

INSPECTION REPORT

HANBURY CE FIRST SCHOOL

Hanbury, Bromsgrove

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116816

Headteacher: Mr E G Charles

Reporting inspector: Hugh Protherough
8339

Dates of inspection: 3rd-5th February 2003

Inspection number: 247698

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Hanbury Bromsgrove
Postcode:	B60 4BS
Telephone number:	01527 821298
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Bottrill
Date of previous inspection:	20 th – 24 th October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8339	Hugh Protherough	Registered inspector	English Information and communications technology Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9510	Christine Murray-Watson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27541	John Collins	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32274	Jane Haggitt	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small, village first school has 98 pupils on roll comprising 48 boys and 50 girls, the overwhelming majority of whom are of white ethnic origin. The school serves the community of Hanbury, but in recent years has gained considerably in popularity with families living on the edge of nearby towns. Two thirds of the children attending the school currently live outside the catchment area. Class sizes are below average when compared with similar schools because this year the governors have used the budget to provide one class for each year group. Hardly any pupils are entitled to free school meals and at 15%, the number of children with special educational needs is below the national average. The pupils' attainment on entry covers the full range, but taken overall is generally average. This year's Reception class contains a majority of pupils whose birthdays fall in the spring and summer terms, and their slightly lower levels of attainment reflect this younger profile.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The staff team is well led by an established and caring headteacher. He has successfully created an ethos that values the contribution of all staff, and this is reflected in the good and developing management skills of an increasingly effective team. The quality of education provided is generally good. The pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2 standards are securely above average in key subjects such as reading and mathematics. Good progress is sustained in Year 3, but in Year 4 standards, although improving, are currently average. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of speaking and listening, reading, art and physical education are above average at the end of Years 2 and 4.
- The teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is good.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched by a good range of educational visits and visitors to the school.
- The teachers know the pupils well and take good care of them.
- The arrangements for the training and induction of new staff successfully encourage these teachers to accept wider responsibility and develop their subject management skills.

What could be improved

- The standard of the children's writing, especially in Year 4.
- The length of the school day in order that the teaching time meets the recommended minimum for each of key stages 1 and 2.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in October 1997, there has been satisfactory improvement. As a result of the small cohorts taking the national tests and school assessments each year, standards have fluctuated considerably, and in Year 4 are currently slightly lower than those described in the previous report in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, this group of pupils has generally made satisfactory progress since taking their national tests two years ago. The school has made a good response to the key issues in the previous report. The quality of the pupils' work in design and technology and music has improved and is now in line with the levels expected at the ages of seven and nine. The Foundation Stage curriculum meets the requirements and offers all pupils increased opportunities for purposeful play and child initiated learning in both indoor and outdoor environments. The assessment of science is on a firmer footing and the school pond has been made safe. The school is well placed to sustain continuing improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	D	B	B	C
writing	E	E	A	B
mathematics	D	A	C	D

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

The variance in the children's performance suggested in the chart above is a result of the dramatic swings associated with the data drawn from small cohorts of less than twenty pupils. The current Reception class contains a preponderance of younger children and their attainment on entry was slightly lower than usual. Nevertheless, they are making good progress. The vast majority are on course to attain the expected targets in all the areas of learning.

The results of the Year 2 tests in 2002 overall were above the national average. Almost every child reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics and a third exceeded this in each subject. Closer analysis of the results of the past three years shows that by the age of seven the pupils are, on average, about a term ahead in reading and mathematics, and achieving results in line with those of similar schools. Attainment in writing has been more varied and is in line with the national picture, but the girls have tended to do better than the boys. The inspection findings confirm that in most respects both boys and girls are achieving well. Standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, art and physical education continue to be above average. The standard of writing is average and shows signs of further recent development since the staff training provided last year. Even so, further improvement is required, especially in encouraging the pupils to recognise that the development of correct letter formation and a fluent joined style of handwriting needs to be applied to all written tasks.

The school makes effective use of the voluntary tests for Years 3 and 4. The results of the past two years show that the pupils have generally made steady progress in reading, writing and mathematics from the point at which they took their Year 2 tests. The inspection findings confirm that the current Year 4 is achieving satisfactorily and making steady progress, but that results are slightly lower because there is a small, but significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards overall are broadly average in reading, mathematics and science. However, standards in writing, although improving from the very low base of 2001 continue to be below average. The school makes effective use of test and assessment data to set realistic targets for attainment for individual pupils within each year group. Trends in progress are charted carefully and in most cases good progress sustained.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The vast majority of the pupils enjoy their time at school and find learning enjoyable.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Almost all of the children are polite and considerate towards each other, their teachers and visitors to the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are positive and the children encouraged to take responsibility from an early age.
Attendance	Good and above average.

A tiny minority of pupils in Year 4 finds it difficult to concentrate and occasionally behaves in ways that interfere with teaching and learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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

Taken overall, the school continues to provide a good quality of education. Since the last inspection, the teaching in the Reception class has improved considerably and is now good. The teacher successfully provides the full breadth of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The children now have more opportunities to make independent choices, to engage in creative and imaginative activities such as role-play and to benefit from the excellent first hand investigative experiences offered by the Forest School Project. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy so that the children are currently getting a taste of the sorts of lessons they will experience in Year 1 next year.

Throughout the school, the classrooms are tidy, attractively displayed and organised in ways that encourage the children to accept responsibility for books and equipment. The teachers have established clear routines and working practices and this has a positive effect on the children's attitudes and commitment to learning. The teachers do their best to set work that matches the range of abilities in each class and the effective deployment of the teaching assistants and student teachers ensures that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are helped to make mostly good progress in their studies. The teaching of numeracy is good, particularly in the effective way that the teachers encourage the skills of mental mathematics. The development of the children's speaking and listening and the teaching of reading are also strong features of the school's provision. Recent staff training has extended the range of the children's writing, but the teachers need to ensure greater consistency in their expectation of the quality of presentation and the quantity of writing produced as the pupils move through the school.

Although there is good provision in Year 3, the teaching in Year 4 is currently satisfactory. This is because the teacher is getting to grips with an unfamiliar age group. He is learning fast and his expectations of the children are increasing, especially in those subjects such as information and communications technology where his subject knowledge is good. As a result, the rate of the pupils' learning is starting to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers a broad, balanced curriculum enhanced by strong community links, a good range of interesting educational visits and visitors to school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are identified at an early age and benefit from the carefully targeted support provided.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school continues to make good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and has improved cultural provision to a similar level.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff take good care of the children, know their pupils well and use this information effectively to ensure their all round development.

The school day is far too short, especially in Key Stage 2 and this limits the time available to improve still further the pupils' work in the non-core subjects such as music, physical education, history and geography.

Most parents feel that the school works closely with them, but a significant number disagree. There is strong evidence that the vast majority of families work hard in supporting the educational partnership by reading with their children and helping them with homework tasks. However, the quality of the guidance provided by the school for these activities could be improved to encourage an even more productive partnership.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher successfully leads a staff team that is increasingly effective in its management of the school. They willingly share their knowledge and expertise about teaching and learning in their pursuit of higher standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are developing a good oversight of the work of the school and carry out their duties conscientiously.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's self-evaluation is generally good because it is firmly focussed on what happens in the classrooms and the subsequent effect upon the pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes full use of its budget and ensures good levels of educational resources for the pupils.

The school makes very good use of its compact site and has successfully developed the school house to provide additional facilities, such as a small computer suite and library. Overall, the accommodation is adequate; for although staffing levels are good, the space for the new fifth class is tight. The headteacher, staff and governing body make full and effective use of their delegated budget and have ensured that the school is well resourced for the National Curriculum. A sound start has been made in introducing the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children all enjoy coming to school and make good progress in their work. • The teaching is lively and makes learning fun. • The teachers expect the children to work hard and do their best • The school's Christian values are helping the children to become mature and responsible. • The children behave well and are polite. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider range of extra-curricular activities. • More information about how their children are getting on. • Closer links with the school and improved guidance on how to help with learning at home. • The leadership and management of the school.

The inspectors agree with the many positive views expressed by the majority of parents, but note the reservations of a significant minority. However, the inspectors feel that the school is well led and managed and that for a school of this size the range of extra-curricular activities is good. There is plentiful information available from the school about its curriculum and the progress of individual pupils. However, the quality of guidance about how the parents can assist their children's learning at home varies from class to class and could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Any statistical analysis of the school's results must be treated with caution as the number of pupils taking the tests is almost always less than twenty and the results of just one or two pupils can lead to considerable swings in the performance table. In last year's national tests, for example, the fact that one pupil just missed reaching the expected level in mathematics lowered the cohort grade from B to C against national comparisons and C to D against similar schools.
2. The children enter the school in the September of the year they become five. The teachers currently make effective use of both the local authority baseline assessment and the PIPS tests. The data from these assessments show that the pupils' levels of attainment cover the full range and taken overall are generally broadly average. For instance, last year's profile for the current Year 1 contained a good proportion of higher attaining pupils, whereas the current Reception class contains far younger pupils whose attainment is currently not so advanced. The teaching has improved and takes full account of the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum so that the children make good progress. The vast majority of the present intake is on track to meet the targets for five-year-olds in all the areas of learning.
3. Apart from the results of 2000 when there was a significant dip following a series of teacher changes in the Year 2 class, the overall trend in the results has been one of improvement. Overall, the results of the Year 2 tests in 2002 were above the national average. Almost every child reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics and a third exceeded this in each subject. Closer analysis of the results of the past three years confirms this positive picture and shows that on average by the age of seven the pupils are about a term ahead in reading and mathematics, and are achieving results in line with those of similar schools. Their attainment in writing has been more varied, but overall it is in line with the national picture. In reading and mathematics there is little difference in the performance of the boys and girls, but on average by the end of Year 2 the girls produced writing that was about a term in advance of that of the boys. This was an important focus for the inspection team. However, the inspection findings confirm that in most respects both boys and girls are achieving well. Standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, art and physical education continue to be above average. There is considerable strength in the pupils' ability to calculate mentally and in their enthusiasm for books and literature. The standard of writing is average and shows signs of further recent improvement since the staff training provided last year. Even so, further improvement is required, especially in encouraging the pupils to recognise that correct letter formation and a fluent joined style of handwriting need to be applied to all written tasks.
4. In science, information and communication technology, geography and history the pupils are working securely within the levels expected of seven-year-olds. The same is true of their work in music and design and technology where there has been good improvement since the last inspection.
5. In Years 3 and 4 the school makes effective use of the national voluntary tests. The results of the past two years show that the pupils have generally made steady progress in reading, writing and mathematics from the point at which they took their Year 2 tests. The inspection findings confirm that the current Year 4 is achieving satisfactorily and making steady progress, but the results are slightly lower because there is a small, significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, standards are broadly average in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing have improved from the very low base of 2001, but nevertheless remain below average. The analysis of the pupils' written work shows that a significant minority of pupils do not always take sufficient pride in their work. The teacher marks assiduously and his remarks are unfailingly positive and encouraging. His commentary correctly emphasises punctuation and spelling, but gives too little attention to other fundamental issues relating to letter formation and the layout of the work. In Year 3 the children's work shows a clear progression through the range and styles of writing encouraged by the National Literacy Strategy, but the range of work in Year 4 is narrower. **This is a key issue for action.**

6. The unsatisfactory writing skills in Year 4 also have a negative effect on the pupils' abilities to record their work in other subjects. Despite this weakness, however, it is clear from analysing books and folders and speaking with the children about their work that in science, information and communications technology, geography and history their skills knowledge and understanding are generally in line with the levels expected of nine-year-olds. Although the pupils have a good body of scientific knowledge, standards would be improved by greater opportunities for investigative and inferential activity. There has been improvement in music and design technology similar to that described for Years 1 and 2, and the quality of work in art and physical education is above average. The pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the standards set out in the most recently available agreed syllabus.
7. The school makes effective use of test and assessment data to set realistic targets for attainment for individual pupils within each year group. An analysis of this information shows that the teachers know the pupils' well and that by providing every child with personalised target cards are helping them to learn what it is that they have to do to improve. The teachers and pupils refer to these cards regularly and this continual reinforcement makes a strong contribution to ensuring that pupils of all abilities are encouraged to achieve as well as possible.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils enjoy coming to school and display considerable enthusiasm for many of the lessons and activities they undertake. The levels of attendance are higher than those found in primary schools nationally and the school reports no unauthorised absence. The parents agree that their children like coming to school and there is a good take up of extra curricular activities. An example of the enthusiastic way in which the pupils throw themselves into their work was seen during a dance and drama lesson. Whilst acting out the role of grizzly bears attacking the king's castle, the commitment and ferocity displayed was truly hair raising! On a more serious note, similar levels of concentration and application were seen whilst the pupils worked on more formal areas of the curriculum, such as science and mathematics. The only instances where this level of application is sometimes lacking occur amongst a few of the oldest pupils who find it difficult to stay on task, particularly if the pace of the lesson is slow.
9. Throughout the school the pupils behave well. They are polite and friendly towards each other and towards the adults in the school. They take care of the school environment and handle books and materials with care. Children of all ages are encouraged to assume responsibility for a range of routine tasks, such as delivering messages and taking the class registers to the central holding point. The older pupils are also encouraged to take an active part in the support and care of the youngest. As a result, the relationships across the school are good, with a strong sense of everyone being part of a caring, family community. The relatively small class sizes are a factor in this, enabling everyone to be well known and recognised within the school. The respect shown by the staff for each child as an individual has a positive influence on the pupils, who are learning to be similarly respectful of others' feelings and beliefs.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. The good teaching described in the previous report has been sustained, but its profile across the school has altered. Taken overall, around eight out of ten lessons were of either good or better quality and almost a quarter were either very good or excellent. Almost all the very good and excellent teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In Year 3 the teaching was never less than good and in Year 4 it was predominantly satisfactory.
11. Since the last inspection, the teaching in the Reception class has improved considerably and is now good with some very good features. The teacher provides successfully for the full breadth of the Foundation Stage curriculum, including improved opportunities for the children to make independent choices and to engage in creative and imaginative activities such as role-play. The thorough induction programme helps the teacher to gain swiftly a good knowledge of the children in her class. Relationships are extremely positive and the well-organised classroom with a clearly defined framework of rules and teacher-expectations helps the children to settle-in quickly. For instance, simple ideas such as the small bell that children ring in order that they might address their classmates work extremely effectively. Most children now stop instinctively at the sound of the bell and listen attentively to what is said before offering their

own views. The weekly journey to a local wood as part of the forest school project provides a wealth of valuable first hand experiences for the children that stimulate their appetite for learning. On these occasions, the teacher's careful planning ensures that every second spent is put to good use as her thoughtful questioning draws attention to the weather and the appearance of the landscape, and skilfully encourages the children's own spoken responses. As a result, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and in particular of their own immediate locality, develops well. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy so that the children are currently getting a taste of the sorts of lessons they will experience in Year 1 next year. Moreover, these skills are also developed most effectively within the wider context of other learning. For instance, when studying a giant snail that had been brought into school, the children were encouraged to compare its size with that of other animals and to measure the diameter of its shell. Later on they were helped to research for more information in books and on the internet.

12. The teaching in Years 1 to 3 continues to be consistently good and is sometimes very good. The classrooms are tidy, attractively displayed and organised in ways that encourage the children to accept responsibility for books and equipment. The teachers have established clear routines and working practices and this has a positive effect on the children's attitudes and commitment to learning. The teachers know the children well and do their best to set work that matches the range of abilities in each class. For example, in the most successful literacy lessons in Years 1 and 2 the teachers vary the level of challenge for the children. The higher attainers are required to provide almost all the writing for their "Wanted!" posters for Mr. Wolf, but the pupils who are less confident are given more support with the text.
13. The effective deployment of the teaching assistants and student teachers also helps to ensure that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make mostly good progress in their studies. These additional adults work regularly with small groups and individuals, including the few pupils with special educational needs, in order that the actions prescribed in individual education plans can be tried and progress assessed. They also support extension and catch-up programmes such as Springboard mathematics to help improve results in the national tests. The conscientious work of these staff makes a significant contribution to the good quality of the teaching and learning at the school.
14. The teachers' lesson planning continues to identify what it is that the children are expected to learn and these objectives are restated regularly during lessons to reinforce the learning. The teaching of numeracy is good with particular strength in the way that the teachers encourage the skills of mental mathematics. The development of the children's speaking and listening and the teaching of reading are also strong features of the school's provision. Recent staff training has extended the range of the children's writing, but there now needs to be greater consistency in the teachers' expectation in regard to the quality and quantity of the writing produced as the pupils move through the school. For instance, the skills learnt in the handwriting and spelling lessons are not always applied in the pupils' written work. Furthermore, the older pupils do not have enough opportunity to write at length or sufficient guidance to help them re-structure their work. **This is a key issue for action.**
15. At the time of the last inspection, the teaching in Key Stage 2 was good. On this occasion it is satisfactory. The Year 3 class is well taught by two experienced teachers and the good pace of learning observed in Year 2 is being sustained. However, in Year 4 the pace slackens. The analysis of the children's books and folders shows that earlier in the year progress was been erratic, especially amongst some of the brighter pupils. This is undoubtedly because the teacher is getting to grips with an unfamiliar age group. He is learning fast and his expectations of the children are increasing, especially in those subjects such as information and communications technology where his subject knowledge is good. He is invariably positive in his relationships with the pupils, and prepares thoroughly a wide variety of interesting materials for the lessons. However, this is not always sufficiently well matched to the wide range of abilities within the current Year 4 and sometimes leads to situations where the focus for learning loses clarity. This happened, for instance, in a religious education lesson where the range of concepts covered was too great and too complex for the age and maturity of the children. On occasions like this, a small minority of the pupils occasionally finds it hard to concentrate and behaves inappropriately by either chattering or calling out. Although it is clear that the teacher has established an agreed code of classroom behaviour and interruptions are few, these pupils are not always dealt with in a sufficiently

robust fashion that would eliminate repetition. However, the signs are that progress is picking up. The vast majority of the children are attentive and responsive to their teacher and as his knowledge and expectations increase so does their learning.

16. All the teachers set homework on a regular basis and most families are keen to support this, although no one at the pre-inspection parents' meeting wanted more. The vast majority of the homework is relevant and useful, but the quality of the guidance provided for the parents varies from class to class and could sometimes be improved. **This is an additional issue that the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan.**

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

17. There has been a good improvement in the quality of the school's curriculum since the previous inspection; it is now broad, balanced and meets the statutory requirements. The provision in music, design and technology and the outdoor play facilities for the children in the Foundation Stage are all much better than before. In Years 1 – 4 the national guidance has been adopted in all subjects. There are also policies and schemes of work for all subjects and consistent formats for planning the curriculum at all levels. The school has successfully introduced the national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The majority of parents expressed their satisfaction with the curriculum provided by the school. However, the length of the school day for both key stages is well below the recommended minimum and limits the time available for the teaching of the non-core subjects of the National Curriculum. **This is a key issue for action.**
18. The provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good throughout the school. These children have full access to the curriculum and the coordinator and the staff have developed good systems to monitor and support the good progress they make. Early identification of the needs of SEN pupils enables support to be quickly given. The well-trained support staff are used effectively across the school. Their support is consistently good and by asking further questions and giving useful clues they support these pupils well. The class teachers always include SEN pupils fully in their questioning and discussions. The SEN pupils receive full access to the extra-curricular clubs and activities and the school's provision for personal development.
19. A strong emphasis on equal opportunities is evident in many aspects of the school's provision, and a firm commitment to meeting the wide-ranging needs of different groups of pupils. The needs of the more able pupils are addressed through differently planned activities in literacy and numeracy, and the school is aware of the need to extend this to other areas of the curriculum. The aspects of the curriculum that cover personal, social and health education are good and have been developed well since the previous inspection. Emphasis is given to promoting the pupils' self-esteem through praise assemblies, merit systems and 'Circle Time'. The work of the pupils is also celebrated in displays around the school. The provision for drugs and sex education is appropriate and is usually integrated within work in other subjects. Health education is also promoted through topics on growth and diet in science, and the pupils' awareness of the importance of exercise is promoted in physical education lessons.
20. Although some parents expressed concern at the provision of extra-curricular clubs and activities, the inspection evidence does not support this. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good and is, indeed, better than that usually found in similar, small village schools. For instance, a good range of musical and sporting clubs is held over the school year. The staff and a few parents give generously of their time, both at lunch times and in after school for clubs, in order to extend the experiences of a considerable number of pupils of all ages. An after-school care club is also well supported.
21. The pupils' learning experiences are also extended through the good range of visits and visitors to school. There are strong links with the church and the vicar is a regular visitor. The school regularly takes part in village activities, such as the Hanbury Fete, and the pupils grow their own produce for the Harvest Festival. Visits by local farmers, artists and representatives of various local services help to develop the pupils' sense of belonging to a community. Visits further afield, for instance to a Sikh temple and a

synagogue, have also raised the pupils' awareness of the world outside. This is further developed through work in geography, for example, in the journeys of 'Barnaby Bear' in both key stages.

22. The school has good links with its partner institutions. Local playgroups visit the school and the Foundation Stage teacher makes home visits to smooth the path of new children starting school. Similar good relationships exist with other local primary and middle schools. Joint ventures have recently included developing the skills of the pupils in design and technology.
23. Overall the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is good. The great majority of parents feel that the school helps their children to become more mature and responsible.
24. The themes of stories in assemblies are used well to develop the pupils' awareness of the values that influence their own behaviour. For example, the theme during the week of the inspection was "being brave and not being afraid". Effective use was made of stories from the Bible to expand these ideas and helped the pupils to explore effectively the values that are part of their own daily life. All the teachers employ a style of teaching that values the ideas and opinions of the pupils and helps them to develop a respect for themselves and others. The Year 1 pupils, for example, develop a sense of their own worth and that of others through their weekly 'Special Person Garden'. Each week they record their positive thoughts about one special person on a tree display in the classroom. The visual and aesthetic value of art is celebrated in the colourful and attractive displays around the school.
25. The moral development of the pupils continues to be good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. All adults in the school provide good role models of behaviour, which develop well the pupils' sense of responsibility. Opportunities are taken in assemblies to raise the pupils' awareness of others less fortunate than themselves, and are further developed through their involvement with the work of local and national charities. The provision for their social development is also good. Assemblies are used to celebrate the achievements of the pupils and develop their sense of belonging to the school. These values are also celebrated in displays of the children's work around the school. The school also has strong links with the local community. All classes have lists of the behaviour expectations for playground, class and school. The good behaviour of the overwhelming majority of the pupils in classes and around the school testifies to their effectiveness and the ability of most pupils to distinguish between right and wrong.
26. The school's provision for the cultural development of its pupils has improved since the last inspection. Better resources in the library, for example, have been used to extend the pupils' awareness of the values and beliefs of different faiths. This work is extended through studies in religious education, where the pupils examine the beliefs of Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. Visits to a temple and a synagogue and a visitor who explained the Festival of Diwali have all enhanced the pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of modern society. Other work in history, geography, art and music gives the pupils experience of the different values of other cultures. The school is also seeking to establish links with a multi-cultural school in Redditch, which will further extend its provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school makes good arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The parents feel that this is a strong feature of the school and that their children are secure and well cared for. The arrangements for child protection are also in place, with clear procedures for reporting any concerns to the child protection officer in the school. The relevant staff would benefit from updating their training in this area, following the recent issue of new LEA guidelines.
28. One of the major strengths of the school is the rapidity with which the teachers get to know their pupils. This process commences at an early stage because the Reception teacher visits the home of every new pupil in the autumn prior to them starting school. This provides the parents and teachers with a valuable opportunity to exchange important information and for the child to meet the teacher in a context other than the classroom.

29. Once admitted, the progress of individual pupils is tracked carefully throughout their time at the school, in terms of both their social and academic development. The teachers make effective use of a variety of tests and assessments that enable them to check the pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and the results are then used to set both individual and cohort targets for the future. One important development has been the way that the teachers' assessments have been shared with the pupils and parents. Each child in the school has a small set of cards linked by a treasury tag that tells them what they need to do to improve their work. Conversations between inspectors and the pupils showed that the pupils have a good awareness of their targets and most children use these sensibly to help them improve. The teachers also build up a good informal knowledge of their pupils as they work with them from day to day. This information is put to good use when the teachers identify specific individuals and groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs, for targeted support. The teachers' awareness of the wider lives of the pupils is reflected in the way that personal achievement in clubs outside school is recognised and celebrated in school assemblies. This was seen, for instance, when one pupil brought news of his success in a Tai kwendo competition.
30. The arrangements for monitoring attendance and behaviour are good. Attendance levels are good, but the educational welfare officer visits regularly and supports the school in nipping in the bud any potential problems such as the emergence of any patterns of lateness. In the rare event of either poor or oppressive behaviour, there are well-defined systems that ensure swift contact with the home and thorough follow-up to ensure that there is no repetition.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

31. The great majority of parents are very positive about the school and appreciative of the provision being made for their children. In particular, they feel that their children all enjoy coming to school and make good progress in their work and that the teaching is lively and makes learning fun. They are also aware that the teachers expect their children to work hard and to do their best. They appreciate that the school's Christian values are helping their children to become mature, responsible, well behaved and polite. However, a few parents have some concerns. They would like to see a wider range of extra curricular activities and more information on how their children are getting on. They would also like to see closer links between parents and the school and improved guidance on how to support their children's learning at home. This minority also has reservations about the school's leadership and management. The inspection evidence supports the many positive views expressed, but includes little to substantiate the reservations. The inspectors find that the school is well led and managed and that for a school of this size, the range of extra curricular activities is good. Plentiful information may be obtained from the school about the curriculum and the progress individual pupils. However, the quality of guidance about how the parents can assist their children's learning at home varies from class to class and could be improved.
32. The school works hard to establish effective links with the parents and in most cases is successful. In response to requests from some parents, it has recently established a Parents' Forum to discuss different issues and there are regular opportunities for parents to meet with the class teachers, either formally or informally. There are increasingly strong links with the church and an independent after school care club has been set up in direct response to the wishes of the parents. Many parents come in to school to help with different activities and accompany classes on school trips. They also help to provide after school activities. The school makes good use of homework, which is generally well supported by the parents and has a positive influence on the standards being achieved. There is an active "Friends Association" which raises funds to provide extra equipment for the school and to subsidise some of the out-of-school trips. However, despite this positive picture, it is evident that a few parents still feel strongly that their voice is not being heard.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

33. The long serving and established headteacher has successfully led the school through a period of considerable staff change. The school has a strong ethos of teamwork, reflected in the recent award of Investors in People status, and as a result the new teachers have settled in quickly and are already assuming a significant role in the management of the school. The new staff team works together with increasing effectiveness at every level because the school policies are clear and the day-to-day

procedures and expectations are set out clearly in the helpful staff handbook. The teachers share their subject knowledge and expertise willingly as they plan together. The teaching assistants know what is expected of them and make a significant contribution not only in the support of the pupils with special educational needs but also by leading activities such as Springboard mathematics. The school secretary does a good job in ensuring the day-to-day life of the school runs smoothly so that the headteacher can manage successfully his hefty teaching commitment. All members of staff have regular meetings with the headteacher to discuss their work, and to set and review their performance targets.

34. Each teacher carries a considerable load of subject management responsibility. There is strength in subjects such as mathematics, science and information and communications technology where the teachers responsible are experienced, knowledgeable and have developed a good oversight of their subjects. The new English co-ordinator took up her role in September following two years where the teachers had shared responsibility. She is well qualified, knows her subject well and has made a good start to her work, not least in the example of her own teaching. She has a good appreciation and over view of the children's work in Years 1 and 2, but now needs to spend more time analysing the work in Years 3 and 4 in order to improve the quality of the children's writing.
35. Although the governing body has also recently seen its fair share of changes of personnel, it is apparent that the governors have a good oversight of the work of the school. Many of them visit the school to observe lessons and speak with staff about their work, especially in relation to literacy and special educational needs. They speak informatively about the school and show a good understanding of the priorities of their school improvement plan and the reasons why these are important. For instance, following a recent dip in the Year 2 mathematics tests, there has been an analysis of the pupils' work to see what needs to be improved. The school improvement plan is a useful document because it sets a clear, manageable agenda for action with details of who does what and the costs involved. The governors contribute effectively both to its construction and evaluation through their dialogue with the headteacher at their sub-committees and at meetings of the full governing body.
36. The headteacher, staff and governors make full and effective use of their budget. The development of the school house has added considerably to the quality of accommodation and the decision to create five classes has eliminated the need for mixed age teaching. The signs are that pupil numbers are still rising and that a five class structure will continue to be affordable next year. However, space is tight, especially for the current Year 3 children. Therefore, careful consideration will need to be given to the accommodation of next year's larger cohort. The school playground is far too small for numbers currently on roll, but careful supervision, by the teachers and the school meals staff and the good behaviour of the children ensures their safety. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained by a dedicated team who take pride in their work for their local school.
37. The levels of educational resources are good. There has been significant recent investment in computer provision and this is leading to the wider use of new technologies across the National Curriculum. The supply of books is good and although some outdated early reading materials remain in circulation, a sound start has been made in introducing more up-to-date published schemes. The school has satisfactory systems to ensure that supplies and equipment are purchased at competitive prices, and has made a sound start to the introduction of the principles of best value.
38. The staff team covers a wide range of age, expertise and experience. The staffing levels are good and the qualifications include a suitable balance to ensure support is available for teachers in all the subjects of the National Curriculum. The recent induction programme for two newly qualified teachers has been extremely successful, reflecting the strong partnership with the local university college. The school continues to offer placements to trainee teachers and provides good support in preparing these students for their chosen profession.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39. In order to raise standards and improve further the work of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should now;

- (1) Extend their review of the teaching of writing so that pupils have the necessary skills to write fluently and at greater length, by the time they leave the school.
- (2) Ensure that the length of the school day meets the minimum recommended by the Department for Education and Skills. They are as follows:
Key Stage 1: 21.0 hours, excluding registration, breaks and worship;
Key Stage 2 : 23.5 hours, excluding registration, breaks and worship.

Paragraphs 5, 14, 17, 72,73

In addition the headteacher, staff and governors might consider ways in which to improve still further the good educational partnership between home and school by:

- Ensuring that there is always precise guidance for homework tasks;
- Adding to the helpful introductory notes in the home/school reading diary by offering specific feedback and guidance for individual pupils and by showing how their parents might help.

Paragraphs 16, 70

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	6	20	5	0	0	0
Percentage	6	18	61	15	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YRec – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	98
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YRec – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	15

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4%
National comparative data	5.2%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0%
National comparative data	0.2%

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	7	8	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	7
	Girls	8	8	7
	Total	15	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (95)	93 (86)	93 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (95)	93 (95)	100 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British		0	0
White – Irish		0	0
White – any other White background		0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean		0	0
Mixed – White and Black African		0	0
Mixed – White and Asian		0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background		0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian		0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani		0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi		0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background		0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean		0	0
Black or Black British – African		0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background		0	0
Chinese		0	0
Any other ethnic group		0	0
No ethnic group recorded		0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YRec – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	19.6

Education support staff: YRec – Y4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	221,706
Total expenditure	215,604
Expenditure per pupil	2,423
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,075
Balance carried forward to next year	10,177

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	98
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	38	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	31	4	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	31	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	46	13	4	2
The teaching is good.	63	33	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	54	10	10	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	23	10	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	48	4	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	31	42	10	15	2
The school is well led and managed.	54	27	4	13	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	35	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	27	33	21	4

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

40. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 children in the Foundation Stage, most of whom have their fifth birthday in the spring and summer terms of 2003. The children are admitted to the school in the autumn term, starting part time and soon moving to full time attendance. They are taught by an experienced teacher and a part time classroom assistant.
41. There is a well thought out induction programme that helps the children prepare for full-time school. Early in the summer term, the children have the opportunity to attend several 'story club' sessions of about 20-30 minutes when the Reception teacher shares stories and books. The parents are welcome either to support their children at these sessions or to have coffee together in the staffroom. Other meetings are held at which the headteacher and school administrator speak to parents about the school procedures. In early September, the teacher and classroom assistant visit the homes to find out more about each child and to develop relationships further.
42. The children are assessed soon after they come into the school. The school uses the local authority baseline and the PIPS assessment. This year, the baseline results were below expectations reflecting the very young composition of the class. However, taken overall, the children's attainment on entry is generally average.
43. The quality of the teaching in the reception class is good with some very good teaching in communication language and literacy, knowledge and understanding and mathematics. The strengths of the teaching lie in the good knowledge the teacher has of each individual child, the safe and secure environment she creates and the enthusiasm she has for teaching and learning across all areas. Her detailed knowledge of each individual and the careful use of this information when planning lessons accelerate the pupils' progress. The teaching methods are varied thoughtfully so that there are opportunities for the children to work as a class, a group or individually at different times of each day. The more formal lessons are well structured. They begin promptly and the instructions are clear so that the children are certain of what is expected of them. The teacher allows time for the children to contribute their own ideas, experiences and thoughts to the lessons, and as a result they pay good attention and are well motivated.
44. A further strength lies in the Forest Schools initiative that has greatly enhanced the opportunities for challenging learning for all these children. Each week the pupils walk to a nearby wood to observe the steady change and cycle of the natural world. The Reception teacher has worked alongside the County Adviser for Forest Schools to develop her expertise, which she now shares with the classroom assistant and volunteer parents. This expertise is used well to support and extend the children's play in exploration and discovery, thereby developing their independence and self-esteem. The week before the inspection the children had made homes for animals out of a variety of natural materials. Following a week of stormy weather, they returned to find considerable damage to their constructions. This led them to recognise the skill of birds and animals in building longer lasting shelters and prompted thoughtful consideration of how to improve their own work. In doing so, they tried to fix and place objects more securely, by threading and wedging wood, grasses and moss to make their weaving more robust.

Personal, social and emotional development.

45. Most children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter statutory education. Their progress through the Foundation Stage is good because the adults have established constructive relationships with them and find numerous opportunities to give them positive encouragement. This helps all the children, including those with special educational needs, to feel good and to regard school as an enjoyable and interesting place to be. The children thrive on the encouragement they are given and this helps them to be adventurous and explore within the classroom environment. They are motivated and interested in learning. The teacher plans a wide range of activities so that the children experience learning in different styles and environments. This helps the children to learn how to cooperate as a member of a

group, to take turns in pairs and to develop perseverance when they are working on their own. They are given appropriate praise and feedback on how to improve.

46. The teacher clearly explains the activities and describes what they might learn from them. She makes clear the focus of the learning by writing key words, new vocabulary and other prompts to support the children. A further good feature of the teaching is the successful way that the teacher uses hand puppets to engage the children's interest and to extend their speaking and listening. The children know these characters well and readily demonstrate their own knowledge and understanding when helping the puppets to learn!

Communication, language and literacy

47. All of the children make good progress in this area of learning, and most are likely to attain the expected early learning goals by the end of their time in the reception class. The teaching is good because the adults make use of a wide variety of techniques to engage the children's interest and advance their learning. The teacher provides a clear and well-articulated model of speech and constantly re phrases sentences and questions in different ways to ensure that all children have a good understanding of whatever is being discussed. When dealing with shy or lower attaining pupils, she sensitively puts their single one-word answers into simple sentences to provide a model of a fuller response. The teacher also uses appropriate strategies to help the children to listen. For example, she sometimes use a very quiet voice to improve children's listening skills, or requests individual children to make eye contact either with her or with the puppet to ensure they are concentrating on what is being said. The children respond to her strategies very well.
48. The classroom is well equipped with accessible resources to support work in this area. There is an attractive 'Bears' House' in the role play area, a quiet book corner and a writing area with a good variety of pens, pencils and other markers where the children can practice mark making and writing.
49. All of the children are aware that print carries meaning. They follow the text from left to right, and attempt to make use of their developing knowledge of the sounds of letters to read new words. There is a fair spread of ability in the class, with the most able pupils being able to read some words in books of their own choice. The lower attainers enjoy following stories, but are not yet confident enough to attempt simple words like "I" or "and" in books outside of the school's chosen reading scheme. The teaching of phonics linked in with the shared reading and the stories read to the children clearly support the good progress being made. All of the children enjoy the letter of the week activity. For instance, everyone brought in an object from home that began with "m." The children spoke animatedly about these items and could distinguish, with prompting from the teacher that Mickey, Minnie and Marmite should all begin with a capital letter.
50. The teacher's good relationships with the children help them to enjoy drawing and writing. There are word banks readily available on each table to support letter recognition and spelling. Most children write their own first name unaided. Their handwriting is reasonably well formed and the teaching helps the children to learn the correct orientation of letters. An analysis of the children's work showed that their writing has covered a variety of purposes such as news accounts, making lists, and simple stories. During the autumn term, much of the writing consisted of copying under an adult hand, but there is evidence of many children attempting to compose their own sentences. Some attempts at spelling also show good application of the pupils' knowledge of the sounds of letters; 'sum' [some] 'spas buc' [space book].
51. The marking of the work is encouraging and praises effort, but there is little annotation to indicate either the next steps in learning or the amount of support given by adults. Many worksheets are used in all of the areas of learning. Some of these support the learning by giving practice in handwriting, phonic work and number work and many are well coloured in. However, more detailed annotation would improve still further the evidence for the assessment record of individual pupils.

Mathematical development

52. The children's mathematical development is in line with the national expectations. They show great enthusiasm for numbers, and the teacher uses many opportunities throughout the day to reinforce their counting skills. The class is making good progress and most children are likely to attain the expected early learning goals by the end of their time in the reception class.
53. All of the children can identify numerals 1-6, and many are beginning to count above 10. In some lessons, the class chanted together as far as thirty. The majority of the children can match objects on a one to one basis up to about six, whilst the higher attaining pupils are becoming increasingly confident up to ten. Two of these children began to recognise that the total does not change when a group of objects is divided and were soon counting back confidently and 'taking away' from ten. All the children are becoming familiar with concepts such as "more" and "less" and have been introduced to the term 'take away'. Many children use the terms "bigger," "smaller," "heavier," and "lighter," with increasing confidence both within and outside the mathematics lessons.
54. The teaching is good and the adults make effective use of a range of strategies such as stories, songs and games to help the children acquire mathematical skills. The classroom is well equipped with mathematical puzzles, games and activities to which the children have free access. The opportunities provided by the Forest Schools experience also enrich the mathematics curriculum and the children's subsequent learning. They offer children the scope to play counting games such as "1,2,3 where are you?" They use mathematical vocabulary in their collecting activities, 'heavier,' 'lighter,' 'more,' and 'less'. The adults also took opportunities to reinforce positional language by requesting that the children 'walk behind the benches,' 'step over,' 'sit next to your friend' and 'run through the trees'

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

55. The teaching of this area of learning is good. It provides a fitting range of opportunities for children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to help them make sense of their world. The children's attainment is within expected levels and they make steady gains in scientific understanding during their time in the reception class. The vast majority are likely to attain the expected early learning goals at the end of their time in the reception class.
56. The use of a local wood as a "forest school" has provided an extremely effective additional dimension to the Foundation Stage curriculum, not least because it has helped the children to understand more about their rural environment. The weekly visits have extended their knowledge of living things and habitats, and enhanced their understanding of similarities, differences, patterns and changes in the environment and weather. The children have also improved their skills of construction and creation by selecting appropriate resources and adapting their work as necessary.
57. All children show enthusiasm and curiosity in the environment offered by their "forest school". They make first hand observations of changes in weather, landscape and environment. They become immersed in experiences that increase their awareness through use of the senses and provide many opportunities for talk and commentary. "That wind sounds strong!" "I can hear the bells. Someone must be getting married;" "Look! The sky is blue!" "Look! That cloud's gone over there...it might go over the sun!"
58. During the inspection, the children investigated objects found in the fields and forest using touch, sight and smell and made small collections to share and discuss. The teacher's planning gave extended opportunities for them to explore and practice new skills. Following on from a story, read to them as they sat and drank hot chocolate in a clearing, the children constructed a collective weaving from natural materials such as grasses, twigs mud and moss. They persevered when selecting, collecting and building the weaving by threading, twisting, winding and securing objects, adapting them where necessary.
59. In this setting, the very good teaching arouses the interest of the children in the natural world. A particular strength is that it encourages the children to be inquisitive but at the same time emphasising the need to respect living, such as snails, spiders and worms. The very careful handling of the giant African land snail by the teacher helped the children to understand that it needed care and special conditions to

keep it healthy and alive. The teacher also took the opportunity to reinforce the children's own need to keep healthy and safe by talking about the germs on the shell, hence her use of waterproof gloves when handling the snail. In discussing the snail's appearance, the children made reference to its weight and size, and the teacher introduced a metre stick to demonstrate the largest ever size of a giant snail was 40cm. The fact that the snail was lent by an interested parent is a good indicator of the strength of the home / school partnership. The parent had also produced clear and colourful notes on the diet and digital photographs taken from a variety of angles. The children were encouraged to compare their own diet with that of the snail and to make observations about its appearance. "He's got slime. That's why he sticks." "He's got bumpy skin and four sticking up bits," "His shell is smooth with black and brown". The lesson was developed effectively back in the classroom with some children seeking further information about snails from books and the Internet, whilst the classroom assistant to create snail shapes from play dough, wool and card.

Physical development

60. Attainment is within the expected range in all aspects of this area of learning. The children have made good progress and are likely to attain the expected Early Learning Goals at the end of their time in the reception class. The teaching includes regular opportunities for the use of the local wood and the outdoor playground. The children are encouraged to engage in vigorous exercise and to respond to physical challenges. For example, they use stiles, traverse through sticky mud and climb over and on to logs and tree stumps. In more formal settings, such as a dance lesson, the children are taught successfully to improve their skills in controlling and coordinating their movements, and to move safely with an awareness of space and others. As a consequence of well-judged instruction from the teacher and the demonstration of their work by the more confident children, attainment improves because other pupils gain fresh insights and increased confidence to experiment more boldly. A good feature of the teaching is the use of simple commands like "stop" and "start" to focus the children's attention, and to improve their listening skills. The teacher makes the most of the taped broadcast by stopping it to draw out key learning points and to make suggestions for differentiated work to ensure that all children are fully involved. Both she and the classroom assistant support the learning well by taking an active part, which gives all children the confidence to join in, try new movements and enjoy the activity.

Creative development

61. Attainment is within the expected range and the children are on course to meet the expected goals by the time they enter statutory education. The children's paintings and drawings show that the staff have taken considerable care in providing them with good resources, both in terms of the media they have selected and the stimulus that has been offered to the children.
62. Good classroom organisation and planning provide access to creative materials and experiences. The children use a good range of equipment with increasing skill such as pencils, crayons paint brushes and scissors. They can manipulate malleable materials to pleasing effect when producing work in play dough, plasticene, mod-roc and clay. They explore and experiment with mark making, painting and sponging, creating a variety of attractive effects.
63. The teacher leads singing and creative dance sessions enthusiastically, and this helps the children to move and sing confidently, and to acquire a small repertoire of well-loved songs. The children play co-operatively and imaginatively in the role play area and show a good recall of the highlights of favourite stories such as "Goldilocks and the three bears." They arrange the bowls carefully and when daddy bear was asked, "How do you feel now Goldilocks has taken baby bear's porridge?" the instant response was "I'm cross and angry!"

ENGLISH

64. The pupils make good progress in the development of the skills of speaking and listening and reading and they generally attain standards that are above average by the end of Years 2 and 4. Recent staff training has seen the successful introduction of a variety of initiatives that ensure a thorough coverage of the types of writing prescribed in the national literacy strategy and which motivate the children. However, the

approaches to the teaching of writing are not yet coherent across the school. Standards are currently average at the end of Year 2 and below average in Year 4.

65. The key factor behind the continuing improvement in the children's speaking and listening lies in the teachers' keen appreciation of the need to model language accurately and their skilful and probing questioning that encourages the pupils to think deeply and respond at length. For instance, in one excellent Year 2 lesson the teacher described the wolf in "little Red Riding Hood" as "*lurking*" in the background," and then checked that the children understood the meaning. Later on, she posed a series of open ended questions such as, "Who can describe this wolf for me?" and "What do you think will happen to grandma to-day?" This ensured that the pupils had to draw on their knowledge of previously read versions of the story and infer likely outcomes from the style of the current text. The children spoke volubly and intelligently about characters and the plot and carried this enthusiasm into their subsequent written work. In a range of situations, most of the class talk and listen with assurance at levels that mostly exceed those expected by the end of Year 2.
66. The teaching in Key stage 2 builds successfully on this good start. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher's effective questioning about a traditional tale had a sharp focus on synonyms and antonyms and enabled the pupils to draw on their good vocabulary. This work was further extended through the careful use of dictionaries and thesauruses so that the pupils learned new words to employ in their writing. By Year 4, the most pupils speak and listen confidently in a broadening range of contexts. For instance, when speaking with the inspectors about their work in a range of subjects they explained clearly and responsively what they had done.
67. The teachers are making successful use of the broad range of texts suggested within the national literacy strategy to promote reading across the school. In Key Stage 1, the teachers make effective use of large format books so that the whole class can read together. The teachers successfully model expressive reading and regularly draw attention to both the shape of words and the letter sounds within them. For instance, when asked to give an example of the sound represented by the letter "s" one Year 1 pupil retorted, "You're struggling with your shoe laces!"
68. The books used for early reading are carefully structured by a system of colour coding that is well understood by the pupils. Although there remain some old and outdated materials, there has been sensible recent investment in more up-to-date published schemes. By the age of seven, many pupils are starting to read with increasing fluency and expression. The higher attaining pupils have already begun to identify favourite authors, such as Jill Murphy and Roald Dahl. They can summarise what happens in the story and show very good levels of comprehension. The few pupils with special educational needs are still at the stage of learning to recognise words and developing an understanding of the sounds of initial letters, but they clearly enjoy reading simple books and discussing the pictures and characters. It is these children who benefit the most from the more up-to-date reading materials that provide greater subtlety of character and plot than the older reading schemes from the 1960's and 70's.
69. By Year 4, there are a good number of committed readers with an appetite for books of all types. The higher attaining readers speak knowledgeably about authors such as Tolkein and JK Rowling, and it is evident that the current passion for "fantasy" has a strong hold on the imagination of many pupils, especially amongst the boys. However, both boys and girls list the work of Jacqueline Wilson as amongst their favourite reading, along with Blyton and King-Smith. The few pupils with special needs within this cohort also have a positive attitude to reading because there is a good supply of interesting material for them, including fiction that combines suitably challenging text and image. As a result, they still enjoy books and continue to improve.
70. The parents and carers also make a major contribution to success in reading, and many of them read with their children almost every night of the week. The home-school reading diary provides a helpful overview of what the parents can do to encourage their children and offers good opportunities for a written commentary. However, this dialogue might be further strengthened if the teachers were to include more specific guidance about particular aspects of reading that the parents could follow up with their children at home. For instance, they could help their children to work out unknown words by encouraging them to make "sensible guesses" involving the use of initial sounds and letter blends. They might also show them

how to infer the meaning of a word from the context of a sentence. **This is an additional issue that the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan.**

71. An analysis of the pupils' written work in Years 1 and 2 shows that there is thorough coverage of the types of work outlined within the national literacy strategy. The teachers help pupils of different abilities to make good progress because they modify tasks to meet individual needs, for instance when setting spellings for homework and in the amount of textual support provided for writing activities. Consequently, one higher attaining pupil who had difficulties in orientating her letters and mixed capitals with lower case is now starting to join her writing, and increasingly spells common words correctly. The lower attaining pupils who were writing strings of recognisable letters with little demarcation between words are now starting to construct individual words that make phonological sense and convey simple meanings.
72. Good progress is sustained in Year 3 where there is evidence of extensive coverage of an increasingly wide range of writing styles, including instructions, opinion, persuasion, letters and dialogue. The teachers also make good use of this work to improve and extend the pupils knowledge of grammar and punctuation. As a result, almost every pupil is on course to reach the targets set at the start of the autumn term. However, in Year 4 progress is only recently starting to improve following a sluggish start due to the teacher's inexperience with this age group. The marking is carried out regularly, but the positive written commentary tends to focus on the same aspects for all pupils, even when there may be more pressing issues to be addressed. For instance, attention to speech marks and capital letters is important, but for a lower attaining pupil it is not as crucial as ensuring correct letter formation and an awareness of how to use a margin. The teacher's expectations in regard to the quantity of work required and the quality of its presentation have not been consistently high enough, but they are now improving. **This is a key issue for action.**
73. The impact of recent staff training is evident in the increasing breadth of the writing curriculum. The next step is to ensure that more pupils write more accurately and at greater length. The use of a number of different notebooks and exercise books for the technical aspects of writing, such as handwriting and spelling, is not always helpful, and sometimes leads to the pupils regarding these activities as separate rather than integral to the writing process. For instance, some handwriting books show a level of care and attention that is seldom present in the children's other books! Even more important is the need for the pupils to learn to structure and edit their work. At the moment, some pieces of work are corrected and copied out in best, and in Year 3 the children occasionally construct simple books or pamphlets. However, as the more able writers start to write at greater length, especially in Year 4, they require tuition in how to order their thoughts and reassemble text to ensure maximum impact, whatever the style of the work. **This is a key issue for action.**
74. The new subject co-ordinator has made a good start. She has a good oversight of the quality of work in the Reception class and Key Stage 1. The next step is to develop a clearer overview of the standards in Years 3 and 4 and to support the continuing development of the teaching of writing.

MATHEMATICS

75. Standards overall are lower than at the time of the last inspection, but account must be taken of the small numbers of pupils in different cohorts and the significant effect this can have on the school's results. Standards in mathematics are likely to be above average by the end of Year 2 and the pupils are achieving well. This good start is continued in Year 3. Subsequently, it is not maintained so effectively and by the end of Year 4 standards are more likely to be average, which is not as high as they might be. This is because not enough is expected of the oldest and more able pupils. The lesson seen in Year 4 was satisfactory, but in other classes they were better. The amount of work completed by the pupils could have been greater if there had been a higher level of demand. Consequently they are not always achieving the standards they should.

In the better lessons seen the strengths in teaching were as follows:

- Well planned lessons with clear ideas about what pupils were going to learn
- These aims were conveyed clearly to pupils so they knew what was expected of them
- Activities that were well matched to the different abilities of the pupils
- Good evaluative marking and assessment through well-directed questioning
- Good mental calculating skills practiced and developed
- Good use of support staff and resources

This resulted in learning which

- Developed the pupils' skills of mental calculation
- Led to productive and well paced learning
- Engaged the pupils' interest and developed their concentration

76. The less successful teaching did not have such effective control and the methods lacked sufficient focus to keep pupils interested and on task.
77. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 was good and as a result the different groups of pupils were achieving well. The introductions to the lessons were used well to develop the pupils' counting and sequencing skills. Often the pupils were well supported by a teaching assistant, who was able to explain and expand the teacher's instruction so that the less able pupils could take an effective part in the lessons. In Year 1, for example, the work was very well matched to the needs of the different groups of pupils and with the good support of the teaching assistant, the lesson moved along at an excellent pace. The main tasks were carefully prepared and provided the right amount of challenge, particularly for the more able pupils who were set more demanding work at an appropriate level. In Year 1, for example, there was a very good emphasis on the correct mathematical vocabulary when the pupils were comparing the mass of various objects. In Year 2, the activities were equally well modified to take account of the pupils' needs so the teaching was just as purposeful. The teacher made good use of a range of resources and supported the pupils well. Her high expectations of what they could achieve were evident when they were learning about odd and even numbers. She also made effective use of the whole-class session at the end of the lesson to ascertain what the pupils had learned. Scrutiny of their previous work shows that most of the pupils in Key Stage 1 have a secure understanding of number, including simple fractions, and can measure accurately in centimetres. The more able pupils can use a decimal point in recording money problems and have a good understanding of the place value of HTU numbers.
78. The good teaching continued in Year 3, but in Year 4 it was just satisfactory. The pupils in Year 3 were able to develop their knowledge and understanding of complex 3-D shapes because the teaching not only provided information, but also allowed time for the pupils to experiment and discover for themselves. This resulted in all groups of pupils learning effectively over the period of the lesson. The lesson in Year 4 started well with a good mental calculating session that developed the pupils' skills of combining different operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. However, as the lesson wore on more and more pupils lost concentration and by the end had too little to show for the time taken. This was because the task was not sufficiently demanding for many of the pupils and the lesson lacked structure. In Years 3 and 4, a scrutiny of the pupils' previous work shows that the majority of the pupils can recognize and measure accurately in centimetres and millimeters the perimeters of regular shapes. The more able pupils can multiply whole numbers by 10 and 100 and use efficient methods of calculation in multiplication and division. By the end of Year 4, most pupils are likely to be attaining average standards for their age.
79. The pupils with special educational are well supported, and the more able pupils are adequately challenged. A good recording system is now in place that gives the teachers a clear overview of what the pupils know and can do. The headteacher is the numeracy co-ordinator, and the present arrangements for monitoring the planning, the teaching and the quality of the pupils' work in mathematics are good.

SCIENCE

80. By the end of Years 2 and 4, standards in science are likely to be in line with those expected for pupils of these ages. This is lower than standards at the time of the last inspection. However, account must be taken of the small numbers of pupils in different cohorts and the significant effect this can have on the school's results. Overall, the progress of the majority of the pupils is satisfactory. These judgements are based on the two lessons seen in Key Stage 1, scrutiny of the teacher's planning, the pupils' previous work, displays and discussion with the staff and the pupils.
81. By the end of Year 2 the majority of the pupils can record their observations in the form of pictures and diagrams. They can name correctly the external parts of a plant and the human body. All groups of pupils can correctly sequence a series of pictures to record the growth of humans. In the lesson seen in Year 2, the pupils were skilfully led to consider whether or not changes to materials can be reversed, and by the end of the lesson more able and average pupils had developed this concept well. The lesson was characterised by carefully directed questioning as the teacher guided the pupils to consider how changes occurred. This was a well-organised practical lesson that emphasised the need for the systematic recording of observations. In their lesson on the different sources of light, the pupils in Year 1 produced some very effective posters on the dangers of fire, matches, candles and the sun. By the end of Year 2 the pupils have addressed all the required areas of learning of the National Curriculum for science.
82. By the end of Year 4, most pupils have developed a sense of 'fair' testing and can use simple equipment, for example, timers, force meters and thermometers. All groups of pupils know that exercise and a balanced diet is required for a healthy life style. They can sort a range of common materials such as wood, metal, plastic and glass according to their properties and the more able and average attaining pupils can distinguish between man-made and natural materials. Scrutiny of the pupils' work confirms that they are attaining average standards, but also indicates that opportunities for them to work at higher levels are limited because all groups follow the same range of work and use the same worksheets. This often affects the level of work of pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining groups of pupils because the work does not always match their prior learning. Furthermore, the previous work in all year groups shows that the teaching of science sometimes focuses too much upon observational and knowledge based work with insufficient opportunities for the pupils to conduct their own practical investigations. The school has begun to address this issue through recent in-service training, but it is not yet having an impact on the pupils' achievement.
83. It was not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching overall. However, in the lessons seen it was good. Both teachers demonstrated a secure knowledge of the subject, which they used well in questioning their pupils. The activities were well planned and the resources used well so that all the pupils were able to settle quickly to their tasks. They responded with interest and enthusiasm to the prompting of their teachers, behaved well and shared resources fairly. All this helped to generate a good pace to their learning.
84. The current leadership and management of the subject are good. A new system for recording the attainment and progress of all pupils is currently being developed.

ART AND DESIGN

85. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 and 4 continues to be above that expected for their age. The children have good opportunities to investigate and make by using a wide range of materials and media. The photographic evidence shows that the youngest pupils in Key stage 1 have studied Rangoli patterns and designed and made their own. They worked collaboratively in small groups using paint, felt pen and torn tissue. They then developed the work on a larger scale by using chalks on the paving slabs outdoors. Work from the folders of Year 2 pupils includes drawings made from close observational of natural materials and from imagination. The artwork in the Year 3 books shows the pupils' developing sense of line in their pencil drawings and in 3D work in string and wool. The work in the books and on display is annotated with descriptive vocabulary, for example, thick, thin, parallel, horizontal and twisted.

86. A well structured and resourced art lesson in Year 3 and Year 4 led to good standards in the use of pencil and pastel techniques to represent the pupils' own observations. Building on earlier lessons on facial features, the pupils began work on self-portraits by observing themselves in mirrors and referring to previous sketches. They used their imagination to produce varying backgrounds and settings for the images. The pupils draw and use pastels confidently, refining their work as they progress. They experiment with smudging and shading to create interesting, textured effects.
87. The pupils gain both knowledge and understanding from their practical work. A planned programme of work across the curriculum ensures that they acquire drawing and painting skills and techniques, which are recorded in their art skills books. Art is often linked with themed work or topics, and the displays around school include work on the Vikings, Tudor houses and portraits in clay. Other 3-D work includes aboriginal masks and an interesting display of sculpture made from corrugated card. The pupils in Year 2 have done extended design work based on the work of Mondrian, and Year 4 have been inspired by the work of Klimt and Matisse. In year 3, the pupils were introduced to portraits by the work of Leonardo Da Vinci, Modigliani and Peter Edwards. All the pupils are able to talk about their work and that of well-known artists and say what they like and why, using references to facial expressions, mood, colours and texture. The teaching is good in both key stages, and the co-ordinator uses his knowledge and expertise to good effect in guiding and supporting his colleagues. This promotes high standards and good progression in the skills and technique that the pupils learn. The lessons are well planned with confident and interesting introductions, and the teachers' clear expectations motivate the pupils well. The support and expertise other adults also make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The pupils are enthusiastic and also learn from one another as they extend and improve their work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Standards in design technology are better than at the time of the last inspection. They are in line with national standards at Years 2 and 4. The pupils show awareness of the design process and use appropriate vocabulary. For example, the Year 2 pupils described the process involved in making a moving vehicle and talked of the need for fixed axles with wheels that move. They were able to evaluate their work and say how they would change some of the features if they were to make another vehicle. Their plans and designs had been formally assessed by the teacher. In Year 3, the pupils have used tools to assemble and join a variety of materials and in Year 4 they have recently completed a joint art and design technology project on designing and building Egyptian thrones as part of their history work.
89. All pupils enjoy food technology and the work is often linked to other areas of the curriculum, for example, health and science. During the inspection, a Key Stage 1 class made cakes as part of their science work on changes and materials. The food technology is mainly an activity carried out by volunteer parents who are briefed well on health and safety procedures and how to make them explicit to pupils. The resources for food technology are good and the pupils have regular use of the new kitchen area of the school.
90. The co-ordination of the subject is shared across the staff team, and the teachers work collaboratively and supportively with each other. Together they have ensured that design technology is comprehensively planned across Years 1-4 and includes work with textiles. Although no lessons of design technology were seen during the inspection, the evidence from the teachers' planning and the children's work shows that the provision is at least satisfactory and that it has improved since the time of the last report.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

91. No geography lessons were seen during the inspection and history lessons were observed only in Key Stage 1. The following judgements are, therefore, based on these lessons and on the evidence gained from a scrutiny of the teachers' planning, the pupils' previous work, displays around the school and discussions with the staff and the children.
92. Attainment in history is above average by the end of Year 2 and in line with national expectations at the end of Year 4. Attainment in geography is in line with national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 4. These are standards similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The overall planning

has improved through the use of national guidance for both subjects, and the library resources have been enhanced. All the pupils are fully included in all aspects of the subjects and make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The pupils study a range of themes that are supported by educational visits and local resources, for example, the school grounds and nearby buildings, such as houses and shops.

93. The teachers make their lessons exciting and interesting and all groups of pupils respond with enthusiasm. In both of the lessons seen, the range of activities was extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of great events of the past and how life is different between then and now. The Year 1 lesson involved the pupils and staff washing a dirty tea towel using a 'posser' and a 'dolly tub'. All the pupils took turns in using the equipment and soon realized how much hard work it involved. The teacher and the support assistant helped all the pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills well as they gave their own ideas and opinions about what they were doing. Good use is also made of "Hanbury House", the play corner in the classroom, to enhance the pupils' learning through role-play. The Year 2 lesson focused on 'eye-witness' reports of the Great Fire of London, drawing upon the pupils' previous work on the diary of Samuel Pepys. Good quality support again helped the less able pupils to make a full contribution to the lesson. Well-organised and well-controlled teaching enabled all the pupils to put themselves very effectively in the role of an eyewitness. Some of the more able pupils wrote very telling descriptions, such as 'the flames are crackling and the pavement is hot under my feet' and 'even when I cover my ears I can still hear the fire'. All pupils were able to develop their writing skills effectively during the lesson.
94. A scrutiny of previous work in history shows work on other famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, and in-depth studies of the Ancient Egyptians and Tudors that is helping to address all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The pupils' previous work in geography is also consistent in following the recommendations of the National Curriculum. In Year 2, for instance, the pupils have studied life on a Scottish island and compared it with their own locality. Similarly, the pupils in Year 4 have studied and compared different types of weather around the world. They know that there are climatic regions, such as polar, temperate and tropical, and can plot these on a world map. The pupils in Year 3 have developed their mapping skills satisfactorily and can plot points and features on a map using two figure grid references.
95. Discussions with pupils across the school show that they enjoy their work in history and geography. Many follow up the various classroom activities with further investigation at home. However, there is limited evidence of the use of information and communication technology in school to allow independent research and thereby enhance the pupils' knowledge and understanding. This remains an area of development for the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

96. The school has continued to make good investment in its provision for the teaching of this subject. Effective use of the additional government funding has provided every class with three computers and there is also a small suite of eight computers in the school house. The proposed purchase of five more laptop computers with wireless connections will mean that every class will then have Internet access. Although it was not possible to observe the subject being taught in every class during the inspection, there is plentiful evidence to indicate that standards are satisfactory. Although standards are lower than those described at the last inspection, most pupils are working at the levels expected by the time they reach the ages of seven and nine. The fact that many pupils have computers at home also contributes strongly to the standards being achieved in this subject.
97. By the age of seven, most pupils are familiar with simple word processing. They compose their writing directly to the screen and know how to delete and replace letters, create capitals and start a new line. In Years 3-4, the children make good progress in developing these skills so that by the time they leave school most can change the colour, size and font of letters and to use "wizards" to assist in formatting documents, such as letters. The pupils are adept at creating images when using programs such as "paintspa," and the Year 4 classroom contains attractive, good quality displays of underwater scenes that were produced last term.

98. Throughout the school, the pupils develop a growing appreciation of how their studies can be enhanced by researching information either in electronic encyclopaedias stored on CD-ROM or on the World Wide Web. Conversations with the oldest pupils reveal that they all know about search engines and are beginning to acquire personal preferences, such as Google. This enthusiasm is reflected in much of the good research that enhances the work in history and geography, for example, and is further reflected in some of the work brought in from home.
99. A good start has also been made to applying the power of new technologies in subjects like mathematics and science. The teachers in Years 1 and 2 make effective use of a programmable electronic toy so that the pupils soon get used to the idea that by entering instructions electronically they can control movements. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher made good use of the program "Badger Trails". It enabled the pupils to simulate the journey of a badger, deepened their understanding of the animal's need for regular food and drink, and widened their knowledge of what badgers eat. The pupils worked hard and methodically and several made particularly good gains in their appreciation of how different "buttons" or icons can unlock further screens containing more detailed information. The whole class finished the lesson with improved knowledge of the simulation and a helpful round-up at the end of the lesson ensured that successful strategies were shared by all.
100. The Year 4 lesson showed that the pupils are making good progress in developing simple data bases and then using a program, such as "Find It", to collect and collate data in response to a series of simple questions. For instance, the pupils had all loaded a variety of personal data and were using the computer to discover the answer to questions such as "How many pupils are aged eight." The teaching is good because the teacher has high expectations and sets a brisk pace for learning. He is currently helping the pupils to refine their questioning techniques in order that they can eliminate data that do not fit. The use of a collection of kitchen objects and a set of sticky labels provided a very good starting point as the pupils used their powers of logic to work out the item the teacher had selected.
101. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He has a realistic appraisal of the current state of the subject and recognises recent success as well as those aspects, such as the use of email, that still need to be established. The subject development plan is a coherent document that charts a sensible way forward for future improvement.

MUSIC

102. At the time of the last inspection, there were weaknesses in the music curriculum that led to the pupils underachieving in relation to composing and appraising music. On the basis of the limited evidence available from the present inspection, the school has made satisfactory improvement. Although it was not possible to observe a lesson in Key Stage 2, the Year 4 pupils speak confidently about their work in composing music about a crocodile. They have used a variety of instruments and recall accurately such names as maracas, castanets, xylophone and glockenspiel. They have listened to music in different styles and from different traditions. They particularly enjoyed listening to the Can-Can and describe carefully the effects of hearing two different versions, one fast and jolly, the other slow and mournful. They have learnt a little about conducting and showed that they remember how to mark two, three and four beats in a bar.
103. In the lesson observed in Key Stage 1, the children worked hard to make good gains in their skills of making and appraising music. As a result of the teacher's good questioning skills, they made sensible and extended responses when describing their feelings about the mood of different types of music. They used their bodies as percussion to beat out the rhythm of favourite nursery rhymes and joined in a final song whilst moving in response to the words. The lesson went well because the teacher made the most of a tape recorded programme in order to augment her own knowledge and skills. She used the structure carefully, but enhanced this with her own interjections to challenge and support individual pupils on the basis of her own very good knowledge of their needs.
104. Throughout the school, the children show signs of a lively interest in music. In worship, they sing lustily and tunefully and clearly benefit from the skilled accompaniment of the headteacher on the keyboard. The

varied choice of music that greets the children as they enter worship also adds breadth to their experience, although opportunities to deepen this through discussion are sometimes missed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. On the basis of the three lessons observed, it is clear that by the ages of seven and nine the pupils develop levels of skill in gymnastics and dance that are above average.
106. Although the school hall is small, the space is put to very effective use and the pupils' mature behaviour and strong sense of co-operation ensure that work progresses smoothly and safely. The school's tradition of teaching country dancing was in evidence when the Year 4 pupils developed their own Irish dance to the accompaniment of taped radio programme. The vast majority have a good sense of rhythm and using the framework of a count of eight introduced an interesting variety of step patterns, including skips, steps, strides and jumps whilst keeping good time with the music. The pupils worked sensibly in pairs and small groups as they developed the story of potato planting and digging so that many of their responses successfully reflected the effort and tension of this work. The teacher supported the pupils with an encouraging commentary. However, the inability of a tiny minority to listen carefully slowed the pace towards the end of the lesson. As a result, it became difficult for the teacher to provide the incisive intervention that might have taken the performance of the majority to even higher levels.
107. The foundations of this sort of lively work are evidently laid lower down the school. In Year 2, for instance, the pupils are already showing an appetite for creative dance and work hard to capture characterisation through their movements and facial expression. In a Year 1 lesson, the enthusiasm of the class teacher and her clear instructions enabled the children to make very good progress in developing a sequence of movements at a variety of levels. Even at this young age, the pupils are developing confidence and independence in setting up their own equipment and they work safely and sensibly with each other. The quality of their work was high and their physical effort intense as they responded to the exhortations of their teacher.
108. Despite its small size, the school does its best to ensure that the pupils have some experience of competitive sport by joining other local schools for events such as athletics and soccer. Football and netball clubs are also provided after school. The distance from the school to the local baths is considerable and would take up a large slice of curriculum time. As a result, the school has understandably taken the decision not to take the pupils swimming during the school day.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

109. Standards are average and similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The pupils in Year 2 reach the expectations of the Locally Agreed syllabus for religious education. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made satisfactory progress. An improved range of books and artefacts is now available to support the teaching and learning and has enhanced the pupils' knowledge and understanding of various religions.
110. Scrutiny of previous work shows that Year 2 pupils have used Bible stories, such as 'The Lost Sheep' and 'The Two Sons', to develop their understanding of Christian beliefs and values. Close links with the local church and regular visits by the vicar help to strengthen their knowledge and understanding. The pupils also know of the Festival of Epiphany and what it celebrates. They have also learned about the sacred objects of the Jewish faith and compared them with the symbols and objects of the Christianity. This work is further developed in Years 3 and 4, where the pupils have studied such symbols as the rainbow and its significance in the story of Noah and the Ark. The pupils in Year 3 learn about special occasions, special people and relationships. For example, they describe the qualities of their friends and relate this to stories of Jesus and his friends. In the one lesson seen in Year 4, the pupils were discussing how the life of Jesus is represented symbolically by a candle, bread and a picture of a shepherd. The pupils have learnt about Remembrance Sunday and understand what poppies symbolise. They know the main events of Christmas and Easter as Christian festivals and have learned about the story of Rama and Sita and its part in the beliefs of Sikhs. This knowledge and understanding of other beliefs was effectively reinforced by a visit to a Sikh temple and by visitors to school who talked about the Diwali festival and Rangoli patterns.

111. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the teaching. That seen in the Year 4 lesson was satisfactory. A scrutiny of teacher's planning shows that the school is addressing all the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The teachers are also supported in their planning by units of work taken from recent national guidance. The subject still lacks formal systems for monitoring the quality of the teaching and learning across the school, but this is largely due to the small size of the staff and the school's appropriate focus on improving the core subjects.