pupils found it difficult to see the computer screen and follow the detail of what was being taught. The teacher was aware of this and did her best to involve these pupils through well chosen questions.

137. The rigour with which whole class lessons are followed up with individual practice is variable. This reflects the competing demands of other subjects and limitations in the medium term planning, which does not always specify the detailed use of computers each week in other subjects.

138. Management of the subject is good although responsibility has very recently changed hands. The subject has been a development priority for several years. The developments are appropriate and are the reason for the improvements in standards attained by the pupils. The broad curricular guidance to support the teaching is relevant. Training has been provided in recent years and knowledge of information and communications technology forms part of the specification for all teachers appointed in the past two years; this is good management. These measures mean that the teachers' levels of knowledge and understanding of the subject are satisfactory. Medium term planning identifies specific learning objectives for the whole-class lessons but does not identify when pupils are to gain the individual experiences necessary to consolidate what is taught or the information and communications technology objectives when the subject is used with other subjects. Resources have been improved and are now adequate. Developments following national grants have only recently been completed and only just beginning to have a noticeable impact on pupils' learning.

MUSIC

139. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. Progress is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 are able to compose their own lyrics, which follow a melody, and can perform them confidently. They study lyrics and melody in a variety of songs from well known hit musicals, gospel songs, protest songs and consider the impact of the lyrics on society. They are able to recognise and speak about the work of composers like Beethoven and Grieg, recalling individual compositions.

140. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Since that inspection, the school has formulated its music policy and has adopted a nationally recognised scheme of work. Although these have not been in use long enough to have a significant impact on standards, the teachers are all using them as the basis for their planning and this is ensuring a coherent approach to the subject and that the pupils' work is at an appropriate level. The accommodation has been much improved since the last inspection and learning in music is no longer handicapped by cramped conditions. Musical instruments are now stored accessibly on a mobile trolley. There is a good range of instruments although the amount of tuned percussion is limited. The school has a good selection of music on discs. The choir, which was judged to be good in the last inspection, is no longer run although choirs are formed for musical productions. The recorder groups continue but had not started by the time of the inspection. There is, at the moment, no individual instrumental tuition, which limits the opportunities of pupils to develop skill with particular instruments. Older pupils who had been offered this tuition in the past regretted that it was no longer available.

141. The quality of teaching is satisfactory; none is less than this quality and in a third of lessons, the quality is good. Teachers in the good lessons show good subject knowledge, which allows them to set tasks at the appropriate level for the pupils and have the confidence to extend pupils' knowledge in response to their questions. They are able to correct pupils' errors in a constructive manner. They choose good metaphors to bring alive musical terms, for example comparing ostinato to a pizza base on which 'toppings' are laid. They establish good habits by emphasising correct posture for singing.

Occasionally, the teachers are too ambitious, trying to introduce too much new information into a lesson too quickly, leaving the pupils briefly confused and limiting the learning to a minority. Teachers adopt a very positive approach, particularly to singing, and this is transmitted to pupils who respond enthusiastically. A group singing lesson for the three classes of younger pupils was conducted with great gusto. The teachers all took part, changing role and supporting each other, thereby emphasising the importance of the subject and keeping the pace and interest level high. Some of the teachers have good singing voices and are able to use these to demonstrate and challenge the pupils but the lack of a pianist inhibits the learning. Although the teachers make good use of CD recordings, these are not easily used to demonstrate particular features of a melody as would be possible with a piano.

142. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes are good. Pupils of all ages listen intently to recordings at the start and end of assemblies and many are able to identify the composer. Pupils are enthusiastic singers. Songs that are particular favourites are greeted with murmurs of pleasure. Junior aged pupils break into song spontaneously as they enter the hall for singing practice. A boy in a Year 6 class who was asked if he would sing a short solo did so confidently and without demur. All pupils in the Year 6 class are prepared to sing their own lyrics, in small groups, in front of the rest of the class.

143. The coordinator has been in post for a relatively short time but management of the subject is already having a positive impact on the learning of the pupils, particularly in the area of musical appreciation. The coordinator carefully plans a programme of music to accompany assemblies throughout the year. The pupils are introduced to the music of composers such as Beethoven, Elgar and Tchaikovsky and to musical terminology. Music is chosen to support the themes of the assemblies and the short but frequent sessions of listening to music, backed up by displays and talks about the lives of the composers, give the pupils a good introduction to a wide range of musical pieces, placed in their context. The coordinator also seeks to further the learning of the pupils by using the expertise available from other organisations. Good numbers of pupils participate in musical productions led by music specialists employed by the local authority. Pupils form a choir to take part, with other schools, in productions at venues in the area. The music tutors from the local authority also give concerts at the school, some of which involve instruments and music from other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144. Standards among eleven-year-old pupils are below average; those among seven-year-olds are satisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection has not been quick enough. During the inspection lessons in gymnastics and games were observed. In addition, the teachers' planning indicates that full coverage of the National Curriculum is provided, with the exception of swimming. Regular swimming lessons have not been held for two years due to problems with access to appropriate facilities. The school is attempting to remedy this but at present the statutory requirements of the curriculum are not fully met. The overall provision has improved since the last inspection, largely due to the greatly improved facilities but there is still a need to develop the teachers' expertise and knowledge of the subject further. The allocation of time to the subject is satisfactory and meets the needs of most pupils, but the time for actual lessons is often squeezed between other subjects and results in too brief a time to develop activities fully.

145. The current learning in lessons is broadly average in the infants but is not fast enough in the juniors for pupils to catch up on national expectations by the age of eleven. The level of skill demonstrated by older pupils still reflects their limited access to satisfactory teaching facilities in the past. A number of the older pupils are clearly capable of better achievements. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as the other pupils and no aspects are denied them except swimming.

146. Lessons for pupils who are aged five to seven demonstrate the benefits of the accommodation and the good quality of the teaching. The Year 1 pupils have developed appropriate game skills, using beanbags and other small apparatus. They have satisfactory skills of throwing and catching and can use their knowledge to develop their own games, which they demonstrate to others. In Year 2, pupils are able to move at different heights and make a variety of wide or narrow shapes. They work together effectively, sharing mats safely and begin to build their movements into controlled sequences involving travelling, a roll and a balance.

147. In lessons in the juniors, pupils from Year 3 and Year 4 practise their ball and racket skills with varying success. Overall, their skills are at a very basic level and standards achieved are below those expected for their ages. In Year 6, pupils work to improve their gymnastic skills but the lack of gymnastic experience in the past has resulted in standards that are below those that could be expected for their ages.

148. The attitudes of pupils are good throughout the school. They clearly enjoy the subject and work hard to improve their performance, especially when the teaching is strong. All dress appropriately and they respond to the teachers' instructions quickly and safely. The quality of teaching and learning is good for five to seven year olds but is not always challenging for seven to eleven year olds. One lesson at the older age group was unsatisfactory. Teachers' subject expertise varies. For example, although most lessons begin with warm-up sessions there is not enough discussion about the effect of exercise on pupils' bodies. The teachers dress appropriately for lessons and they ensure that pupils change safely and sensibly. The

safety aspects of activities are clearly thought through by teachers and they supervise activities effectively. Where the teaching is good, lessons enable pupils to practise and improve their skills. The pace is good and the teacher works with individuals and groups, as well as coaching the whole class. For example, in one gymnastic lesson a new method of rolling was well demonstrated and pupils were given enough opportunity to practise this. Where the teaching is weaker, teachers' personal expertise is less evident and the activities do not provide enough challenge to consolidate or improve the skills pupils already have.

149. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is provided. A number of the new staff have ideas for activities which will enable pupils to extend and develop the skills they have learned in lessons. At present, there are clubs for football and netball and a variety of inter-school events among local small schools take place. The school also provides opportunities for older pupils to take part in residential visits, which enables them to take part in some outdoor and adventurous activities, such as canoeing and climbing, as well as providing a good opportunity for social development.

150. The present scheme of work is based on a nationally recommended scheme. This needs to be further adapted and better guidelines produced especially for those teachers who are less confident with the subject. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable coordinator has a clear action plan for the development of the subject. Resources have improved, as has the accommodation, which is now good, although the field needs to be improved now the old mobile classrooms have been removed. There is no effective monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. The pupils' levels of attainment are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve well in relation to their standards on entry. Older junior pupils are able to consider the nature of worship and discuss words such as "sacred", considering how the term applies to different religions in, for example, the treatment of holy texts. They are able to explore particular aspects of creation, developing ideas that they have established in previous years at the school. They approach difficult subjects with sensitivity; an example being their poems based on the suffering of Jesus. Younger junior pupils know about the different characteristics of Hindu Gods, for example, and understand some of the nuances of details in pictorial representations of the different Gods. Pupils in the infants are able to compare the Christian version of the Creation with Norse creation myths. They know about the lives of significant Christian figures, such as St David, and religious festivals like Divali and Christmas. They have knowledge of Old Testament stories, such as Noah's Ark and aspects of the life of Moses, as well as building an appropriate knowledge of the teachings of Jesus.

152. Standards have been at least maintained since the previous inspection. The school has introduced a nationally recognised scheme of work and is using aspects of this combined with parts of the locally agreed syllabus. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and has improved. In the previous inspection, teaching was described as always satisfactory with some good features; this time the teaching in almost half the lessons was good. Resources are now better and there is a reasonable collection of artefacts to support the curriculum particularly in the study of other faiths. The lack of monitoring of standards of learning and teaching noted in the previous report has not been addressed.

153. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and this means that they are confident and fluent when speaking to their pupils, often holding them entranced, as for example with a group of eight and nine year old pupils when hearing about the Hindu God, Ganasha. The good subject knowledge also means that teachers are able to respond to pupils' questions, for example, in response to a pupil's question, older pupils were taught how Sikhs choose their children's names. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good, particularly older pupils, and ask many pertinent questions. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to engage and extend pupils' interest by postponing answers because they become anxious about having sufficient time to complete the planned lesson, a consequence of the crowded afternoon timetable. Lessons are well planned and prepared, teachers taking trouble to ensure that the proper resources to assist learning are available. Pupils are set challenging tasks as for example when Year 4 pupils were asked to complete symbolic pictures of themselves showing their likes and interests. Teachers of younger pupils take particular care to create a sympathetic atmosphere in the classroom, where children have the confidence to discuss their feelings openly. Children in Year 2, as part of their work on holy books, were keen to show and discuss a book that had special significance for them.

154. The coordinator has had few opportunities to monitor teaching although she is able to monitor pupils' work by organising whole school displays. These have the added advantage of raising pupils' self esteem as well as emphasising the importance of the subject. The coordinator has taken care to resource the new scheme ensuring that teachers have suitable artefacts to support the curriculum. To help further their learning, pupils make visits to places of worship; Year 2 pupils visit the local church and Year 3 and 4 pupils go to a Hindu temple. The school has close links with the local church and the programme for religious education is enriched by regular visits from local clergy and by regular visits to the church for Christmas and harvest services. Parents of other faiths have spoken to pupils about religious festivals. The programme is further enhanced by the daily acts of collective worship, which are carefully planned around themes and involve stories from the Bible or with a moral dimension. The spiritual element is emphasised with a prayer or period for reflection.