

INSPECTION REPORT

RUSHTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rushton Spencer, Nr. Macclesfield

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124272

Headteacher: Mrs A. L. Hurst

Reporting inspector: Mr G. D. Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 3 – 5 March 2003

Inspection number: 248578

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rushton Spencer Nr Macclesfield
Postcode:	SK11 0SG
Telephone number:	01260 226303
Fax number:	01260 226495
E-mail address:	headteacher@rushton.staffs.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J. Brelsford-Blake
Date of previous inspection:	18 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21038	Mr G. D. Timms	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Music Physical education Foundation Stage Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19342	Mr T. Heavey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29989	Mrs P. Goodsell	Team inspector	English Science Design and technology Geography History Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Sandfield Educational Consultants Ltd

16 Wychwood Drive
Trowell Park
Nottingham
NG9 3RB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House

33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

With only 24 pupils (18 girls and 6 boys) on the roll, Rushton Primary is very small compared to other primary schools. It is a first school, taking children in September of the year they are five until they are nine when they move on to local middle schools. It serves the village of Rushton Spencer and the surrounding area. There are no pupils from minority ethnic community backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the reception class is above that expected although this varies from year to year. None of the pupils has special educational needs and no pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school works as part of a cluster of three small schools that share expertise, resources and some visits.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that provides pupils with a good education and effectively prepares them for middle school. Good teaching, leadership and management helps pupils to attain well above average standards in English and mathematics and above expected the standards in all other subjects by the time they leave school. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high in English, mathematics and above those expected in all other subjects.
- The leadership and management are good and provide the school with a clear educational direction.
- The quality of teaching is at least good and often very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and relationships are very good. Attendance is well above average.
- The planning of the curriculum ensures a very good range of stimulating activities supported by very strong cross-curricular links; there is a strong partnership with the local community and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The information provided for parents, and the way the school works in partnership with them, is very good.

What could be improved

- There are insufficient opportunities for junior pupils to produce sustained pieces of writing in a range of styles and forms.
- The provision of outdoor activities for reception pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Some important key issues arising from the last inspection in 1997 have been addressed well and the improvements have had a positive impact on standards. The effectiveness of teaching is monitored more closely and pupil progress is tracked in detail. The development planning is firmly based on raising standards and is well linked to the planning of a cluster of local small schools. Pupils now have individual targets and this is proving successful in motivating them, although they are too recently introduced to yet have a significant impact on standards. The provision for the children in the reception year is now based on the expected areas of learning. In addition, the school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully and the resources, teaching and standards in information and communication technology have improved. The quality of leadership and management has improved and is now good. The school is well placed to improve further in the future.

STANDARDS

Due to the small numbers of pupils taking the tests each year, the school's results are not published. Although the number of pupils taking the tests is small, there is a high level of consistency in results from year to year. The high standards are largely due to the very good quality of education provided by the school. Since the last inspection, standards have either improved or been maintained at the previous high level in all subjects.

The children make good progress in the reception year by the end of which they have all attained at least the expected levels in the early learning goals, and many have exceeded them. The results of the 2002 tests taken at the end of Year 2 put the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally for reading, writing and mathematics. The teacher assessments supported this and showed a similar result in science. By the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, they have built further on these high standards and in English and mathematics their attainment is well above average. In science, it is above average, as it is in all other subjects. The pupils' progress over their time in the school is at least good and often very good. The inspection found that standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in all subjects.

The results over time show that the standards are improving at a faster rate than most schools. When the results are compared with those of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the 2002 tests still put the school in the top five per cent nationally in reading and writing. In mathematics, the standards were well above average. The school does not have to set statutory targets for its test results but the individual, group and informal targets set for pupils are appropriately challenging and are largely met in full.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils display very positive attitudes towards school and the tasks they are given. This has a very positive impact on their learning
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils get on well together and have a caring attitude towards others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils grow in maturity through the school and the older children show good levels of initiative and are developing their independent learning skills to a very good level.
Attendance	Very good. The attendance rate is well above average and the unauthorised absence level is very low.

The pupils are very keen to be at school and they clearly enjoy being part of the school community. They are articulate and enjoy sharing what they have done and achieved with adults. A few of the younger children demonstrate some immaturity in their attitudes but they respond to the teacher appropriately when required.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good and teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. Numeracy skills are well taught and are used effectively in other subjects such as science or design and technology. Literacy skills are equally well taught. Pupils' writing is often of very good quality but

the teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for them to use their skills in extended writing in a range of styles or for different purposes.

The best teaching shows that teachers have high expectations of the work pupils are capable of doing. The planning for the small, mixed age classes is very effective and good use is made of the able teaching assistant to support the work of the reception children. The teachers know all pupils well and the work is effectively matched to their individual needs. The relationships created between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good and result in pupils being enthusiastic about their work, showing pride in their achievements and developing very good learning habits.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum provided is well planned and cross-curricular links are effectively made; the curriculum has a very good breadth. The school staff work very hard to enrich the curriculum opportunities for pupils through trips, visits and visitors to school mostly organised with other local small schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Although there are no pupils with special educational needs at present, the provision has been effective in the past, and is used well to support lower and higher attaining pupils in small groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Personal development is very good overall. The provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very good and the staff work hard to broaden the pupils' horizons through a range of experiences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory, overall. Assessment arrangements have improved and are now good. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very effective.

The school works very effectively in partnership with the parents. The information provided is of very good quality and parents are very effectively involved in their children's learning. There are a small number of after school activities but when offered, such as the gardening club, a high proportion of the pupils take part.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The recently appointed headteacher has made an effective start, focusing her work on raising standards and ensuring pupils are sufficiently challenged. She has developed a clear vision and educational direction for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good, overall. The governors have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses but do not hold the school to account effectively enough.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. This has improved and the available data and tracking systems are now used to address any underachievement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All available monies are used efficiently and have a good impact on learning.

The staffing level in the school is good and good use is made of staff expertise and part time teachers' specific skills. The accommodation and resources are mostly of good quality and sufficient in quantity. The school is aware that reception pupils do not have access to a suitable outdoor classroom area for large toys and practical activities. Financial management is good and a recent audit report commended the school for its systems. The school applies the principles of best value appropriately.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can approach the school with questions or problems and the school works closely with them. • The school has high expectations of their children and is helping children become more mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is good. • Their children like school and their behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no areas of the school's work that a significant proportion of parents wanted to see improved.

The majority of the parents are very positive about the work of the school. The findings of the inspection support their positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children start in the reception year, their attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year due to the small size of the cohorts. However, the early assessment of their attainment, together with the inspection evidence, indicates that the knowledge, skills and understanding of the majority of them are above those expected for their ages. By the end of the reception year, virtually all children have reached the expected early learning goals in all areas of learning and the majority of the children have exceeded them.
2. The national test results for Year 2 pupils are not published due to the small size of the school. However, the results are much more consistently above those expected than is normal for such a small school. In 2002, the standards attained in reading, writing and mathematics were very high, putting the school in the top five per cent nationally. This is also the case when the school is compared with schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds. The trend in test results over time shows that they are improving at a rate faster than that found nationally.
3. The school has many more girls than boys. Over time Year 2 test results show that, taking into account gender differences across the country, girls achieve better than boys. However, the inspection team found no evidence to suggest that teaching and other provision favour the girls.
4. The inspection findings showed that standards in Year 2 are above average by the end of the year. This is true in all subjects. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, they have built successfully on their earlier attainment and have reached standards in English and mathematics that are well above average. In both subjects, they make good progress due to the quality of the teaching and the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects and the needs of pupils of this age. In English, pupils have very good literacy skills although they have insufficient opportunities to use these in writing longer pieces of work in a range of styles and forms. In mathematics, pupils' standards have been raised by the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the high expectations evident among teachers. Standards in all year groups are consistently higher than those expected. Literacy and numeracy skills are used effectively in other subjects. Standards are also improving since the school began setting more focused individual and group targets.
5. In science, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are above average. The pupils have good opportunities to take part in a range of investigative and problem solving activities. However, insufficient opportunities exist for them to devise their own investigations. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and above those expected by the end of Year 4. The ICT curriculum and teaching have been improved through better resources and training for teachers. This has had a positive impact on standards and pupils now use computers and other ICT hardware for a wider range of purposes. In religious education, standards are above those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Good progress is made throughout the school and by the time they leave the school the pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of religious concepts and a range of faiths.

6. Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are all above those expected by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. They make good progress in their knowledge and understanding and use a range of practical literacy and numeracy skills, as well as ICT skills to extend their learning in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The very high standards in this area of school life have been sustained in the period since the previous inspection. This judgement is supported by an overwhelming majority of the parents. Pupils' very positive attitudes, their good behaviour and their very good relationships rate among the school's major strengths, and make a significant contribution to their education.
8. The sight of several pupils racing to be the first to arrive at the school door in the morning epitomises the very high level of enthusiasm that they display towards their school. Their obvious pleasure at being in school is reflected in their happy, smiling faces as they meet and greet their teachers and classmates, and in the eagerness with which they apply themselves to their work. The warm and welcoming atmosphere coupled with their eagerness to please the teachers and other adults enables pupils to concentrate for lengthy periods and to cooperate very effectively in group work. The pupils benefit from the presence of a classroom assistant and further time for this when funds allow would extend the opportunities for small groups to have more personal attention in the infant class.
9. Pupils' good behaviour both in the classroom and around the school creates a climate of discipline and good order that greatly enhances their learning experience. Almost all parents responding to the questionnaire agreed with that view. Children are polite and respectful both with one another and with adults in the school. There are no signs of aggressive or oppressive behaviour and there have been no exclusions.
10. All parents acclaim the very high level of personal development displayed by pupils as they progress through the school. One parent writes: "My daughter has progressed amazingly well in response to the teacher's work in building her confidence and maturity." An inspector described a "very interesting and stimulating conversation" with the children. The strong ethos of the school, and the very small classes, promote a family atmosphere in which children are treated as individuals, and they readily respond to the school's high expectations of dutiful and responsible behaviour. Relationships within the school are characterised by mutual respect and affection. Adults in the school set a fine example, and the children readily respond. Their eagerness to learn, their readiness to work without direct supervision, their responsible behaviour and their fraternal care for their younger peers combine very effectively to prepare these pupils to be tomorrow's citizens. Indeed, they already demonstrate their concern for the disadvantaged in society by raising money for charitable causes, both at home and abroad.
11. The attendance rate of 95.8 per cent for the most recent reporting year is very good, placing the school very high in the national attendance ratings. The zero rate of unauthorised absence sets the school below the national average, while the very good punctuality at both morning and afternoon sessions ensures that pupils have full access to the whole range of school activities. The marking of registers complies with legal requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The overall quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in the infant class, and it is very good in the junior class. The teaching team is one of the school's major strengths and their work has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. They have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils of the ages taught in the school. All of the teaching observed was at least good quality and thirty per cent was very good or excellent. One lesson was of excellent quality. In addition, the scrutiny of pupils' books shows that teachers are planning a full curriculum. They mark the work appropriately, sometimes with good annotations to let pupils know what they have done well and how they can improve their work. This is an improved picture since the last inspection when seven per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory and only four per cent was very good or better.
13. The teaching of the reception pupils is good and they make good progress towards the early learning goals. The very good relationships created and the very positive ethos that exists in the class supports the children's learning from when they first enter the school. The teaching is well planned and based appropriately on the nationally defined areas of learning. The planning differentiates correctly between the needs of the reception children and those of the older pupils in the class. The resources are good, appropriate for the ages of the children and used well. The teaching assistant works mostly with these children, and they have a good relationship with her. The teacher and her assistant try to provide work outside the school when possible, but for most of the time the children do not have access to an appropriate outdoor play area, although one is planned.
14. In both classes, the pupils learn well, due to the good teaching and relationships, as well as the effective planning. The teachers base their planning on their knowledge of the pupils' prior attainment and assessments they make. The small classes, especially in Years 3 and 4, enable the teacher to provide a lot of individual attention and support, and this has a very positive impact on learning. In Years 1 and 2, the work is well planned to provide the pupils with work matched closely to their ages and prior attainment. The teachers work hard to encourage all pupils, including a small number who find it difficult to concentrate for long, to have good attitudes towards their work, and to take pride in their efforts. Throughout the school, learning objectives are shared with pupils who are therefore aware of what it is they are to learn by the end of the lesson. The school has recently introduced individual and group target setting and pupils' individual targets are clearly displayed to help them know what they must do to improve further.
15. In Years 3 and 4, the teacher has very high expectations of the pupils, and this results in children having a clear understanding of what is expected of them. They develop mature learning habits and a very good level of independence. This manifests itself, for example, when they help each other through a difficult task, as the two Year 3 pupils did in a numeracy lesson. The best teaching has a very good pace, is well planned and appropriately challenging and gives the pupils very good opportunities to solve problems and develop their thinking skills. For example, in one literacy lesson pupils were asked to design an invention in their names as part of a topic on eponyms and the Greeks, to be advertised using the web-cam.
16. Teachers are able to communicate with parents regularly at the start and end of the day, and this has a positive impact on relationships between school and home. Informally, parents are kept informed about how their child is doing and they are able to pass on to staff any concerns from home. In addition, meetings are held twice a year for consultations that are more formal, and reports of pupils' progress are sent out towards the end of the year.

17. Very good use is made of individual teachers' expertise. For example, part time teachers are used to teach religious education throughout the school, to work with pupils with special educational needs when the school has any, and to take physical education and creative arts lessons in the infant class. This also enables the headteacher to have some time for her management work. Teachers are supported by the shared co-ordination of subjects with teachers in the other two small schools in the local cluster. This provides a cost efficient way of supporting developments and improvements in the teaching and learning. The monitoring arrangements are satisfactory and the school works hard to enable teachers to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects. The provision for homework is broadly satisfactory and in line with that recommended for the ages of the children.

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

18. The good progress and high standards reached are supported by the high priority given to developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Good use is made of the opportunities provided by the literacy and numeracy strategies. The very good quality and range of learning opportunities and activities provided by the school support the standards reached in all subjects; these opportunities are very well enhanced by a good variety of educational visits out of school and visitors to the school. A particular strength is the way in which the school joins with two other small local schools to form a cluster and makes very good use of this arrangement to plan together work for most subjects. This planning of the curriculum ensures that a very good range of stimulating and worthwhile activities is available which are supported by very good links between the subjects of the curriculum. All statutory requirements are met and the guidance from the local education authority is used very well to plan what should be taught in religious education. The school makes good arrangements for the pupils' personal, social and health education and provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good. There is a strong partnership with the local community and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
19. There are no pupils with special educational needs at the school at present. However, there are good plans for the initial identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs, and for the assessment of their progress. The class teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs work together to provide good arrangements to meet any pupils' individual needs. The school has applied for 'Dyslexia Friendly' status and already has good strategies to support any pupils with specific learning difficulties. The school has also carefully assessed its arrangements to accept pupils who have physical problems. It has secure strategies to support pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties. The overall ethos of the school is the acceptance of all children whatever their individual needs and the determination to help pupils reach their full potential in an educational setting, and these aims are evident in the school's work.
20. The local small schools have arranged all the topics to be taught in a rolling three-year programme in the reception and infant classes. In the junior classes, there is a two-year programme. These arrangements gives pupils good access to all subjects and contribute to the good progress and standards seen across all areas of the National Curriculum and in religious education. It also means that when the pupils move to the middle schools they have a shared experience of topics studied. There are policies for all the subject areas although some are out of date. However, the subject co-ordinators are gradually working through them and updating the documentation.

21. The good range of educational visits and visitors to the school has a positive and constructive effect on the pupils' learning. Each event is linked to the topics being studied and the cluster schools take it in turns to arrange the visit, as when the older pupils took part in a Viking day as part of their history topic. The younger pupils visit museums to extend their work on toys in the present and past. There is a residential visit planned for the Year 4 pupils, when they will take part in a range of outdoor activities. As part of their religious education work, the pupils visit a synagogue and mosque as well as the local church and chapel. All of the pupils are able to experience and enjoy live performances of music and theatre both at the school and by visiting other venues. The curriculum opportunities for all the pupils are enriched and enhanced by visitors to the school. These include parents, governors, friends of the school, together with musicians, the school nurse and police and firemen. Together with the good use of the teachers' talents, and those of other adults who work in the school, these provide learning experiences that contribute to the overall development of pupils as individuals and members of the community. There is a small number of out of school clubs, organised by the teachers, parents and other volunteers and outside agencies. Particularly popular is the 'Gardening Gang' attended by virtually the whole of the school. Its enthusiastic members are engaged in a range of environmental, gardening and nature activities, which are enhancing and improving the school grounds whilst at the same time extending the pupils' knowledge and understanding of how they themselves can contribute to the sustainability of the environment. A parent runs football sessions in the summer. The parents pay for some of the activities such as the French club.
22. The school has good arrangements for the personal, social and health education of the pupils. This includes provision for education about the use and misuse of drugs such as medicines and smoking. The school has included topics on healthy eating and the care of teeth in the science curriculum. The governors have decided that the school will not make formal arrangements for the sex education of pupils. The personal development of pupils is good because the pupils are given opportunities to show initiative and develop responsibility. This means that as they move through the school pupils grow in independence and in knowledge of their own learning.
23. The school has very effective links with the local community and these make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Links with the church enhance the pupils' understanding of Christianity. The school has an open door to the community which support the many social and educational happenings hosted by the school. The annual open day as part of Science Week, concerts and plays, the summer café run by the pupils for the community and the party to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee are a few examples of these events. The school welcomes members of the community in to the school to provide good opportunities to enhance the education of the pupils; for example, older local people have been telling the pupils about their childhood and the toys they played with. As part of the pupils' topic on the Second World War, they used a web-cam to record a living witness of war memories from older members of the community. The school has taken part in providing education packs for local theatres and a National Trust property. Partnerships and links with local schools are very good and effective arrangements assist the smooth transfer of the pupils to their new schools.
24. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a strength of the school. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. All the staff work hard to develop the pupils' self-esteem and promote the very good relationships seen; as a result, the pupils enjoy their learning they are confident and content in their surroundings and feel part of a living community. Spiritual development is promoted

- very well throughout the school in lessons, assemblies and acts of worship and the school makes very good use of the teachings of Christianity, and other world faiths to support its provision. The school provides opportunities for the pupils to reflect upon the spiritual dimensions of life; musical and artistic ways of looking at feelings are explored and the pupils are given opportunities to value their individuality. They show respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs and the relationships between adults and pupils are very good. The pupils are encouraged to look for beauty in their surroundings and spontaneously and naturally remark on such things as the opening buds of the narcissi in their classroom.
25. The school teaches pupils the difference between right and wrong, and promotes and fosters values such as honesty and fairness; the adults in the school provide good role models for the pupils. There are few school rules because the teachers sensitively make the pupils aware of the expectations of a code of positive behaviour. The pupils have many opportunities in lessons to work together co-operatively and to compete fairly, and they treat one another with courtesy and respect. The school values the suggestions put forward by pupils for the shared responsibility of improving the school and its surroundings. The school has developed a good range of opportunities for the pupils to experience social activities. Often the pupils join with pupils from cluster schools for shared educational and sporting activities. The size of the school means that children of different ages know one another well. The older pupils set a very good example in behaviour and mature approach to work for the younger ones. Each pupil in the older class has their own responsibility for a task to help in the smooth running of the class. Joint activities enable the pupils to build relationships with members of the other class apart from their immediate friends. This is very successful as when the Year 2 pupils amalgamate with the older pupils for design and technology and physical education. A good number of charities are supported; these activities involve the pupils well, promoting their own personal development and enabling them to learn about and support the needs of people in different situations. A striking example of this was the support given by the school to a partner village in Malawi when the proceeds from the school's Harvest Festival were used to send basic supplies to the village.
26. The school works very well to promote the pupils' knowledge of their own culture. There are good opportunities for them to learn about living in a multicultural society and to consider aspects of cultures not represented in the school. As part of religious education lessons, the pupils learn about Hinduism, Judaism and Islam and this work includes visits to places of worship. In music lessons, assemblies, and with visiting musicians, the school provides the pupils with opportunities to listen to a range of musical styles. The pupils learn about a range of artists and art forms. In literature sessions, the pupils hear poetry and prose and are encouraged to begin to appreciate the rhythm of language and ways in which it is used to promote ideas, feelings and emotions. Visiting workshops and whole school events extend the opportunities for the pupils to experience, enjoy and participate in a good range of activities which enhance their learning opportunities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school has continued the generally sound quality of provision for this aspect of school life identified at the previous inspection. The resultant atmosphere of confidence and well being makes a good contribution to the raising of educational standards.
28. The arrangements for child protection are sound. They are based on those of the area child protection committee, and a copy of the procedures is available to staff. The headteacher is the designated person in such matters and she has received the requisite training.

29. The policies and procedures for health and safety comply with legal requirements, and proper arrangements for pupils' personal safety and security are in place both within and around the school. The governing body is undertaking a systematic review and updating of policies. Termly fire drills ensure that safe exit procedures are well rehearsed. The annual risk assessment of the premises is supported by a system for reporting hazards. The procedures for first aid and for the reporting of accidents are coordinated by the headteacher, and are appropriate. Pupils are familiar with the procedures.
30. There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, including early follow-up arrangements in the event of absence. The very good attendance rate does credit to the joint efforts of school and parents together, though it could be even further improved through a reduction in term-time holidays. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour is evident in the good behaviour seen around the school during the inspection. The combination of good role modelling by adults, a strong Christian ethos and good parental support, results in behaviour that is at least good, and often very good, when the teaching challenges and stimulates pupils most. The creation of house teams and the introduction of an awards assembly are evidence of further efforts by the school to increase pupils' motivation to behave and perform even better.
31. The school's very good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development make a telling contribution to their learning because of the maturity of approach that they promote. Parents who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in declaring that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible people. The intimacy that results from small class sizes enables adults in the school to focus on individual developmental needs such as articulation, confidence, self-esteem and independence, and this is effective. The systems combine effectively to develop that blend of maturity and responsibility evident among the older pupils in this school.
32. Pupils' academic progress is closely monitored. The quality of the school's assessments of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The small size of the school makes it straightforward for staff to know the individual pupils well. Good tracking systems show the progress made in test results for English and mathematics. These records are used well. When they indicate that any pupil is underachieving the staff are able to address this and provide work appropriately matched to the child's needs and to enable their progress to improve. In addition, staff analyse the national test results to work out which questions pupils have most trouble with, and on which they can focus their teaching in future. The school has recently introduced individual and group target setting based on the assessments made when work is marked and tests are analysed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. The school has built on the good relationships with parents identified as a strong feature at the previous inspection. These have evolved into a very effective partnership, and are a continuing strength of the school.
34. The great majority of parents responding to the questionnaire or attending the meeting with the inspectors agreed that their children like school, that they behave well, and that they make good progress. The same parents unanimously declared that the teaching is good, that the school expects their children to work hard, that it helps them to become mature and responsible, and that the school is well led and managed. There were no significant criticisms of any aspect of the school's provision.

35. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about their children's progress, is very good. As well as complying with legal requirements, the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are clear and informative documents. They are supported by two parents' evenings, formal annual reports on pupils, informal access to teachers, and a weekly newsletter that includes topics to be tackled by pupils over the next term. In view of the comments of a small number of parents, the school is planning to use the newsletter to consult parents further about their wishes on such matters as homework. The provision of such high quality information helps to engage parents in the education of their children. The links between home and school are also strengthened as part of the starting school arrangements when parents and pre-school children are invited in weekly for a very good story and singing session alongside the reception and infant pupils.
36. The very successful engagement of parents in their children's learning at this school provides valuable assistance to the teachers. Volunteers in the classroom provide support for a group of children while the teacher attends to others. This support is very useful where there are different age or ability groups of pupils. Parents, as well as ensuring that their children get to school, also see that they do their homework, and help them with their reading, or help out on school trips. They cooperate with teachers through the reading diary, attend parents' evenings, and they support fundraising events through the very active home-school Association. One such fundraising event, that also promotes a useful community link, is a large and well-attended country fair. This year that event alone raised a tremendous amount of money for school improvements. Parents are appropriately involved in decisions over what the money should be spent on. Such high levels of parental involvement have a very positive impact on the work of the school and on the education of their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The leadership and management demonstrated by the headteacher are good. Although only recently appointed as headteacher, she has a lot of experience of teaching in the school and is very aware of the needs of small schools. Her time as acting headteacher was also used positively in auditing the immediate needs of the school. She is successfully coping with her new role as well as a heavy teaching load. In this, she is very well supported by her staff. The adults who work in the school form a very effective and efficient team. Communication is good and the management of staff meetings and professional development is good given the size of the school. They are responsible for the creation of the very successful ethos. The school's aims, although evident in the day-to-day work of the school, are in need of review, now that the new headteacher has taken up her post.
38. The leadership ensures that there is a clear educational focus to the work of the school. The good results the school regularly achieves are proof of the continuing improvements in the provision, and the school is improving and developing appropriately. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively and results are analysed to see where improvements could be made. This is done on an individual basis due to the small size of the year groups. Where necessary, extra support is given to pupils through time with the teaching assistant or through work prepared and planned specifically to address any underachievement.
39. The school policy for performance management is appropriate and the system is used to help improve performance and develop teachers' skills and expertise. The headteacher has observed all staff teach and has set agreed objectives annually. In addition, the headteacher is set performance objectives by the governors. The objectives are linked appropriately to the priorities in the school development plan.

40. The school's provision is enhanced through the sharing of expertise and resources with two other local small schools. When they share trips and visits, it supports the pupils' personal and social development through the interaction with their peers. The sharing of teacher expertise and part of the subject co-ordinator role also provides a sensible use of expertise and the time available when the number of staff is small. The schools plan their topics together, thus sharing experiences and expertise further and ensuring they can share visits and visitors and thus enable them to get best value. In one example of good practice, the literacy co-ordinator from one school has visited Rushton to observe and feedback on the teaching and learning in a literacy lesson. This good practice benefits all of the schools and should be extended when funds allow.
41. The school development plan provides a useful basis for the future improvement of the school. It is arrived at through an appropriate process of consultation with staff and governors. The governors monitor the impact of the plan at their meetings, especially those of the committees who follow up the specific aspects of the plan that link to their responsibilities.
42. The governing body is very supportive of the school, and has grown more involved in providing a strategic overview for the development of the school since the headteacher took up her post. Most governors have visited the school during the day although not on a regular basis. Some have monitored the work of the school through visiting lessons, especially for the reception children. This work needs to be extended so that other governors become more aware of the issues arising from the day-to-day running of a small school. A recent open day for governors proved successful and most visited the school and saw it in action. There is an appropriate committee structure that enables the governors' work to be carried out efficiently, and good, clear minutes are kept. The headteacher's reports to governors contain appropriate information about past events but do not provide sufficient information about issues arising in the future.
43. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very well informed about the needs of individual pupils and is highly committed to helping pupils achieve their learning potential. She has ensured that the statutory requirements for special educational provision are up to date and there are plans to help pupils with a range of learning needs. When the school has pupils with special educational needs her main tasks are to assess their individual needs, help establish the individual education plans and give direct teaching support to the pupils.
44. The headteacher has quickly grasped many of the issues surrounding the budget in such a small school. The administration of the school is efficient and the day-to-day routines and the ordering and paying of invoices are done effectively. A recent audit by the local authority found that little needed to be improved and the school's financial routines were good. The secretary provides a regular report on the budget for the governing body and there is a clear system of delegation for spending. Money is being saved to cover the costs of improvements to the outdoor facilities for the reception children, although this is yet to be confirmed. In addition, the provision of before and after school facilities is being considered. The school is well resourced in all curriculum areas and there are few shortcomings. This supports the good progress made and the pupils above average attainment. In particular, the resources for the reception children have improved since the last inspection. The staffing levels are appropriate for such a small school but more time for the teaching assistant to work with individuals and groups would be of benefit when finances allow.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. The school is effective in enabling pupils to achieve high standards. To continue the improvements made recently, the headteacher staff and governing body should:
- (1) Provide more opportunities for junior pupils to write at length in a wider range of styles and forms.
(Paragraphs 4, 58, 62)
 - (2) Complete the planned improvements to the outdoor play provision for the youngest children.**
(Paragraphs 13, 44, 50, 56)

*** The school has already identified this issue*

In addition to the above key issues, the governing body should consider adding the following minor issues to their action plan:

- Review the use and quality of worksheets for recording work in science;
(Paragraphs 5, 74)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	14	0	0	0	0
Percentage	5	25	70	0	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents 5 percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0
Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0
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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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	24	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10.4
Average class size	12

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	127 960
Total expenditure	116 579
Expenditure per pupil	5 299
Balance brought forward from previous year	3 000

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.05
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	24
Number of questionnaires returned	19

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	11	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	26	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	74	26	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	47	5	5	0
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	32	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	11	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	79	21	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	21	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	79	21	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	32	5	0	0

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

46. The provision for the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The children are taught as part of the infant class but the curriculum is appropriately planned around the nationally agreed areas of learning and is more closely matched to the needs of children of this age than was the case. Staffing levels have improved, with the addition of good quality support from a teaching assistant for part of each day. Resources are good and the school has good plans to extend and develop an outdoor classroom for the use of these children.
47. The children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year due to the small cohorts, some with as few as two children. However, the overall picture is of the majority of the children starting school with levels of attainment largely above those expected for their ages. The routines for making the start to full time schooling are good and parents feel that the transition is well handled and that children enjoy school and are happy there. In one good example of this, pre school children are invited with parents to a weekly story session. This provides a very good introduction to being with the older pupils and to some of the routines of school life.

Personal, social and emotional development

48. The teaching is good and the children are on line to achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children enjoy coming to school and they settle into the routines quickly. They work and play well together, learning to share resources, make suggestions for how their work could be improved and their behaviour is good. Children are encouraged to speak or sing rhymes in front of a larger group, such as story time with the pre school children. They have opportunities to play a variety of roles in the classroom 'toy shop', linked to the topic on toys. The teacher creates very good relationships with children by, for example, using registration time to make very positive comments about children's work. When taking part in assemblies, reception children learn about, and contribute towards a list of, bad ingredients in life such as lying, anger and other behaviours that spoil people.

Communication, language and literacy

49. The teaching is at least good and has some significant very good aspects. For example, very good use of sticky notes is made to note day-to-day assessments, such as annotating a piece of writing with the child's meaning. The majority of the children will achieve the expected early learning goals and a number will exceed them. They can sit and listen attentively, and are keen to join in with class or assembly discussion. Higher attainers are articulate and have a mature vocabulary. Most of the children understand and appreciate the humour in a story. After being in school for two months, children can sequence pictures to tell a story in the correct order. They can sound out initial sounds, although they are not yet able to blend these into two letter sounds or to sound out unknown words very accurately. More able readers are already working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. They use books confidently and can retell favourite stories. Teachers provide good opportunities to learn to write letters and words and writing of the present reception children shows good progress over their time in the school although some is of uneven size.

Mathematical development

50. The teaching is good and most children are on course to achieve or exceed the expected early learning goals. Very good support is offered by the teaching assistant and the teacher ensures that lessons are appropriately planned so that children take part with Year 1 and 2 pupils where appropriate but also have their own work planned at a level better matched to their prior attainment. For example, in one good lesson, children used the group time to create a measure made from their hand spans, which they then took round the school to use when measuring a variety of objects, supported well by the teaching assistant who encourages the use of mathematical vocabulary such as tall and long. Good use of workbooks linked to appropriate topics enables them to develop skills in number, shape, space and measure. After a term in the school, children can sort shapes, objects and numbers of dots into sets. They can recognise, count numbers to 10 and give the correct answer to questions about one more or one less. They can recognise and name basic two-dimensional shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. The teaching is at least good and often very good. Most children will achieve the expected early learning goals by the age of five, and a number are likely to exceed this. In history, children have compared toys, such as teddy bears, from the present and the past. They have listened to adults talk about their toys and the games they played when they were at school. In design and technology, they have discussed and chosen suitable fabrics for toys for babies, cut out shapes and sewn two pieces together to make a stuffed toy. During the inspection, children designed and made a hoop-la toy from a variety of materials. In science, they have tested a range of toys to see which force, such as push, pull, squeeze or turn, makes a toy work. They use computers regularly, usually with the support of volunteer helpers. They can design and print work using art software. In their first term at the school, children learned about trees and plants and they are able to label parts of plants, do some accurate observational drawing of seedlings and leaves. They have a satisfactory knowledge of some basic Christian stories and festivals, such as Christmas. For example, in assembly they learn about Shrove Tuesday and Lent.

Physical development

52. The teaching is good and by the end of the reception year, most children will achieve or exceed the expected early learning goals. Children's skills with small tools are good. They can cut out carefully and accurately. This was evident in the mathematics lessons where they drew round their hands and then cut these out to make spans with which they measured objects. Children change themselves for physical education lessons. They sing and move appropriately to music. In creating dances based on toys, they adjust their movements to fit 'stiff' or 'floppy' definitions. They move confidently and imaginatively. The good resources enable the children to experience a range of materials and equipment needing careful manipulation, such as construction apparatus. The school still lacks the facility for children to play outdoors with large toys and cycles.

Creative development

53. The teaching is good and the majority of the children are likely to attain the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They create models using modelling

materials; for example, they have made dragons and monsters from plasticine and modelled heads from clay. Salt-dough is used to make rabbits and teddy bears. When they make models, such as the hoop-la toy, they decorate these imaginatively. Children sing tunefully and know a range of nursery rhymes and action songs. They paint and print effective pictures of trees. In a music lesson, they play simple percussion instruments and keep to a simple beat accurately.

ENGLISH

54. The pupils enter the school with a range of attainment but overall above average attainment in English skills. By the time they leave the school, the standards that the pupils attain are very high and they achieve very well. At the end of Year 2, the overall attainment of pupils is above national standards and they make good progress. The school provides good opportunities for all pupils to participate well in the learning activities planned. Standards have risen steadily since the last inspection and inspection evidence shows that this improvement is being maintained. In reading, writing, speaking and listening the pupils make consistently good progress because the teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. However, there is a shortcoming in the way the school provides for the older pupils to use the very good literacy skills they have developed, when writing longer pieces of work in a range of styles and forms. This has a limiting effect on the progress of the pupils in their writing.
55. In developing their speaking and listening skills, the pupils make good progress. The teachers make good use of whole class discussions at the beginning of literacy lessons, and in the introductory sessions to other subjects. The pupils respond very well, listen carefully to the teachers and other pupils, and enjoy offering answers. They confidently ask questions about vocabulary or things that they do not understand. They talk about their work willingly and the older pupils often give detailed answers and make mature comments. The pupils' ideas and opinions are listened to carefully and valued by adults working with them. In one session, Year 3 and 4 pupils think carefully and speak clearly when they describe and promote their invention named after themselves. At assembly time, because the number of pupils is small, any pupil who has a contribution to make can do so; this fosters their self-confidence in speaking to adults and children of different ages. Pupils acquire a wider vocabulary to use in their work. They often suggest alternative adjectives or verbs to use to enhance the quality of their descriptive writing. For example, when testing ways in which air is used as a force, or investigating the best material to make parachutes from, the pupils use appropriate scientific terms to describe their work.
56. The pupils make good progress in learning to read. They attain above average standards by the end of Year 2, and well above those found nationally by the time they leave the school. The majority of pupils read fluently, accurately and with expression. Throughout the school, the pupils have positive attitudes towards the books they read and they enjoy reading. They have good opportunities to develop good reading habits because each day time is devoted to reading in a number of ways. Big books are used well to help the pupils tackle challenging texts and the pupils read individually, and in groups with the teachers to practise and develop their skills. The pupils are encouraged to develop a critical appreciation of the books they read and the older pupils complete book reviews regularly. The pupils discuss the characterisation and the way in which authors develop a plot, and they always say why they like or dislike about a book. The school's arrangements for the home-school reading partnership are carried out consistently; the pupils take books home and read regularly to their parents or carers. The pupils all know that they can find information from different

sources, including the Internet. However, only the older pupils understand how non-fiction books are catalogued and have opportunities to use this knowledge to find books on specific topics. The school has recently improved the number and quality of reading books and 'big books' for use during the literacy sessions. The range of books for pupils to read individually and take home is more limited.

57. Standards in writing are good by the time the pupils reach the end of Year 2, and by the time they leave the school they are often very high. Throughout the school, the pupils make good progress in gaining and using skills in spelling, handwriting, punctuation, and in the quality of their writing. Spelling patterns and strategies are taught systematically and this enables the pupils to reach a high standard of competency in spelling. Pupils spell common words correctly and use their knowledge of spelling rules and letter strings to make informed attempts at spelling less familiar words. The less confident spellers are fully supported to improve their spelling by being given points to help them remember patterns and opportunities to practise the words they have problems with. The school makes good use of structured booster programmes to improve pupils' progress in learning to spell and to increase their skills in developing and using a wider and richer range of words. The pupils are taught a joined script from an early stage and the teachers have high expectations that all pupils will use a neat, legible and fluent style of handwriting. Clear teaching of punctuation rules means that by the time the pupils leave the school they fully understand how to use speech, question and exclamation marks as well as basic punctuation.
58. In Years 1 and 2, a strength in the writing is the way in which the teacher plans opportunities for pupils to write across a range of forms. These include stories, recounts, persuasive writing and writing that puts forward balanced arguments for and against issues such as should there be a water trough outside the school buildings. The pupils write in paragraphs to extol the personalities of their friends and when reviewing a story one writes succinctly: 'All the characters are very brave and cuddly'. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils improve their writing skills using more complex sentence and spelling structures, a good range of punctuation and fully joined handwriting. They often tackle challenging tasks such as comprehension of events in a play script on 'Working Children'. They learn how to use a dictionary and a thesaurus to expand their vocabulary and to learn interesting words to use in their writing. Their openings to stories invite the reader to continue to find out what happens, as when a story begins: *'In the cosy pumpkin shaped house there was a moody duck, a mean squirrel and a bossy cat'* and *'One gloomy day Lily was sitting in the untidy, smelly stable when a brilliant idea popped into her head'*. Good use is being made of writing skills across the curriculum especially in history, geography and religious education. However, although the older pupils show imagination and flair, especially in short pieces of writing, the school does not provide enough opportunities for them to engage in extended and sustained opportunities to write in a range of styles and forms.
59. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The teachers plan effectively to provide work that teaches the basic skills of literacy systematically and well throughout the school. The pupils are made aware of what it is they are to learn by the end of the lesson and their individual targets are clearly displayed to help them know what they must do to improve further. The teachers make good use of resources to support the learning, including well-chosen texts and interesting presentations of the material. There are helpful displays about literacy in the classrooms and the teachers refer to them to support teaching and learning. Good use is made of the skills of the teaching assistant, and volunteers who help in the classrooms, to support teaching and learning in literacy. The pupils have some opportunities to use word processing programs to plan, draft and edit pieces of work. A good use of ICT

skills was seen when the younger pupils used a digital camera to 'capture' a topic for their page in the class dictionary. The school has a policy for the subject and is using the National Literacy Strategy guidelines on what should be taught. Assessment procedures are secure and are used to clearly identify what needs to be done to raise standards further. The pupils' work is marked regularly throughout the school. The marking recognises work done and efforts made; it is often annotated with helpful comments and guidance to help the pupils to improve their work. There are some areas for development in the teaching. In a lesson seen with the younger class, following a good introduction, the expectations of what the pupils could achieve independently were too high and the progress of the pupils was slowed. The teacher of the older pupils does not plan enough occasions when pupils can plan and complete extended pieces of writing. However, overall the teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and very good relationships with them. They know the pupils well and generally, the work is well matched to the needs of the pupils. The subject manager for literacy is the headteacher; she has already implemented a programme of monitoring teaching and learning to ensure that the high standards achieved by the school are sustained.

MATHEMATICS

60. The standards have been regularly above or well above average for a number of years. Given the small cohorts, this represents a very good level of consistently good test results, and the evidence of the work being carried out by the present pupils supports the view that standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 4. This picture is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were above average by the end of Year 4. The rise in standards is due to improvements in the teaching since the National Numeracy Strategy was introduced, and the teachers' consistently high expectations and very good relationships between staff and pupils.
61. Year 1 pupils' skills in number work are above those expected for their ages. They can order, add and subtract to 20 confidently, and use money accurately in some calculations and to make given amounts. They know how many sides two-dimensional shapes have. They have a growing understanding of ordinal numbers and use these in practical work such as putting a queue of cars in order. Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of early multiplication tables, work with amounts of money to five pounds and are familiar with odd and even numbers. They tell the time in hours and half hours in both analogue and digital systems. They are beginning to work with numbers to 100 and round to the nearest 10. Less able pupils still reverse written numbers at times. In mental sessions they count in hundreds to one thousand. In one good lesson, pupils used partitioning to add two digit numbers.
62. In Year 3, pupils are working at a high level. They estimate accurately and then measure lengths in metres and centimetres. They work out perimeters of irregular shapes and have a sound knowledge of three-dimensional shapes. Early work with fractions and decimals supports the good and often very good standards achieved. They use their understanding of a right angle to work out which angles are larger or smaller. In Year 4, pupils use smaller fractions and understand equivalence. They are confident with numbers to 1000 and are learning to accurately use coordinates, compass points and understand clockwise and anticlockwise. Early work using negative numbers also indicates the advanced level of understanding of these pupils. In one excellent lesson pupils learn to multiply by 9 and 11 by using their understanding of multiplication by 10.
63. The pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very good. They are interested and enthusiastic about the tasks given them. They work well together and co-operate on joint tasks, although

this is less well developed in Year 1 and 2. The use of individual and group targets is helping focus pupils on those areas where they are underachieving.

64. The teaching is good in the infant class and very good in the juniors. In one excellent lessons observed in Years 3 and 4, the teacher's very good relationships and extremely well-planned and challenging teaching resulted in excellent learning about how to multiply by two digit numbers using partitioning and combining. The lessons have very good pace and the small classes enable very effective assessments to be carried out on an individual level. Resources are well prepared and appropriate to support the learning. Those who complete complex multiplication are then challenged to check their work through mental calculations and this very successfully extends their understanding and mental skills.
65. Numeracy skills are used effectively in other subjects. For example, in a design and technology lesson, pupils in Years 2 designed and made a game for which players needed addition skills. In geography, Year 3 pupils collate information about threats to the environment and turn this into a bar chart. The teachers use computers and other ICT equipment appropriately. Calculators are used when necessary. The CD-ROM resources are not very extensive, although there are a number of activities for practising multiplication tables. Older pupils use a spreadsheet to create graphs and charts. For example, pupils have recorded the results of their measurement of the speed of flow of a stream.
66. The co-ordinator analyses the test results to look for areas of weakness. For example, a lack of understanding about how to approach two part questions was causing some misunderstanding and this has been addressed through some carefully directed teaching. The co-ordinator attends regular local authority up-date meetings and this helps overcome any isolation resulting from the small size of the school. She has also attended more detailed subject training and this has had a positive impact on standards. The newly introduced commercial scheme is being used appropriately to support the teaching throughout the school and ensure more consistency in the provision. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning. The staff share planning and assessment and they know the attainment and achievement of all of the pupils on an individual basis due to the good tracking systems. Where these show individual underachievement the staff address it, helping pupils to make good progress over time.

SCIENCE

67. The attainment at the end of Year 2 is above that seen nationally and pupils leave the school with a similarly high standard of attainment. The pupils enter the school with above average attainment in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The significant strengths in the teaching, and the science curriculum provided for the pupils, means that they make consistently good progress. The teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to take part in investigative work although there could be more occasions on which the pupils devise their own experiments in order to explore their own ideas. Teachers always use correct scientific language with the pupils, and good input is made to ensure that the pupils all fully grasp the meanings of the words used. An area for development is the over use of pre-prepared worksheets for pupils to record their findings. The standards in literacy are high and the pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the science they are taught but there are missed opportunities for them to devise their own ways of writing up experiments independently.

68. Year 2 pupils know that forces can occur as pushes and pulls, and be described by twists, squeezes, or blows. They can explain that water or air can be forced through a hole at different rates, for example in a bottle with holes down the side the water from the bottom hole spurts out further because the pressure is greatest at the bottom of the bottle. They conduct experiments to test air pressure being used to blow balloons up or move the sails of a windmill. They discover that the more air force being used, the quicker things will expand, move, or turn. They know that materials have different properties and the youngest pupils can identify correctly a range of items made from wood. They experiment to find out that seeds need water to grow and carry out fair tests to try out their predictions. They study the parts and life cycle of plants. They predict and then test a range of items to see if they float or sink.
69. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils first predict, and then test, to see if every metal is attracted to magnets. This work is extended when they test magnets to see if they work underwater and through various materials. They learn about gravity and how to measure using newtons. They know that friction is a force that is 'trying to stop things moving'. They can test rocks for hardness and the permeability of different soils. The pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of the different properties of materials and learn about solids, liquids, and gases. They know that some changes are reversible and some not. They have good opportunities to study aspects of caring for and enhancing the environment. The pupils know what constitutes a fair test, and communicate and carry this out well when they make parachutes from different materials and test their efficiency from the top of the climbing frame in the hall. The most able pupils can explain how gravity and air resistance affects the performance of the parachutes.
70. The teaching is good overall with some very good teaching seen in Years 3 and 4. The planning of the science curriculum is a strength. It provides the pupils with a broad and challenging range of topics and careful attention is paid to the pupils working at a higher level when they revisit topics in the next cycle of the planning. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and place a good emphasis on careful observation and the use of correct scientific vocabulary. However, on too many occasions teachers direct much of the work and the pupils' investigative skills are limited by too few opportunities to devise their own investigations. There is some use of ICT to support the pupils' learning in science, as when the older pupils use a program to model testing parachutes with different loads. The teacher usually devises the way in which the pupils record their findings and so, although the pupils make good use of the skills they are learning in writing, they have few opportunities to decide which is the most appropriate format for presenting their work.
71. The subject is well coordinated and the school makes good use of the planning and resource opportunities provided by membership of the local cluster of small schools. A science week, which involves the children, the parents, and the community, is held annually to raise the profile of the subject. The 'Gardening Gang' after school environmental club involves nearly all of the school. It extends and enhances the pupils' knowledge and understanding of how they themselves can contribute to the sustainability of the environment. The pupils are encouraged and stimulated to look at objects and happenings with excitement, enjoyment, and interest when they are studying science. This results in the subject making a significant contribution to the personal development of the pupils and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

ART AND DESIGN

72. It was not possible to observe any art lessons during the inspection. However, from displays and examples of pupils' past work, it is clear that the standard of work is above that expected for pupils by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 4. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
73. Year 1 and 2 pupils use modelling materials to create teddy bears and rabbits, which they paint when dry, resulting in good, colourful animals. Pictures of different shop fronts have been produced to form a frieze illustrating a town street as contrast to their village locality. They have used egg boxes and modelling materials to make colourful and imaginative dragons.
74. In Year 3 and 4, pupils sketch good, observational pencil drawings of leaves and plants. A good link with ICT is made as pupils use the digital camera to take close up photographs of parts of trees and hedgerow, evaluating the result and saying how they could improve their effort another time. They have designed good Ancient Greek patterns and cut out Greek vases with very exact symmetry in a good link to the history topic. Further work involved using computer software to create repeating patterns using illustrations with a Greek theme.
75. The work of well-known artists has a high profile in the school and pupils learn to appreciate a range of different techniques and styles. Older pupils have written some biographical notes about Picasso after researching his life in books and on the Internet. They have created painted portraits in a similar style to Picasso and these are very effective. Pupils have also studied works by Paul Klee and have produced very effective pictures of Theseus in a similar style, to illustrate the Greek myth.
76. The recent introduction of sketchbooks will provide pupils with more opportunities to try out techniques and new media and will create an effective record of the development of their skills. There is little formal assessment of skills made and recorded at present, although the teachers are very aware of individual pupils' abilities.
77. The school has produced its own scheme, planning work directly from the National Curriculum and basing it around the topic being covered. For example, in the toys topic children learnt to mix colour while painting a multicoloured elephant. This planning ensures pupils meet a good range of techniques and opportunities over their time in the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78. By the end of Year 2, and when the pupils leave the school, their attainment is above national expectations and they make good progress. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection, although the rate of progress made by the pupils has improved. Throughout the school the pupils talk enthusiastically about their work, they show pride in their finished products and can test and evaluate the standard and use of the finished articles. Often work is linked to topics being studied in other curriculum areas and this has a positive impact on the understanding of pupils as to the usefulness of the techniques they are taught. The teaching is arranged differently to other subjects. The Year 2 pupils join with the older pupils, and, although they tackle different tasks, they have the experience of learning alongside the Year 3 and 4 pupils to test and evaluate their finished articles. There is a growing use of ICT skills as, for example, when pupils take photographs in their work using a digital camera; however, this is an area for future development.

79. The Year 1 and 2 pupils make a soft toy 'suitable for a baby'. They design the toy, choose the material it is to be made, create a pattern and cut out the shapes. They then join them by sewing and stuff them to produce an attractive result. The pupils in Year 1 use a simple running stitch and Year 2 pupils successfully use a blanket stitch showing that the pupils make appropriate progress in the development of their skills. Year 2 pupils have constructed good quality wooden toys that have moving parts such as wheels and a clock with hands that turn. The toys are carefully varnished and finished to a high standard. As part of the on-going toy topic both year groups design and make a game from 'found' materials that involves adding up. A good variety of games are suggested and the pupils draw their designs in detail and identify the materials they will use to make up the final design chosen. The Year 3 and 4 pupils learn how to measure, saw, sand and fix pieces of wood to make a solid structure as the basis for a model of the Wooden Horse of Troy complete with a hinged flap for the soldiers to come out of. They make a good range of items from recycled materials; for example a water-timer from plastic bottles and some tablemats from old paper. On completion, they test and evaluate the finished products and suggest how they could have improved their design.
80. The quality of teaching is good overall. Strengths in the teaching include good knowledge of the curriculum, the sharing of clear learning objectives with the pupils, and good preparation of resources. In addition, the pupils are encouraged to work independently and try techniques for themselves. The teachers are skilled at asking open-ended questions that encourage the pupils to think problems through for themselves. However, in the younger class this approach, together with the pupils working in groups of three or four, means that the process of reaching a consensus is rather protracted and the teacher could usefully consider having the pupils working in twos. The subject co-ordinator ensures that the school makes good use of its links to the cluster schools. These links support the planning and ensure that the pupils build on previously learned knowledge and understanding and skills when they tackle new topics. The subject manager also makes sure that there is an adequate range of tools, materials and equipment to support teaching and learning in the subject. The school has in place satisfactory systems to check the pupils' knowledge and understanding and skills in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

81. When the pupils leave the school, and at the end of Year 2, the standards of attainment in both subjects are above those expected nationally and all the pupils make good progress. This is an improvement on the findings at the time of the last inspection where standards and progress were found to be only satisfactory. All the pupils are interested in and enjoy learning about historical and geographical topics. The strengths of these subject areas include the planning and the provision for teaching and learning. The school plans together with the two other schools in the cluster group for a three-year rolling programme in the infant class and a two-year rolling programme in the junior class. This planning ensures that a very good range of stimulating and worthwhile activities is available which are supported by very good links between subjects. An area for development is to use fewer prepared worksheets, especially in Years 3 and 4, increasing the opportunities for the pupils to independently use their very good literacy skills in recording information and findings.
82. Growing use is being made of good ICT skills to support learning. For example, the pupils have used the web-cam to record the living memories of the Second World War from older members of the community. The Internet is used to research topics such as the Stone Age and data handling programs to present findings about waste disposal and recycling. An

interesting booklet about why Rushton would be a good place to take a holiday is well-illustrated using photographs taken with a digital camera.

83. In Year 2 pupils compare toys of the present with those of past generations and say how and why they differ. They investigate six differing teddies, place them in age order and talk about which is the oldest and why. They write their own accounts of Theodore Roosevelt and the history of teddy bears. They have a time line showing events between 1900 and 2000 and they are beginning to have a sound sense of chronology. The pupils are interested in history; they enjoy talking about what they have learned. They understand that we can learn about the past by looking at pictures and artefacts, and by asking people to tell us things and by remembering for ourselves. They know that books and the Internet can provide good sources of historical information and evidence. Year 3 and 4 pupils increasingly develop their ability to select and link information from a variety of sources. When they learn about Stone Age man they consider what evidence there is and where it is found. They find out about a stone shelter in the Orkney Islands and consider man's needs for food, shelter and warmth. In studying the Ancient Greeks, they learn about the influence that there has been on architectural styles in succeeding buildings right up to the present day. They use Greek vases as a source of information about everyday life and warfare. The pupils learn about the Greek gods and write about their personal favourite with some insight: *'Ares - god of war and lover of Aphrodite. Ares was not as important as he thought he was'*.
84. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about maps and globes and find where countries are on a world map. They make a map to show the journey made by Little Red Riding Hood from home to her Grandmother's house in the woods. They study and learn about buildings' use in a shopping area. They consider the implications of toy manufacture, transport and selling in shops. The pupils make a traffic survey of the main road as part of their environmental topic. The school has maps of the local area and plans of the school and the pupils have opportunities to follow routes on a plan of the school. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils study the weather. They discover that there are different climatic zones and the effects varied sorts of weather can have on people's lives. As part of their history topic on Ancient Greece, they learn about and consider the geographical features of the country. The work on maps of the world is extended as the pupils use travel brochures to identify the climatic zone and probable weather in a chosen holiday area. The pupils' awareness of environmental issues is well fostered in geography lessons. They carry out a check on the waste materials produced at their home over a week and consider local pollution threats. They learn about fossil fuels and renewable sources of energy and how they could save energy in the home.
85. The teaching of history and geography is good overall. One lesson was seen in history; it gave the pupils good opportunities to try playground games and rhymes from the past. They remembered how they had played some of them as part of the community celebrations for the Queen's Golden Jubilee. The teacher lead good discussions on how songs give us information about life in the past as in *'Have you seen the muffin man?'* Inspection evidence shows that the pupils are given very well planned and interesting opportunities to consider historical and geographical issues and to gain knowledge and skills in both subjects. The school makes effective use of visits to a range of places, as for example during the work on Greece, to a local pottery. Very good use is made of members of the community to give the pupils experience of living memory as a historical source. The older pupils take part in an enjoyable and interesting Viking Day to help them understand something of life in those times. Both subjects make a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and their personal development. The subjects are well-managed and good use is made of the support from the cluster schools. The teachers are enthusiastic about the

subjects and ensure that there are good resources and books to support the teaching and learning in history and geography. The school's satisfactory systems monitor the growth of pupils' historical and geographical knowledge and understanding.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

86. Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and above those expected by the end of Year 4. Standards have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. However, there have been significant improvements to the curriculum provided, due to better resources and extra training for the staff. The hardware and software is used in a range of subjects across the curriculum, and this is a strength of the provision.
87. In Year 1 and 2, pupils used a computer activity with confidence as part of their science work on forces, to consolidate the idea of how far an object moves depends on the force applied to it. The curriculum plans show that they have experience at programming a robot to move and turn. Good use is made of peripheral ICT equipment such as a digital camera and a web cam. In Year 1 and 2, pupils use a digital camera to illustrate the page they are making for a class dictionary. Their attitudes towards the work are very good and they share the camera and co-operate in a very mature manner. Year 2 pupils download photographs from a town website as part of their work following a trip in the locality. They move text around in literacy tasks to put simple instructions in the correct order.
88. Year 3 and 4 pupils log on to the computer and open up specific programs as required. In art, they use the digital camera to take close up pictures of parts of trees and hedgerows, as well as doing observational drawing. They evaluate the pictures and say how they would improve them. The web cam is used in literacy lessons to record pupils making a self penned sales pitch for inventions they have devised. They record, store, and then retrieve and play, the video clips. In addition, they access a recording of two visitors who answered questions on the Second World War as part of a history topic. The teacher in the junior class uses this work as an effective method for assessing pupils' speaking and listening skills. In addition, work in science is assessed through a program that tests parachutes carrying different loads. Pupils merge text and clip-art images to create posters, using a range of font styles, sizes and colours. In a history topic on ancient Greece, pupils have used art software to create effective repeating patterns using Greek shapes and images.
89. No direct teaching of the subject was observed but the skills pupils have and the evidence from the work they have produced indicate that the teaching is supporting good progress. In some work, although apparently finished, grammatical or spelling errors remain uncorrected. However, there are examples of very good marking where the teacher points out the need for sub headings in booklets relating to pollution, encourages the use of different fonts and annotates the next draft to show what improvements have been made. This ensures pupils have a clear idea of what they have done well and how they can improve their work.
90. The school has a website, although this is at an early stage of development. Parents have been correctly consulted about the participation of their children through photographs and regarding Internet access. Pupils have not yet been involved in creating any of the website. Very good use is made of volunteer helpers to work with pupils especially when using the computers. Good records of progress are kept and teachers are very aware of the skills different pupils have. The use of e-mail is growing. Pupils receive e-mails from ex-pupils at their new school. In addition, pupils have used e-mail to contact the parish magazine, other

schools and local people regarding the Second World War. In one case, the teacher e-mailed instructions for some work to the pupils while she was absent from school.

91. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about the subject and is working very hard, alongside her other responsibilities, to improve provision and raise standards. She attends briefing meetings with the local authority, enabling her to keep up-to-date with developments in the subject. The teachers are taking part in a national training scheme, and this is almost complete. It has clearly developed their knowledge of ICT and how computers and other hardware can be used more effectively.

MUSIC

92. Music has a high profile in the school. A good range of percussion instruments is displayed and labelled in the hall, and others are stored on a trolley, making them easily accessible to both classes. Music was played at the start of one assembly observed, but an opportunity was missed to discuss the music, the composer or the instruments used. However, in another assembly the ballet music played was discussed and pupils' reactions to it showed some thought and feeling for the music. Following earlier appreciation of music in assemblies, the work of Gilbert and Sullivan had a high profile in the school and had a very enthusiastic response from one pupil. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 4.
93. It was only possible to observe one lesson, and that was with the infant children. In this good lesson, pupils demonstrated a confidence in using percussion instruments, in recognising changes in pitch through an action game and in singing very tunefully. They use terms such as crochet, quaver and minim correctly and try hard to match their instruments to the beat, although their skills in starting at the correct place are less secure. The singing throughout the school is of a high standard. Pupils sing tunefully from hymnbooks in assembly, or from memory, when singing the end of the day prayer in Years 3 and 4, or action songs and nursery rhymes in Years 1 and 2. They experience music from different cultures, learning, for example, rounds and two part songs from Africa. They also learn music from different times; for example, the recorder group took part in a local festival and had to learn Tudor music. In music lessons, junior pupils have learnt to record the pitch of a piece accurately, using a simple form of notation. The pupils have the opportunity to compose music using pictorial forms of notation. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 use computer software imaginatively to compose, record, play, assess and alter their work, using a range of sounds and sound effects.
94. Good use is made of a local pianist to help provide an appropriate level of support for singing and recorder lessons. Occasional visits from local authority musicians provide pupils with the opportunity to hear a range of instruments played to a good standard. In addition, the pupils often attend musical performances as part of theatre visits or while visiting other schools, further widening their experience of different types of music. The teaching observed was good and made effective use of a scheme that enables non-specialist teachers to approach the subject with confidence.
95. The co-ordinator has only recently taken on responsibility for the subject. She also leads the subject for the other schools in the cluster. She attends professional development meetings to keep herself up-to-date with issues in the subject, and disseminates information around the three schools. The development plan indicates that she is looking for and will attend further

training as appropriate, including investigating the use of ICT in the subject. The subject policy needs reviewing and updating. Standards are assessed and pupils' progress is tracked.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96. Standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is a result of very good teaching in the junior class and very productive lessons, supported by pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour. At the last inspection, no judgement about standards was made due to a lack of evidence. Standards are high in swimming, where all pupils reach the expected level for their ages. In gymnastics and dance, standards are also above those expected. A good result of the very good teaching is the way that the pupils focus on improving the quality of their movement and sequences.
97. Year 1 pupils create imaginative movements to music illustrating different toys. They understand terms such as loose or stiff movements. They move confidently and with enjoyment. Pupils in Year 2, 3 and 4 link a range of movements into a sequence, on the floor and using apparatus. For example, in one very good lesson they linked travelling on large or small body parts, with twists, balances and rolls. The higher attaining pupils also ensured they had good starting and finishing positions. At lunchtimes and play times pupils also have the opportunity to practise skills. For example, one boy demonstrated good tennis skills as he played with a racquet and ball against a wall.
98. The quality of teaching is good in the infants and very good in the juniors. When the teacher is giving instructions, the pupils listen well, and respond appropriately. Teachers are aware of the need to emphasize safety, especially in the small hall. The resources are well prepared and appropriate. The teacher in the Year 1 lesson made very effective use of a commercial recorded dance lesson tape by adapting it and using the music to support her own planning. In the Year 2, 3 and 4 gymnastic lesson, the very good relationships existing between the teacher and the pupils resulted in them listening very carefully to the instructions and responding to suggestions for improving their work very positively. Very effective use of pairs is made to get pupils to work with different ages and to extend their skills by copying and evaluating others' work. Their attitude towards the subject is very good, as is their behaviour, and this encourages the development of a high level of skill.
99. The staff work hard to offer pupils a chance to take part in competitive activities. There is a cluster sports day, and a school sports day. These involve all pupils but also are appropriately competitive. The school has a football team that has taken part in matches against other local small schools, and some larger ones in a local town. The curriculum planning is appropriate and ensures the full coverage of the National Curriculum. A range of schemes is used when planning different aspects of the subject. There is no evaluation of teaching and learning in the subject at present. Teachers have received training in the use of new resources and for dance, and the co-ordinator attends local authority up date meetings.
100. The school has a very small room for use as a hall. However, it is used very effectively and safely and enhances pupils' learning. The apparatus available is suitable for the ages of the pupils and the space available and this has a positive impact on the standards. The hall is used very safely and the pupils are clearly well used to routines for getting the apparatus out, or moving unwanted furniture from the hall. The school has a small field and a very good-sized hard play surface. Good use of the local small schools' cluster is made through joint sports' days.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. By the end of Year 2, and when the pupils leave the school, attainment is above that expected and the pupils make good progress. This is an improvement on the situation found at the time of the previous inspection when progress was judged to be satisfactory. The school uses the guidance from the local education authority very well, and this makes clear what should be taught. This has a clear impact on the good progress made by pupils in gaining religious concepts, knowledge and skills. A particular strength is the way in which the school joins with two other small schools to form a cluster and makes very good use of this arrangement to plan work together. All the pupils have equal access to the subject and are included in the various activities planned to support the learning in this area. Because the teaching in the lessons and assemblies is very good, the pupils' response is correspondingly of a high standard. The pupils concentrate very well and think carefully about complex issues and their relevance to their own lives. The opportunities the pupils have to learn about Christianity and other major world faiths contribute significantly to their very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and their personal development.
102. The younger pupils find out about the history and structure of the Bible. They learn about events from the Old Testament such as Moses and the Burning Bush and how Solomon built the Temple. They know that Joseph was a carpenter and imagine Jesus working with his father. After they have heard the story of Zaccheus, they think about how they and other people could change for the better. They learn about the Christian festivals of Christmas, Easter and Harvest and about the importance of Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday in the life of a Christian. The pupils learn about Sukkoth and the Jewish harvest traditions. They hear and learn about other religions through stories such as the Hindu one of Ganesh and the Broken Tusk. They discover how Muslims pray, and the significance of parts of a mosque. Year 3 and 4 pupils study the events in the early life of Jesus as they consider the Temptations and the time Jesus spent in the Wilderness. Through learning about major twentieth figures such as Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa, the pupils have good opportunities to consider how difficult it can be to stand up for what you believe to be right. When they listen to the story of the Good Samaritan, they develop an understanding of the power of the message of Jesus to the Jews that on some occasions the breaking of a law might be permissible. As this lesson follows one on the Children's Act as part of the citizenship curriculum the pupils have an opportunity to think deeply about the implications in their lives about right and wrong and how laws are constructed to protect people's rights to education and care.
103. The quality of teaching is very good. The teacher who is responsible for the subject in both classes demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of the guidance for what is to be taught. She manages the pupils very well and ensures they are fully involved in the learning. She uses effective, well directed questioning to develop the pupils' understanding and shows that she values the pupils' ideas. A very good lesson was seen when she introduced the Qur'an as an article of religious and precious significance. She explains the use of the prayer mat and its compass. She washes her hands and puts on a headscarf. As she speaks quietly and reverently of the importance of the Qur'an to Muslims the pupils watch with intense interest as she unwraps it from its white cloth. The pupils follow her request for silence while the candle is alight and afterwards are able to express their thoughts and ideas about the special nature of the book.
104. The subject co-ordinator ensures that there is a good range of resources and artefacts including Bibles, books and pictures to promote the pupils' knowledge of different faiths and cultural traditions. Regular visits are made to places of religious significance such as the local

church and chapel, a synagogue and a mosque. Additionally, the school receives visits from local clergy and other friends of the school from different faith heritages. All of these activities help the pupils to recognise the importance of religion in many people's lives and how they themselves form part of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. However, this complements the clear teaching and lead given to the pupils about Christianity and the Christian way of life, which is wholly appropriate in a Church of England school.