

INSPECTION REPORT

Canonbury Primary School

Islington

London

LEA: Islington

Unique reference number: 100398

Headteacher: Steve Lancashire

Reporting inspector: Paul Canham
1353

Dates of inspection: 28th February – 3rd March 2000

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Canonbury Road London N1 2UT
Telephone number:	0171 226 5020
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Annie Dinner
Date of previous inspection:	This is the first inspection of this school

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Paul Canham	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Design and technology; Physical education.	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school; The school's results and pupils' achievements; Teaching and learning; Leadership and management; Key issues for action.
Brian Gilbert	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and personal development; Pupils' welfare, health and safety; Partnership with parents and carers.
Tom Allen	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History; Information technology; Equality of opportunity.	
Margaret Lygoe	<i>Team inspector</i>	Children aged under five; Art; Mathematics.	Quality and range of opportunities for learning.
Steven Parker	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Provision for special educational needs.	
Gerry Slamon	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Music; Religious education; English as an additional language.	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Canonbury is larger than most primary schools; it caters for 406 pupils, aged from four to eleven years, with roughly equal proportions of boys and girls. In addition, 51 children attend the nursery. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average. The proportion of pupils with some form of special educational need, including those with statements, is similar to the national average. A small but significant proportion of pupils are from ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The attainment of pupils on entry to compulsory education at the age of five is very broad and varies between intakes. Currently, attainment for the large majority of pupils when they start school is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The recent amalgamation has meant that the school has undergone a period of turbulence, although it has successfully overcome many of the challenges. It is a good school, and pupils benefit from a good standard of education. The school is very well led and managed, and places a strong emphasis on high standards within a rich curriculum which meets the needs of the pupils, including the higher attainers. Many pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment, but they achieve above and well above average standards in a broad range of subjects when they leave the school at the end of Year 6. The consistently good teaching is another reason why the school is so successful. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children are given a very good start to their education in the nursery.
- Pupils achieve very well, and by the age of 11 they reach above average, or well above average, standards in English, mathematics, science, information technology, art, design and technology, and music.
- As a result of consistently good teaching in Key Stage 2, which makes challenging demands, pupils are motivated to make good progress.
- The outstanding leadership and governance set a clear direction for the work of the school in raising standards.
- Exceptional strategic and financial planning underpins the school's priorities.
- The broad and rich curriculum is enhanced further by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

What could be improved

- Writing for the pupils currently in Year 2. These pupils do not write confidently at length. Standards of spelling and punctuation are below average and handwriting is generally poor.
- Numeracy skills for the pupils currently in Year 2. These pupils do not add and subtract numbers to ten as quickly as they should.
- Punctuality. Too many pupils are brought to school late at the start of the school day.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This school was formed in 1998 by the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school on the existing site. No previous inspection has taken place of either school, or of the present school. In consequence, no judgements can be made about improvements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	N/A	N/A	C	A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	B	A
Science	N/A	N/A	B	A

Key

well above average **A**

above average **B**

average **C**

below average **D**

well below average **E**

The infant and junior schools amalgamated in September 1998 and the report has not referred directly to the performance of pupils prior to this. When the 1999 results are compared with those of schools having a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science. The proportions of pupils reaching levels above those expected for their age were also well above average in the three subjects. These results show that pupils are achieving particularly well, and inspection evidence reflects this. In addition, standards in information technology are above the national expectation, and standards in art, design and technology and music are above those found nationally. Pupils are making enough progress in religious education to meet the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of both key stages. Standards in other subjects are similar to those found nationally. The school has set realistic targets for English and mathematics for the Year 2000, and the most recent results indicate that the school is on its way to achieving them in both subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are interested in their work and excited by challenging and lively teaching. They are responsive, show good attitudes, and are interested in the activities which the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school is good, and it is satisfactory overall in lessons. Pupils understand what is expected of them although a small number of pupils are easily distracted and hinder the learning of others in a few lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good relationships are a feature of the school community. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to work by themselves, or in groups, to develop independence when working in class.
Attendance	Attendance is good, but too many pupils come to school late in the morning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The consistently good teaching is the main reason why pupils are achieving so well. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, 96 per cent were satisfactory or better, of which 63 per cent were good, very good, or outstanding. Teaching was good in Key Stage 2, where 76 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better. Teaching was good for children aged under five, and particularly for children in the nursery, where they are involved in an exciting variety of skilfully structured activities. Examples of good teaching were seen in all years and in all subjects. A feature of the good and very good teaching in Key Stage 2 is the range of challenging activities for pupils when grouped by attainment in English and mathematics. High expectations and well-planned lessons lead to good levels of achievement. Pupils also benefit significantly from the good and very good teaching by subject specialists, such as in information technology, art, design and technology and music, because knowledge of the subject underpins incisive questioning and closely-crafted tasks to match the pupils' needs. Careful attention is given to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. A feature common to all the unsatisfactory teaching (4 per cent) was a lack of focused tasks to match the pupils' needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The well-planned curriculum ensures that all pupils are given a balanced range of experiences matched to their wide-ranging needs. The emphasis placed on teaching English and mathematics in similar attainment groups balances the good provision for music and art which enables pupils to express themselves and develop their confidence. Children aged under five are given a very good start to their education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good, and pupils are given appropriate work matched to their needs. Pupils benefit from effective support when working individually or in small groups away from the main class. The detailed individual education plans are used well to help with assessments.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The provision is well managed and pupils with English as an additional language are given appropriate levels of support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is satisfactory, and for social and cultural development it is good. The school's rich curriculum and good relationships enable pupils to reflect on events and on their lives. The importance of truth and justice is communicated through the schools evident concern for these qualities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures to ensure that pupils are well cared for. Good Child Protection procedures ensure that staff are sensitive to the needs of the pupils. Teachers and other adults give pupils positive encouragement to promote confidence.

The school has a strong working partnership with a significant proportion of parents, and this has a positive impact on the quality of learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives outstanding leadership and provides his colleagues with sensitive support. The management structure has yet to evolve fully, but the headteacher delegates well and key staff have a clear understanding of their roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Members of the governing body are knowledgeable and committed to the school. They are highly effective in shaping the direction of the recently-amalgamated school because they are well informed and very supportive.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. Information from assessment and test data is used successfully to help with planning. The school has established very good strategies to identify the value added to its work.
The strategic use of resources	Financial administration and planning are very good. The school makes good use of its resources, and it budgets carefully to support the priorities identified for improvement.

The school places a high priority on staffing, and pupils benefit from the additional support in lessons and around the school. The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers and other adults with subject expertise. The large school building provides adequate accommodation, and the good resources are used well to support teaching.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The good teaching. • The school listens to their concerns. • The good management. • Their children are expected to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework that is consistently set and marked. • Greater consistency in the expectations of all staff regarding behaviour.

Inspection evidence supports all the positive features expressed by parents in response to the questionnaire and at the meeting of parents with the registered inspector. The quality of the homework seen during the inspection was satisfactory for pupils in Key Stage 1 and good for those pupils in Key Stage 2. However, inspection evidence supports the parents' concerns over the inconsistency in respect of behaviour management. Some parents expressed their concern over the high turnover of staff; inspection evidence did not indicate that this had a significant impact on standards.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Following a curriculum in the nursery which gives children a rich variety of very skilfully structured activities, most children enter compulsory education with standards expected for their age, although the range of attainment is very broad. Throughout the school, pupils made good gains in their knowledge and understanding in 65 per cent of the lessons observed, and satisfactory progress in all but 4 per cent of the remaining lessons. Over time, pupils aged 11 achieve very well in most subjects, particularly English, mathematics, science, and information technology, and in art, design and technology and music, where pupils benefit from the expert support of subject specialists. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress when they are withdrawn for specialist support, and good progress overall. Their needs are identified as soon as possible after entry to the school, so that they can be given appropriate individual education plans. Targets in these plans are clear, specific, and suitably challenging for academic and personal development. Careful monitoring of progress and regular adjustment of targets means that these pupils sustain a good quality of learning, and few pupils require a statement of special needs. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good gains in their knowledge and understanding, and they achieve well over time when the work is closely targeted to their needs.

2. The results for the 1999 national tests show that standards at Key Stage 1 matched the national average in reading and writing, though they were below average in mathematics. When these results are compared with those of schools which have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in these subjects was above the national average in reading but below in writing. In science, the performance levels of pupils in the teacher assessments were below the national average in the 1999 results.

3. The results for the 1999 national tests show that standards at Key Stage 2 matched the national average in English, and they were above average in mathematics, and well above in science. When compared with schools having a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science. The proportions of pupils reaching levels above those expected for their age were also well above the national average in the three subjects. The school has set realistic targets for English and mathematics for the Year 2000, and the most recent results indicate that it is on its way to achieving them.

4. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that in several subjects pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age. By the end of both key stages, standards are above the national expectation in information technology and above those found nationally in art, design and technology and music. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above the national expectation in English and science, and well above in mathematics. Standards in other subjects are similar to those found nationally by the end of

both key stages. Pupils are making enough progress in religious education to meet the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of both key stages. Although attainment in the present Year 2 matches expectations for age in speaking, listening and reading, standards in writing and mathematics are below the national expectation. This is due, in part, to a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs, and also because there are weaknesses in teaching.

5. Literacy skills are used well to reinforce learning throughout the school, although standards are affected by the weak start in developing handwriting. In consequence, standards in writing and presentation are too low in everyday work in all subjects. They do not come up to the high standards that some pupils reach in handwriting exercises and work for display. For example, standards of presentation of written work in mathematics are inconsistent through the school. Several subjects make a good contribution to developing speaking and listening skills.

6. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced, although the school has found it insufficiently challenging for the most talented pupils in Year 6. Pupils generally develop a confident understanding of the number system and become increasingly proficient in mental arithmetic as they progress through the school. This is a strength which underpins the high attainment towards the end of Key Stage 2.

7. By Year 2, pupils learn to listen closely to their teacher, follow instructions, and readily join in discussions of the shared text. Because teachers value the pupils' contributions and listen carefully, pupils try hard to explain their ideas clearly. By Year 6, pupils take part confidently in class discussions. Most pupils are confident speakers and some show good skills in role-play in class assemblies. The enthusiasm with which pupils read is a significant strength. By Year 2, most pupils are independent readers, and levels of accuracy are good. Although few read with expression, because the language is challenging, pupils read expressively in shared reading with the teacher. By Year 6, many pupils have an impressive range and depth of reading experience, and they read fluently. However, pupils would benefit from more opportunities to develop research skills by using information books for independent study. By Year 2, standards in writing are not high enough, and this weak start has a considerable impact on the standard of writing throughout the school. By Year 6, pupils write increasingly for a range of purposes and audiences, and many pupils write very good stories which include an impressive range of vocabulary. Those with higher attainment use varied sentence structures well for dramatic effect.

8. Pupils' good information technology skills are used well to help them redraft their work and check for accuracy. By Year 2, pupils use information technology well to generate ideas in different forms, including text, tables, pictures and sound. By Year 6, pupils are adept at using information technology for a wide range of purposes. They use a range of programs to combine different forms of information for presentation. They incorporate photographs of individuals and landscape into textural reports. Pupils develop research skills by using CD-ROM to find information on topics being studied. Pupils send and receive e-mail and use the Internet to obtain information from web sites.

9. In mathematics, most pupils develop a sound understanding of number facts by Year 2, although standards are low overall. A few pupils in Year 2 achieve well, but many do not have an instant recall of simple number bonds. By Year 6, pupils have made very good progress in acquiring mental skills, and standards improve substantially. Pupils calculate the areas of triangles and arrive at the formula for the calculation. Talented pupils are challenged well in mental arithmetic, and all pupils benefit from being taught in groups formed on the basis of attainment.

10. In science, pupils in Year 2 describe similarities and differences between materials such as glass and metal, and record their findings by using simple tables, drawings and charts. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of day and night, and begin to make simple generalisations about physical phenomena. By Year 6, pupils have a good breadth of understanding of all aspects of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Their knowledge of life processes and living things is particularly good. Pupils benefit from the good emphasis on practical investigations ; they predict what will happen and they understand the concept of a fair test. Higher attaining pupils begin to apply ideas about physical processes to suggest a variety of ways to make changes, such as altering the current in a circuit.

11. Above average standards in art, music and design and technology reflect the school's strong commitment to giving pupils a rich and varied curriculum which enhances their creative skills. The subjects are well integrated into other aspects of the curriculum. Standards in geography, history and physical education are similar to those found in other schools nationally. In religious education, pupils are increasing their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. By Year 6, pupils relate some of the concepts of different faiths to their own experiences and go beyond these to discover more about religious beliefs, ideas and structures.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

12. Pupils have good attitudes to school and to learning. A high proportion of parents (97 per cent) indicated in their response to the questionnaire that their children like coming to school. Pupils are happy to be in school, and to play a full part in their lessons, and they take part with enthusiasm in the extra-curricular activities provided. Some pupils are highly motivated to achieve well in lessons, and they are excited by challenging and lively teaching which grasps their interest and encourages them to think for themselves. Many pupils tackle tasks enthusiastically and this often influences the work of others in the class.

13. The development of children's personal and social skills underpins all the work in the nursery. Children listen to others and take turns. They learn to treat living things with care and concern, and to show a range of feelings. Children respond well to the exciting quality of the activities. In consequence, behaviour is consistently good and there are high levels of concentration. Behaviour in the reception classes is also good, particularly when children are taking part in activities. Children generally concentrate well on tasks and try hard. Relationships are good, and children readily ask for help when they need it.

14. The school has a very good behaviour policy which is based upon high expectations and fostering pupils' self-esteem. It was formulated last term, following wide-ranging discussions between staff, pupils, parents and governors. The policy has not yet become fully embedded in school life. Pupils' behaviour is good around the school and satisfactory in lessons, although it varies considerably. Behaviour in the nursery is very good; children are stimulated by the wide range of activities, and they respond particularly well to consistently high expectations. Overall, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory in lessons in both key stages. They behave well in lessons which are well managed and when the teacher has established good relationships with the pupils. In these lessons, pupils are attentive, and they persist with challenging work and remain attentive. However, in a small proportion of the lessons observed, pupils became restless and easily distracted. This was due in part to the immature behaviour of a small number of pupils, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2.

15. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are generally good. Pupils are supportive of one another. For example, during a lesson in Year 4 on personal, social and health education, pupils used their strong relationships and mutual trust to support each other. Teachers help to cultivate the mutual respect that exists within the school. Although there were occasional disagreements in the playground between pupils, these were dealt with appropriately by teachers and other adults. Pupils are keen to carry out tasks and, when given the opportunity, they behave sensibly and take their responsibility seriously. A significant factor limiting pupils' personal development through the school is that the group-work routines, such as those used in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, have not been established firmly enough. When working independently, pupils are inclined to seek attention from the teacher at an early stage, or disrupt others in the class, rather than persevere in finding their own solution.

16. Attendance levels are good and are above average. However, a significant proportion of pupils arrive late to school in the mornings. Many of these pupils are accompanied by their parents, who acknowledge that they are consistently late. During the inspection, almost 10 per cent of pupils arrived late and fewer than 50 per cent of pupils in classes in Year 2 and Year 4 were ready to start work at the beginning of the school day. The school has written to parents, explaining how the lateness of their children disrupts the beginning of the school day, affects the learning of other pupils who arrive on time, and undermines the work of the teachers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The consistently good teaching is the main reason why pupils are achieving so well, and this is particularly the case for children aged under five and for pupils in Key Stage 2. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of all the lessons seen. Good teaching was seen in 41 per cent of lessons. Very good and outstanding teaching was seen in a further 21 per cent of lessons. Such teaching has a particularly strong focus on helping pupils to make good progress, extend their thinking, and create a thirst for knowledge. For example, children in the nursery are involved in an exciting variety of skilfully structured

activities. The children's good learning is promoted through stimulating practical experiences and well-structured teaching. The quality of teaching was consistently good in Key Stage 2, where 76 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better. A feature of good teaching in this key stage is the range of challenging activities for pupils when grouped by attainment, such as those in English and mathematics. High expectations, well-planned lessons, and teachers' expertise in these subjects lead to pupils achieving well and learning at a very good rate.

18. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen throughout the school. However, some subjects are taught consistently well, and this is reflected in the standards achieved. Pupils in Key Stage 2 benefit from good teaching in English and mathematics because the tasks and activities successfully extend pupils' thinking and understanding. Pupils make very good gains in their knowledge and understanding in information technology because the very good teaching includes tasks which are carefully chosen to match pupils' needs, often with built-in support and extension material provided by the subject specialist. Consistently good teaching in science gives pupils good opportunities to think for themselves and to relate science to every day life. Good teaching in art and music reflects the expertise of the specialists, whose knowledge of the subject underpins the questions they pose to make pupils think and to test their understanding.

19. An overall weakness in teaching is the lack of planned opportunities for pupils to work by themselves and develop their research skills. These weaknesses were seen in some lessons in science and religious education and in English, where pupils have not been adequately trained to work independently while the teacher attends to other groups. The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching (4 per cent) was seen in lessons in both key stages. The teaching of basic skills for pupils in Year 2 was not guided by a sufficiently detailed scheme, and writing tasks were not matched closely enough to different levels of need. A common feature in unsatisfactory lessons centred on the ineffective management of a small number of pupils who became inattentive because they were not sufficiently stimulated by the tasks. Teaching that lacked confidence led to pupils spending too much time listening; in consequence, they became noisy, learning opportunities were lost, and pupils made little progress.

20. Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught when they are withdrawn for specialist help. They take part in a carefully chosen range of activities which engage them mentally, physically and emotionally. As a result, these sessions are productive and happy because pupils realise for themselves that they are making very good progress. Most complete the homework tasks they are given regularly. When these pupils return to class, teachers make good use of their individual education plans to plan appropriate tasks. Though there are few support assistants, they play a valuable role in giving these pupils close attention. Pupils' progress is occasionally unsatisfactory if the teacher does not supervise them closely but it is generally good, because teachers plan appropriate work following the guidance given in the individual education plans. Their progress is carefully monitored and adjustments made to their individual education plans so that future lessons meet their needs.

21. Teachers have a generally good knowledge of their subject. The depth of understanding is often used to underpin clear explanations and incisive questioning to help pupils extend their thinking. For example, pupils in Year 5 made very good gains in their knowledge and understanding about the optimum conditions for plant growth because they were continually challenged to predict and to plan investigations. Pupils benefit significantly from subject specialists who have very high expectations and an infectious enthusiasm for their subject. For example, during an English lesson, high attaining pupils in Year 6 were inspired by the passion, the fear, and the joy which the teacher brought about by her inspirational approach. Planning is a strength, and this was particularly evident where the teacher had carefully designed the lesson to enhance pupils' learning and their creative efforts. This occurred in several subjects, including music and information technology. In these lessons, pupils were given good opportunities to work independently with good guidance which matched their individual needs.

22. There is a good range of methods and strategies to support learning. Teachers who have established a good rapport with pupils manage groups well while focusing attention on individual pupils. Final summary sessions are used well to consolidate and share what has been learnt. For example, in a lesson in Year 5, pupils' understanding of numeracy was reinforced by an outstanding use of extension tasks and a challenging plenary session. Teaching in small groups helps pupils to understand and review their weaknesses; for example, pupils with special educational needs and those in similar attainment groups benefit from close individual support and sensitive use of questioning. Sometimes this draws out information from pupils, sometimes it develops their understanding, and sometimes it makes them think harder and express their thoughts more precisely. Homework is set regularly to reinforce and extend pupils' learning, and in particular it supports achievement in spelling and reading.'

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

23. The school gives its pupils a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements. It has strengths in the enrichment of pupils' artistic and creative development, and in the development of numeracy and information technology. The teaching of English and mathematics within similar attainment groups, and the additional specialist teaching for information technology, art, design and technology and music, have a positive impact on attainment.

24. Following the amalgamation, the new school development plan identified the need to revise the curriculum to provide secure links between the key stages and to ensure that learning is coherently developed. The timing of the amalgamation coincided with a period of extensive curriculum change nationally. Currently, the two deputy heads are working with the headteacher to produce a curriculum plan. New schemes of work are not yet in place for all subjects, but the school is using national guidance, where it is available, to guide planning. The school is wisely preparing for the introduction of the revised National Curriculum and the Early Learning Goals in September 2000.

25. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy, and has adapted the format to provide more time for writing. Creative writing, poetry, and reading are promoted well, but there is currently no formal structure to ensure the progressive development of speaking skills as pupils go from one year to the next. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively. In some years, pupils benefit significantly from being taught in similar attainment groups for English and mathematics. This strategy enables teaching to have a strong focus on helping pupils to make good progress and to extend their thinking. The school has obtained material planned for pupils in Key Stage 3 to extend the most talented Year 6 pupils in mathematics. A specialist English teacher is employed to extend pupils in Years 4 and 6. In consequence, the provision for gifted and talented pupils is good in English and mathematics, and standards are well above average.

26. Provision for religious education meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has not yet developed a scheme of work for personal and social education, although circle time and assemblies are used to promote development, and the whole school follows the same theme. There is satisfactory provision for sex education, and appropriate attention is given to developing pupils' awareness of drug misuse.

27. Provision for information technology is very good, and pupils benefit from weekly lessons in the well-equipped computer suite, including the children in the nursery. The school employs a full time specialist technician who teaches alongside the class teachers. The provision for creative arts is good. The school employs specialist teachers in art, design and technology, and music. All pupils benefit from weekly music lessons. The specialist art and design and technology teachers work with different classes for half-term blocks of lessons. In these two subjects, there is no scheme of work at present to guide class teachers in their planning, and this is identified as a priority in the school development plan. Similarly the school has yet to develop whole school schemes of work for physical education.

28. The equal opportunities policy is clear and explicit. The school actively ensures that all pupils have access to the opportunities it provides. Pupils with special needs have full access to the curriculum. The team of specialist teachers use their expert knowledge well in designing individual education programmes to meet each pupil's needs, taking account of their background, personality and learning styles. Class teachers plan appropriate work, following the guidance given in individual education programmes, so that continuity is assured. The very effective use of the limited support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language ensures that these pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. Pupils benefit from a very good range of after-school clubs, including chess, embroidery, sport, art, craft and music. An art club takes place during the holidays. Many pupils benefit from instrumental tuition, and have the opportunity to play together in an after-school club. Pupils in all year groups, including the nursery, make regular visits to places of educational interest, such as art galleries, theatres, museums, and farms, and to the school locality. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit, when they experience a range of outdoor pursuits. Pupils' experience is also extended by regular visits from artists in residence and from theatre groups.

29. Following the amalgamation, provision in the nursery was identified by the school as an aspect urgently in need of development. The curriculum for children aged under five is good overall, and in the nursery the curriculum is very good. This is having a positive impact on standards. Children are involved in an exciting variety of very skilfully structured activities. Learning is promoted through practical experiences in the very well organised indoor and outdoor teaching areas. Early literacy and numeracy are promoted through well-structured teaching. The reception classrooms, and particularly the reception play area, have yet to be improved to match the standard in the nursery. Provision in the reception classes is satisfactory. There is a good emphasis on developing basic skills, but children have only limited opportunities to work independently.

30. Good provision is made for pupils' social and cultural development. Satisfactory provision is made for their spiritual and moral development. The generally calm atmosphere that has been created in the school supports pupils' spiritual development. This is nurtured in assemblies, in circle times, and by opportunities for reflection in areas of the curriculum such as English, science, music and art. However, the potential contribution which daily acts of collective worship can make to this area of pupils' development has yet to be fully explored.

31. The good relationships, and the good example set by all who work in the school, support pupils' moral development, which is underpinned by the school's aims. The importance of truth and justice is communicated through the school's evident concern for these qualities. The new behaviour policy is designed to support this moral development, though it is not yet fully implemented or consistently applied throughout the school. Pupils' sense of citizenship is developed through the opportunities to discuss and reflect upon environmental issues. Their sense of citizenship is developed through the opportunities to discuss and reflect upon environmental issues.

32. The school actively encourages the development of good social skills. Assemblies are used to promote a feeling of community. Older pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility within the school. Many suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to appreciate, and to contribute to the community in which they live. Some good examples of this are local studies, entertaining the elderly, and providing Harvest food parcels and singing carols at the local underground station. Pupils are also offered opportunities to contribute to the wider community through donating to charities such as the British Heart Foundation and cancer research. Pupils in Year 6 have an annual residential trip which further enhances their social development and sense of achievement. These activities, together with opportunities to perform in musical and dramatic performances, are good examples of the school's provision.

33. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate and to develop their knowledge of British culture and traditions, for example through visits to places of cultural and historical interest such as Hampton Court and London museums. There are also well planned opportunities for pupils to understand and to appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures and faiths. These arise through their religious education programme and when they study art, music and food from other cultures as well as their own.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils. There are beneficial links with outside support agencies in the protection of children. Good Child Protection procedures have been established and staff respond quickly and sensitively when the need arises. First aid procedures are good and they are carried out effectively. There are good relationships between staff and pupils and these allow pupils to approach staff confidently with any personal concerns. The school promotes healthy living through its personal, health and social education programme. The headteacher and designated staff regularly carry out a detailed risk assessment of the school site, and any concerns are addressed. The governing body undertakes regular reviews of security and buildings. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are satisfactory, although class registers are not always fully completed.

35. The school provides a good standard of care for pupils who have special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language. Teachers and other adults give these pupils positive encouragement, to promote their self-esteem, so that they play a full part in all aspects of school life.

36. The very good behaviour policy was developed following consultation with all members of the school community. The school has established very effective systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, including sanctions. Appropriate supervision and a positive approach give pupils good opportunities to discuss their behaviour and its consequences. Class teachers, who know their pupils well, provide good pastoral support. In this they are helped by some effective links that have been established with parents and carers, who bring their children into the classrooms at the start of school of the school day. However, the behaviour policy has yet to be used consistently by all members of staff, and particularly those who are new to the school.

37. A small number of parents expressed their concerns about the quality of the supervision at break times. Inspection evidence indicates that supervision is good in the nursery and satisfactory elsewhere in the school. During the inspection, supervisors dealt particularly well with one incident in the playground because they carried out clearly defined procedures. However, the school recognises that all staff should be fully involved in training to ensure consistency at all times.

38. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Teachers maintain good records through the term and carry out regular tests to track pupils' progress. The annual written reports on pupils' progress give a good indication of the standards they have reached, although targets for the future are not yet a regular feature. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are less formal but are satisfactory.

39. Within the assessment and monitoring procedures, those for pupils with special needs are very good and are a significant strength. Prompt and accurate assessment is a key feature of the high quality special needs provision, and it ensures that these pupils make very good progress when they are withdrawn for support. Their needs are identified by a range of formal procedures, and the information is used very effectively to guide the design of pupils' individual education plans. Their progress is regularly checked against established benchmarks. Continuous assessment is fully integrated into the teaching process, and staff keep detailed running records to guide adjustments to individual education programmes. Relevant information is properly recorded so that pupils' progress towards academic and personal targets is monitored effectively. Formal records are kept, and are passed on to receiving schools when pupils leave.

40. Use of assessment information is also very effective in the nursery and reception. Children's attainment is formally assessed when they enter the school, and good use is made of the information to guide teachers' planning. Thereafter, officially recommended tests are used each year to monitor progress through the school in English, mathematics and science. Additional tests are given more regularly in aspects of these subjects, and procedures are generally effective in ensuring that pupils make consistent progress. However, procedures for assessing attainment in writing in Key Stage 1 are not used effectively to monitor pupils' progress so that the curriculum and teaching methods can be modified appropriately and quickly. As a result, pupils are not making the rates of progress expected for their age. Pupils' progress in other subjects is assessed against the criteria of the National Curriculum, though more formal procedures are being developed to standardise practice through the school.

41. Information from formal tests is used well to place pupils in groups of broadly similar attainment in all classes. In many lessons, teachers plan appropriate work for pupils in three broad bands of attainment, and this process is generally adequate. In some lessons, however, the same task is given to pupils across a wider range of attainment. Usually such tasks are better matched to pupils of average attainment and higher, with the result that the rate of learning of pupils at lower levels is much slower and occasionally unsatisfactory. Pupils in some year groups are divided into three sets of similar attainment for a number of their lessons in English and mathematics. In some sets pupils are taught as if they were all at the same level of attainment, but because there are fewer pupils and the range of needs is narrower than in classes, teachers are more able to respond to individual needs as they arise. As a result, setting has generally been effective in raising standards.

42. Established class teachers know their pupils well and keep good records of their personal development, including their persistence, collaboration, concentration and self-confidence. These records give sound guidance to temporary teachers so that they can make appropriate adjustments to their teaching and class management.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Evidence from parents' questionnaire and from their meeting before the inspection shows that they have very positive views of the school and its work. They are keen to know about their children's progress and a significant number are well informed about the government's and the school's educational priorities. Parents feel that their children are happy in school and believe that it is approachable and works closely with them. Parents feel that the school has improved and that it has high expectations for their children's academic and personal development. A significant proportion of parents have some concerns over the turnover of teaching staff, the inconsistency in the quality of supervision at break-times, the quality and the amount of homework their children are given, and the information for parents about their children's progress.

44. There is a good link between the school and the parents, and this has a positive impact upon children's learning. There is a significant minority of parents who give the school unstinting and high quality support. Parent representatives contribute fully to the work of the governing body and its committees, and there are focused visits to see pupils at work in the classrooms. Some parents are able to support teachers by helping in classes and other areas of the school, while others assist by accompanying staff on educational trips.

45. Parents are given clear information about the school's special needs policy and practice. They are kept fully informed of their children's progress and are invited to annual reviews. Whenever they have concerns, they are able to contact the class teacher and the co-ordinator for special needs. The governor for special needs takes an active role in liaising between parents and the school.

46. Many parents support their children's reading by hearing them read at home. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school, as governors, helpers and members of the strong and active parent teacher association. The association not only raises a significant amount of money for the school, and puts on a variety of social events, but through its parent-link group it has a direct interest in the education provided. This acts as an effective communication channel between the school and parents. There is also a parents' working party involved in developing the school environment, and it is presently working on improving the playgrounds.

47. The information which the school provides to parents is good. The headteacher sends out a very good weekly newsletter containing notes on achievements and news of forthcoming events. Some parents choose to receive information from the school by e-mail, and its web-site is used regularly. The prospectus is of high quality and is very well produced, and the governors' annual report to parents is detailed and informative. These documents make very effective use of information communication technology; in consequence, they are accessible and give parents a good range information about the school. Information concerning the curriculum is provided on request, at curriculum meetings held for parents after school, and during consultation evenings. The reports on pupils' progress paint a good picture of what they have learned and the progress they have made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The headteacher has been in post for just over one year, following the amalgamation of the junior and infant schools on the existing site. He was appointed to lead and manage the new school through a turbulent period. Through highly effective leadership, a strong commitment and determination, and a sensitive approach to staff he is successfully overcoming the problems brought about by the amalgamation. He sets a very good example with his own teaching and support of colleagues. With the keen support of well-informed governors, his approach to the complex task of amalgamation has been to focus on the strengths of the two previous schools. Soon after his appointment, specific targets for improvement were identified in the very good school development plan. In the first instance, these targets necessarily focused on the development of a new set of aims. The teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and governors were involved in developing a strategic overview and agreeing a common set of goals to maintain standards and raise them further.

49. To a large extent, staff work cohesively as a caring team, committed to the welfare of the pupils and the whole community. This gives the school a clear sense of purpose, and as a result relationships are generally good throughout the school. The school's aims are reflected in its daily work. It is a friendly, supportive and purposeful community, pupils are confident and respectful of one another, and expectations are high. The headteacher, with the help of the senior management, which has yet to benefit from a full complement of staff, has improved curriculum planning and has implemented procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and coverage of the curriculum.

50. The headteacher delegates well, and staff value the levels of responsibilities given to them. They have clear roles and responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators are responsible for their own resources and help in shaping the direction of the school through their own action plans. These are closely linked to priorities in the tightly-crafted school development plan, which reflects the headteacher's clear vision and close attention to detail. Subject co-ordinators have a clear understanding of their role and provide colleagues with helpful support and advice. Some use time away from the classroom to formally monitor their subject by observing lessons or by working with staff on planning. The targets set by the school for English and mathematics are achievable and reflect the school's realistic commitment to high standards. Several subjects, including information technology, religious education, and history, are particularly well managed. The special educational needs provision is very well managed. The school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for special educational needs and complies with the official Code of Practice. The school development plan identifies targets for improvement, and allocates appropriate resources to meet them. There is a named governor for special educational needs, who makes formal reports to the governing body on all relevant matters. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is very well managed within the school. Assessment data is very well used in planning and, in line with its aims, the school encourages parents to attend evening meetings to discuss their children's progress.

51. The knowledgeable and committed governing body has been instrumental in the development of the new school and the substantial improvements to the accommodation. Members of the governing body are very much involved in shaping the direction of the new school. Key governors are active, conscientious, well-informed, and highly supportive of the headteacher and the work of the school. Parents value the improvements brought about since the appointment of the headteacher, and the capacity for improvement is good. The school is meeting all statutory requirements.

52. The headteacher's and governing body's vision for the school's development is based upon a thorough audit of the school's current position. The development plan is a clear, useful working document, and educational priorities identified are highly relevant. Targets are set for each year, and very efficient procedures are in place for monitoring and evaluating the extent to which these priorities are achieved. The governors provide excellent support and have clear systems in place for monitoring the effectiveness of spending and its impact on learning. The development plan provides a secure framework upon which the school can plan effectively and judge value for money. Educational developments are very well supported through excellent financial planning. There are very good structures in place to ensure the strategic management of resources. Funds are clearly designated for pupils with special educational needs, for those who speak English as an additional language, and for booster classes, and pupils receive very efficient support. Excellent financial control is complemented by efficient school administration. Excellent use is made of funds for pupils with special needs in providing them with high quality support.

53. Following the amalgamation, the school underwent a period of turbulence and there were a significant number of staff changes. However, there is a good match of the number of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The teaching staff are highly qualified, with a wide range of experience, and the special needs staff are exceptionally well qualified. The good mix of appropriately trained staff enables specialist teaching in English, information technology, art, design and technology and music. The engagement of subject specialists helps the school to focus on enriching and developing the creative aspects of the curriculum. The engagement of a well-qualified, full-time information technology assistant also contributes to high standards achieved by pupils and to the quality of the information provided for parents.

54. The two deputy heads are without classroom responsibility and they have been able to support staff and deal with some of the difficulties caused by the recent amalgamation. However, they are used to teach mathematics and English when pupils are arranged within groups based upon attainment. Their support for staff, along with that of the headteacher and other adults has helped the school to maintain and improve standards.

55. The school has good arrangements for the induction of new staff, and the scheme follows the guidelines given by the local education authority. Teachers new to the school are given good support by the headteacher and deputies. The school's appraisal and performance procedures are very good. Information from professional development interviews is used to set manageable targets which are incorporated in the school development plan. Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service training, some of which takes place in the school. For example, the information technology assistant provides regular training for classroom assistants. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are well met by a highly qualified co-ordinator and other part-time teachers with expertise in special learning

difficulties. Classroom assistants, working effectively under the direction of the class teacher, make a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. Midday supervisors work as a team, with specific duties, and contribute effectively to the management of behaviour. The school is well served by the administrative and clerical support staff as well as by the site manager. All staff work together to support the aims of the school and to create for pupils an efficient and effective working environment which encourages them to learn.

56. The large, three-storey building provides pupils with an interesting and, in many areas, a stimulating learning environment. Good quality displays reflect the rich range of activities experienced by pupils. Some of the displays are informative and interactive, and they include examples of pupils' poetry and their work in art and design and technology, and examples of information technology.

57. The school has substantially remodelled several areas of the school to improve efficiency and effectiveness. For example, the secure reception area gives parents access to the administrative staff, and the well-equipped information technology suite is having a considerable impact on standards achieved by pupils throughout the school. The nursery provides a large and stimulating learning environment. It has its own entrance and secure outdoor play area.

58. The school makes effective use of the space available and has organised separate specialist rooms for the teaching of music and art. Although the building is large and gives a feeling of being spacious, some of the rooms are small. The school has been imaginative in making the best use of the spaces available. The library is large and well stocked and good use is made of small rooms and communal areas to support pupils when they are working in small groups. However, the medical room is unsuitably placed on an upper floor, where appropriate supervision can be provided only by taking a member of staff away from other duties.

59. Learning resources are good and they are used effectively to support the teaching of all subjects. The school has a well equipped computer suite which includes a large monitor for demonstrations. All classrooms have access to information technology through a network, and the school has its own web-site. The good number of books and the range of resources used to support the teaching of literacy and numeracy reflect one of the school's main priorities. The school recognises the need to replace some of the physical education equipment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. To improve standards of work and the pupils' learning, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Improve standards in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 by:
 - * giving teachers support through further training;
 - * developing a more detailed scheme of work with a clearer structure to guide teachers' planning;
 - * using assessment procedures that ensure accurate monitoring of pupils' progress;
 - * strengthening teachers' pupil-management skills.

- Build on the good relationships with parents to ensure that their children come to school on time.

61. Other weaknesses which the governors should consider for inclusion in the school's action plan are:

- * ensure that all teachers and adults implement consistently the school's behaviour policy;

- * improve pupils' independent learning skills by giving them more opportunities to work by themselves, and in groups, on tasks which closely match their needs;

- * provide pupils with more opportunities for writing in subjects other than English to improve their confidence and competence.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	92
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	17	41	30	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	51	398
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	8	152

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	89

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	54

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	30	30	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	26
	Girls	24	25	27
	Total	48	49	53
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	80	82	88
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	25
	Girls	27	29	28
	Total	51	55	53
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	85	92	79
	National	82	86	87

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	28	23	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	20	26	25
	Girls	18	19	21
	Total	38	45	46
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	75	88	90
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	18	20	22
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	34	35	38
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	67	69	75
	National	68	69	75

percentages of the performances of pupils in the infant and junior schools before their amalgamation are not included.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	21
Black – African heritage	18
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	3
White	253
Any other minority ethnic group	46

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	22.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	159

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5

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

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	979849.00
Total expenditure	962564.00
Expenditure per pupil	2107.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	14028.00
Balance carried forward to next year	31313.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	449
Number of questionnaires returned	74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	16	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	36	7	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	58	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	29	21	3	1
The teaching is good.	60	32	4	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	36	12	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	20	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	25	10	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	36	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	60	36	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	38	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	45	4	0	3

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

62. Children enter the nursery at the age of three, and most attend for three terms before transferring to the reception classes either in the September or the January of the school year in which they are aged five. A few children start in reception without previous nursery experience. Children enter the nursery with a very wide range of attainment. While some have very good speaking skills and a good general knowledge, others have limited skills in communication and little experience beyond their immediate home environment. Overall attainment is broadly average on entry.

63. The development of the nursery has been a major school priority. New teaching staff were appointed this year in all early years classes. The indoor and outdoor teaching areas have been re-organised, curriculum planning has been revised, and very good assessment procedures have been developed in the nursery. The nursery curriculum is very good, and this is having a positive impact on standards. Children are involved in an exciting variety of very skilfully structured activities. Learning is promoted through practical experiences in the very well organised indoor and outdoor teaching areas. Early literacy and numeracy is promoted through well-structured teaching. The reception classrooms, and the reception play area in particular, have yet to be improved to match the standard in the nursery. Provision generally in the reception classes is satisfactory and children have a suitable range of experiences. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of basic skills but children have limited opportunities to work independently.

64. By the time they are aged five, most children currently attain the standards expected nationally. The quality of learning is generally good both in the nursery and in the reception classes. There are indications that children who are now in the reorganised nursery are achieving well, in many aspects of the curriculum. Teaching is good in the reception classes and frequently very good in the nursery. Children with special educational needs are identified early and given good support.

Personal and social education

65. The development of children's personal and social skills underpins all the work in the nursery. Teaching in this area of the curriculum is very good. Staff have high expectations and are swift to intervene and redirect children when disagreements arise. Children are encouraged to listen to others, to share, and to take turns. Through the very well planned animal topic they learn to treat living things with care and concern, and to show a range of feeling.

66. One teacher developed a very calm, quiet atmosphere as children took turns to stroke a rabbit and discussed its needs. Other children gazed in wonder as they looked at a new chick which had just emerged from its egg. Skilful management by staff, and the exciting quality of the activities, results in consistently good behaviour and high levels of concentration. Teachers are careful to promote good practice in health and safety, and hands are washed carefully after handling animals. Children are prepared well for their entry into the main school. They climb the stairs sensibly to the computer suite on the top floor and they join other classes regularly for assemblies. Pupils in one class performed with increasing confidence as they led an assembly.

67. Behaviour in the reception classes is also good, particularly when children are taking part in activities. A number of children find it difficult to sit quietly on the carpet in a whole class group and to listen to others. The teachers calmly reinforce expectations and remind children of the need to take turns in speaking. Children generally concentrate well on tasks and try hard. Relationships are good, and children readily ask for help when they need it. By the time they are five almost all children achieve the expected standard in this area.

Language and literacy

68. The teaching of language and literacy is good in both the nursery and the reception classes. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in the nursery, for example when the teacher works with children in the role-play area. Children learn and use new vocabulary as they take the role of vet, pet owner and receptionist. They gain confidence in speaking to a large audience as they prepare and perform their class assembly. Reception children also have good planned opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. They take turns to talk to the class about their news or about an object brought from home. The audience are encouraged to ask relevant questions. Children gain confidence in a very supportive atmosphere, although in one class the quality of the morning session was spoiled by the steady stream of late arrivals.

69. Children make good progress in developing reading skills. Most children benefit from good support at home. They enjoy listening to stories and sharing books. Children in the nursery benefit from a short literacy period and are confident in handling books. They know that print conveys meaning and they learn to recognise their own names, some letter shapes, and sounds. The language area in the nursery is very attractive and well organised. In the reception classes children read familiar repetitive text together. They begin to recognise a few words and to use letter sounds to work out words they do not recognise. The teaching of phonics is good. All the children enjoy reading. The most talented children read simple text confidently and accurately. Children with special educational needs also make good progress in gaining confidence with books and in learning their sounds. This results from good support in school, and the good links between home and school promoted by the teacher.

70. Children have good opportunities to develop early writing skills and to understand the purpose of writing. In the nursery, children use marks, symbols and letter shapes as they make appointments in the vet's surgery. They write words about the rabbit with the teacher and write letters to their teddy bears. In the reception classes children are taught how to form letters correctly as they learn their sounds. Early spelling skills are very well developed when the teachers work with children in small groups. By the time they are five most children achieve the expected standard in language and literacy.

Mathematics

71. The teaching in this aspect is very good in the nursery. Children count with increasing confidence and work with the teacher to investigate numbers. In one very good activity the teacher promoted learning through skilful questioning which was accurately matched to the differing needs of a group of children. One child was supported as she counted to four, while another explored numbers which added to six by putting badges on two different sides of an owl shape. The latter made significant gains in learning, and was highly motivated, saying 'Now can we try seven?' In another activity, children were guided in using number as they named their favourite animals and together made a simple block graph. Learning is reinforced very well when children use the computers. Teachers take every opportunity to promote the use of number and mathematical language as children play.

72. Reception teachers also introduce mathematical language very effectively, and consequently children begin to use terms such as 'more than' and 'less than' confidently. The children count to ten and beyond, learn to write numbers, and become familiar with the concepts of addition and subtraction. There is a wide range of attainment, with a few children still needing practice in counting and sorting, while others refer to numbers up to 100 in discussion and count confidently to 30 and beyond. Classroom assistants work effectively with small groups. In one lesson progress was slowed because the teacher was on her own.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Teaching in this area is a significant strength of the nursery. Activities are exciting and very well planned to motivate children and to extend their understanding. Children made significant gains in learning as they watched the chicks hatch in the incubator. They began to use new vocabulary confidently and learned through first hand experience how to care for the chicks and the rabbits. They look carefully at the fish and the large snails and are skilfully guided by the teacher into identifying the different needs each creature has. Children benefit considerably from using the computer suite, making very good gains in learning to control the mouse and to move objects on the screen.

74. Teaching in the reception classes is good. In one lesson children showed an emerging scientific understanding of plant growth as they suggested the conditions needed for their seeds. With the teacher's guidance they recorded their experiment by careful drawing. Classroom displays indicate that teachers plan a good range of activities to extend children's understanding of the world. Early geographical understanding is promoted effectively through a walk along the road, identifying different buildings. Children develop a satisfactory understanding of their own personal history through the use of photographs of themselves while younger. By the time they are five most children achieve the expected standard and some exceed it.

Creative development

75. Teaching in this aspect is good overall in the nursery and reception classes. At times the teaching in the nursery is very good. Children benefit from using a good range of good quality materials. In the nursery, children have good opportunities to experiment independently with paint and colour, as well developing new skills when they work with adults. Activities are stimulating and very well matched to the needs of nursery age children. They reinforce aspects of learning and are also fun. Children enjoyed making and using chick puppets which popped out of 'modroc' nests. Children learn to sustain imaginative role-play because it is modelled well by the teacher. No teaching of art was observed in the reception classes, but displays show that children have a suitable range of experiences.

76. Children in the nursery and reception benefit from being taught by the music specialist. Standards of singing are good and attainment is above that expected of children at this stage. The children learn words quickly and develop a good repertoire of songs. They take part confidently when singing in unison during a singing practice with Key Stage 1, and gain good experience of joining in a two-part round.

Physical development

77. Children in the nursery have good opportunities for physical development, both indoors and in the large and well-organised outdoor area. Teaching is good, and the children's large motor skills are generally good. Children are given suitable but challenging tasks in a hall lesson. They work confidently on the apparatus, make good progress in developing balancing skills, and show good spatial awareness. Outside, children make good gains as they jump in different ways, because of the teacher's praise, demonstration and encouragement. Children climb, balance and use wheeled toys confidently. The outdoor play area for reception classes is not yet as well developed as the nursery area. Teaching in formal physical education lessons is good. Children enjoy using small games equipment and make good progress. Achievement is generally similar to that expected at this age.

78. In all the nursery and reception classes children have many opportunities for developing small motor skills, through play and during guided activities. They develop appropriate skills in cutting with scissors, rolling and cutting dough and clay, and controlling equipment as they work with sand and water. The quality of equipment in the nursery is better than that in the reception, and there is scope for the school to review provision. Children develop fine motor skills as they learn to write and control a pencil with increasing accuracy. Most children achieve the expected standard by the time they are five.

ENGLISH

79. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level or above in English was similar to the national average, but well above the average of similar schools. The proportion attaining the higher level was well above the national average. Results in English were lower than those in mathematics and science. Inspection evidence indicates that standards have risen, with the attainment of pupils presently in Year 6 being well above average in reading, and above average in speaking, listening and writing. A substantial number of pupils have very high attainment in writing.

80. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven, the number reaching the expected level or higher in reading and writing was similar to the national average. The number reaching the higher level was below the national average in writing but above in reading. Compared with those of schools whose pupils are from similar backgrounds, results were average in writing but above average in reading. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of the present Year 2 is average in speaking, listening and reading, but below average in writing. Standards of writing have fallen since last year, due in part to a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2, but also because there are weaknesses in teaching and curriculum provision.

81. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to listen closely to their teacher and follow instructions, though the attention of many wanders if they are not firmly managed. They readily join in discussions of the shared text, and teachers in both key stages give good encouragement by listening carefully and appreciating the quality of the answers. As a result, pupils try hard to explain their ideas clearly, generally using standard English. Pupils across the school becoming progressively more confident in speaking to a range of audiences in a variety of contexts. By age eleven, they take part confidently in formal class discussions, using technical terms effectively in analysing study texts. Collaboration with others in small groups without teacher guidance is satisfactory, though older pupils need more opportunities to develop this skill. Most are confident in speaking to larger audiences, and some show good skills in role-play in class assemblies. Other subjects make a good contribution to developing speaking and listening skills, but there is no overall assessment procedure to monitor individual progress and ensure that all are suitably challenged.

82. Throughout the school, the enthusiasm that pupils show for reading is a significant strength. Reading development is secured by progressively graded reading materials and by careful monitoring of pupils' progress, using well designed reading records. In the initial stage, pupils are systematically taught the relationship between letters and sounds, so that the majority make steady progress. By age seven, most pupils are independent in reading texts suitably graded to match their level of attainment. Most are able to sound out unfamiliar words to find the meaning. Levels of accuracy are good, and pupils generally have sound understanding. Few read with expression because the language is usually challenging, but they read expressively in shared reading led by the teacher. Many parents give good support by hearing their child read at home.

83. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read longer texts silently with good concentration. They read aloud fluently and accurately, with good understanding. Many have an impressive range and depth of reading experience, naming favourite authors with enthusiasm and explaining their preferences in full. The pupils' library knowledge and research skills are variable, but they are sound overall and developing well because classes now have timetabled library lessons. Many parents extend their children's experience by taking them to local libraries. More opportunities are needed for pupils to develop research skills by using information books for independent study in other subjects.

84. Standards in writing at age seven are not high enough. Pupils make a good start in reception and their skills develop well, so that, by the middle of Year 1, many confidently and accurately write stories and other forms, such as their Barnaby Bear postcards. These skills are not developed sufficiently in Year 2. There is a wide range of attainment in this year group, including a larger than usual number identified by the school as having special

needs in language. When withdrawn for specialist support, these pupils make very good progress because the special needs team analyse their needs precisely and set appropriate targets drawn from a well designed scheme of work. The progress of these pupils towards their personal targets is regularly monitored so that appropriate adjustments are made quickly. By contrast, instruction in basic skills for other pupils in Year 2 is not guided by a sufficiently detailed scheme or closely monitored. Individual topics set for writing are often stimulating in themselves, but they do not secure consistent development over time. Although pupils are grouped according to attainment in each class, writing tasks are not matched closely enough to different levels of need. The school has recognised the problem of low attainment and has intensified teaching by dividing the two Year 2 classes into three sets for some lessons, but a more appropriate curriculum has not been developed. As a result, pupils aged seven do not write confidently at length. Standards of spelling and punctuation are below average, and handwriting is generally poor. Too little use is made of opportunities for writing in other subjects, and lack of confidence in writing lowers pupils' attainment more widely. For instance, their writing of science reports is laboured and slows the progress of lessons.

85. The weak start in developing handwriting affects standards throughout the school, and some pupils in Year 6 do not write in a consistently joined style. Overall standards of handwriting and presentation are too low in everyday work in all subjects, and do not come up to the high standards that some pupils reach in handwriting exercises and work for display. Nevertheless, in other respects, pupils make very good progress in Key Stage 2. A strong feature of provision is the increasingly wide range of purposes and audiences for writing, particularly poetry, and pupils respond well to the highly stimulating curriculum. They learn the craft of writing through the study of good quality texts of all kinds. Key pieces of work intended for display are improved through the process of planning, drafting and proof-reading. As a result, there are many pieces of excellent work from each year group on display. Information technology is used very effectively to improve the accuracy and quality of some pieces. By age 11, many pupils write very good stories, using a range of effects to hold the reader's attention. The best poetry shows depth of insight, sensitivity to the music of language, and imagination in creating pictures in words. Factual reports are clearly expressed and well structured. Many pupils have an impressive range of vocabulary, both technical and imaginative. Those with higher attainment use varied sentence structures well for dramatic effect. Standards of accuracy in spelling and punctuation are generally good, and regular homework supports achievement in spelling.

86. Pupils with special needs take a full part in lessons. They make very good progress when withdrawn for support. Their progress is slower in class lessons but still good overall because teachers plan suitable work for them, guided by their personal targets. Nevertheless, there are few support staff to help these pupils in class, and the quality of their learning is occasionally too low when teachers do not supervise them closely enough. Expectations for higher attaining pupils are consistently high, and pupils of average attainment or above respond very well to challenging opportunities to write for a real purpose in Key Stage 2. For pupils of average attainment and below, lesson objectives are often too broad, and not enough time is spent on word and sentence building in the first half of literacy hour. As a result, these pupils are not always given the structure or language resources they need to tackle successfully the writing tasks that follow.

87. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1, though there was one unsatisfactory lesson. One third of lessons seen were good, and the remainder were satisfactory. Teachers make good choices of books to catch pupils' interest. Pupils enjoy class discussions, and teachers use these times well to develop understanding and powers of expression. The reading programme is organised effectively so that pupils' learning progresses steadily. However, knowledge of how to teach writing and organise writing activities is generally weaker, and was the cause of the unsatisfactory lesson. Even in a stimulating and well planned lesson for a higher attaining set, some pupils achieved little when working independently because their level of achievement had been overestimated and expectations for the written task were too high.

88. In Key Stage 2, teaching was good or better in all lessons except one, which was nevertheless satisfactory. It was good in over half the lessons seen; a quarter were very good and one was excellent. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, enabling them to give clear explanations using appropriate technical terms. High expectations for understanding and effort were a key feature of the excellent lesson, in which the teacher inspired pupils through her love of the subject to appreciate the poetic style of the Elizabethan dramatist Christopher Marlowe. The best lessons are generally those where pupils are placed in sets according to attainment rather than in their regular mixed attainment classes. The smaller numbers and narrower band of attainment in each set result in very good learning because teachers are able to give more attention to each pupil. The pace of learning is usually very good and the resulting work is of high quality.

89. Learning is less productive in regular classes when the work given to different groups does not match their levels of attainment closely enough. At such times, some pupils are slow to settle and disrupt others. A significant factor limiting pupils' personal development through the school is that the group work routines of the literacy strategy have not been established firmly enough. Pupils have not been adequately trained to work independently while the teacher attends to other groups on a rota basis. As a result, some pupils pester others or the teacher when they have a problem, and do not persevere in finding their own solution.

90. Teachers throughout the school offer good models of speech. Most read dramatically to capture pupils' interest, and, in the best lessons, pupils are enthralled. The choice of texts for close study includes classic children's stories and poetry, which makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. In both key stages, teachers generally make good use of time at the end of lessons to review pupils' learning, though the board is not used enough to summarise key points, to model good writing, and to highlight features such as spelling patterns.

91. Marking of pupils' work is generally thorough, and most teachers give encouragement well, responding appreciatively to the content. However, much marking loses its effect because teachers do not generally set targets for improvement, or require pupils to do corrections or further work on identified weaknesses.

92. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The framework of the National Literacy strategy has been adopted, but its procedures are not followed consistently across the school, making it difficult for teaching quality to be monitored and developed. Standards of writing in Key Stage 1 need urgent attention. Teachers in this key stage need support through further training, a more detailed scheme of work with a clearer structure to guide their planning, and assessment procedures that ensure more accurate monitoring of progress.

93. Good features of management that promote higher standards are the placing of pupils in sets for intensive teaching. The library and reading resources have been improved and substantial additional time has been given to reading, with the result that pupils show high levels of interest in the wide range of good quality books. The reading record is effective because it prompts teachers to diagnose and monitor key features of individual pupils' achievement. Print is very well displayed, with pupils' best work displayed effectively to stimulate interest and reward success. Management has shown a clear commitment to attaining high standards, and the subject makes a good contribution to the ethos of the school.

MATHEMATICS

94. The results of the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that pupils achieved standards that were above average compared with all schools nationally, and well above average when compared to those of schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils reaching standards above those expected for pupils aged 11 was also well above the national average. Results of the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average, but close to the average for similar schools.

95. Inspection evidence shows that standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 6 is well above average, with more pupils working at the higher levels than in 1999. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average, and the number of pupils not achieving average standards is greater than that in 1999. The school has identified this year group as having a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

96. Pupils generally develop a confident understanding of the number system and become increasingly proficient in mental computation as they move through the school. This is a strength which underpins the high attainment towards the end of Key Stage 2. Most pupils benefit from regular practice at the start of lessons and from opportunities to discuss different strategies. Where teaching is best, this session is lively, has a brisk pace, and challenges all pupils with carefully targeted questions. Most pupils gain a sound grasp of number facts, although in Year 2 standards are low overall. Although a few pupils in Year 2 achieve well, many do not have an instant recall of simple number bonds. Restless behaviour restricts the pace of learning in one Year 2 class, and learning is also slower where the questioning is not brisk enough. In other year groups, progress in acquiring mental skills is usually good and by the end of Key Stage 2 progress is very good. The use of setting in Years 5 and 6 has a positive impact, enabling teachers to match questions closely to pupils needs. Talented pupils are challenged in mental arithmetic, as they convert fractions such as one sixteenth to a decimal fraction and to a percentage.

97. All aspects of mathematics are given due attention. Pupils learn how to present data in a variety of ways, and confidently produce and interpret graphs, charts and diagrams. They generally gain a good understanding of shape and measure and learn to use the language of probability. Pupils in Year 1 identify common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and begin to recognise their properties. In Year 6, pupils respond to very good questioning as they calculate the areas of triangles and arrive at the formula for the calculation. Standards of presentation of written work are good in Years 5 and 6, but there is less consistency in other year groups. In some classes work is untidy and careless habits develop. For example, vertical calculations are not written in columns, and digits are written with little attention to the squared paper.

98. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced, although the school has found it insufficiently challenging for the most talented pupils in Year 6. While their lessons follow the format of the Numeracy Strategy, work is planned from Key Stage 3 textbooks in order to meet the needs of the pupils. In an excellent lesson, pupils in Year 6 worked confidently as they learned to produce graphs from linear equations. Pupils of all attainment levels in Years 5 and 6 benefit from the well-managed setting arrangements. Lower attainers are supported well within smaller teaching groups. However, in some classes in other years teachers do not have enough additional adult support. Although these teachers cater successfully for the needs of most of the class, a very few pupils with behavioural special educational needs quickly drift off task because they lack focused support. Other pupils with special educational needs learn at a similar rate to the rest of the class. Pupils with English as an additional language generally make similar progress to their peers. In lessons when they receive additional specialist support their learning is very good.

99. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It was judged to be good in just over half the lessons seen. It was satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 varies from outstanding to unsatisfactory. In one lesson, some pupils were restless and did not make enough progress.

100. The strongest teaching is seen in Years 5 and 6, and as a result pupils make greatest gains in learning towards the end of the key stage. In almost all lessons teachers explain strategies clearly and develop pupils' mental skills well. This has a significant impact on attainment. In most lessons, teachers manage behaviour well. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of good behaviour, and their lively presentation motivates pupils to learn. Pupils' attitudes vary, and a minority present challenging behaviour which interrupts the flow of some lessons and slows the pace of learning.

101. Pupils' good numeracy skills are applied well across the curriculum. Measuring skills and calculations are used well in science, design technology and art. Pupils enter data into computer data handling programs to produce graphs and tables, and employ their knowledge of co-ordinates and scale as they work with maps in geography. Most teachers have interesting displays linked with mathematics

102. The recently-appointed subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a good understanding of the issues within Key Stage 2, although his role is not yet fully developed. The school plans to appoint another co-ordinator to manage Key Stage 1. Assessment procedures are good ; progress is closely monitored and targets are set for all pupils.

SCIENCE

103. Results of the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that pupils achieved attainment levels which were above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching standards above those expected for pupils aged 11 was well above the national average. When the results are compared to those of schools with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, they are well above average. Results of the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that pupils achieved attainment levels which were below the national average.

104. Inspection evidence shows that standards in lessons and in other work around the school are at levels expected for pupils aged seven, and above those expected for pupils aged 11. The school carefully monitors its results so as to identify weaknesses in provision and has introduced a structured approach to planning the science curriculum.

105. By Year 2, pupils understand that materials can be twisted, bent, squashed or stretched and that some materials are permanently changed. They describe similarities and differences between materials such as glass and metal, and explain why some materials are suitable for specific purposes. Pupils record their findings, using simple tables, drawings, and charts. Pupils have an understanding of classification and describe the basis for grouping animals in terms such as the number of legs or wings. They describe the changes that take place as animals grow, and recognise that different living things are found in different places. The majority of pupils have a sound understanding of the functions of some of the organs of the human body, such as the eye and the ear, and compare the effects of similar phenomena, such as the colour of lights, or the pitch of sounds. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of day and night, and begin to make simple generalisations about physical phenomena, such as explaining that sounds become fainter the further they are from the source.

106. By Year 6, pupils have a good breadth of understanding of all aspects of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Their knowledge of life processes and living things is particularly good. Pupils benefit from the good emphasis on practical investigations ; they predict what will happen and understand the concept of a fair test. For example, when pupils in Year 5 investigated optimum conditions for growth, they predicted the outcomes and recognised the need to vary one factor whilst keeping others the same. Within the area of life processes and living things, pupils identify organs, such as the petal, stamen and stigma of different plants. They identify major organs of the human body and identify the positions of these organs. Higher attaining pupils recognise that there is a great variety of living things and they understand the importance of classification. All pupils have a good understanding of the main stages of the life cycle of humans. In their study of materials and their properties, pupils describe differences between the properties of different materials and explain how these differences are used to classify substances as solids, liquids and gases. Pupils use scientific terms, such as evaporation and condensation, to describe

changes. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of saturation. Pupils use their knowledge about reversible and irreversible changes to make predictions about whether other changes are reversible or not. Within the area of physical processes, pupils correctly describe and explain physical phenomena, such as motion being affected by forces, including gravitational attraction, magnetic attraction and friction. Pupils of all abilities show a clear understanding of simple electrical circuits. Higher attaining pupils begin to apply ideas about physical processes to suggest a variety of ways to make changes, such as altering the current in a circuit. The majority of pupils, at the end of the key stage, use the idea that light travels when they are explaining phenomena such as the formation of shadows. Higher attaining pupils use models to explain effects that are caused by the movement of the earth, such as the length of a day or year.

107. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was judged to be good in just over half the lessons seen in both key stages. This, together with the good attitudes and behaviour of most pupils, supports good learning in lessons. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm during practical work, although their written work is not always well presented. Good all-round relationships are evident in most lessons. Pupils work well together, taking turns and sharing apparatus. During discussions, most pupils take part willingly and enthusiastically. When working together, they value each other's contributions and every pupil is made to feel important within the group. They are confident in sharing predictions and answering questions. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and provide pupils with a good foundation. In the best lessons, teachers have the ability to ask pertinent questions and give clear explanations, which help pupils to develop scientific understanding. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning intentions which are appropriately shared with pupils so that they are aware of what they are to learn. Tasks are interesting and generally well chosen, with a good balance of information given and opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves. A very good example of this was seen in a lesson in Year 5, where pupils were investigating conditions for growth. In general, however, pupils' research skills are not sufficiently well used to support their learning. The pace of most lessons is good and teachers set time targets as pupils work. Shortcomings in a minority of lessons in Key Stage 2 relate to control of pupils and behaviour management.

108. Throughout the school, teachers are effective in assessing pupils' work during lessons and in examining and marking their written work. In most lessons, teaching and learning is well supported by the calm, positive learning environment which teachers have established.

109. The two co-ordinators provide effective leadership. Planning is good, covers National Curriculum requirements, and helps to ensure continuity in pupils' learning as they pass through the school. Assessment procedures are good but the information gained is not always well used in planning work for different groups of pupils. Resources are good, and are well managed and efficiently used. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM

110. In just a small number of subjects, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching, although some conclusions are drawn from the few lessons and the scrutiny of previously completed work

ART

111. Pupils achieve standards higher than those usually found at ages seven and 11 when they work with specialist teachers. In lessons with class teachers, the quality of work by pupils in Year 2 was above that found in other schools, and the pupils in Year 6 was similar to that in other schools.

112. The school has a strong commitment to art and employs specialist teachers for all year groups on a rolling programme. The quality of work displayed through the school reflects high standards and a rich experience for the pupils. Pupils benefit from working with very good quality equipment and learn a wide range of skills and techniques. Displays demonstrate confident work in watercolour paints, pastel, charcoal, clay and fabric. Specialist teaching was not observed. However, the quality of teaching seen was satisfactory overall, with some very good teaching in Key Stage 1 and some good teaching at Key Stage 2. The school has appropriately identified the need to develop a scheme of work to support class teaching.

113. In the best teaching, the lesson objective is clearly identified and the pupils understand what is expected of them. For example, pupils in Year 2 worked carefully with charcoal to draw teddy bears. Achievement was high, because the teacher had explained and demonstrated techniques very clearly and pupils understood the task. Lesson objectives were not as well defined when pupils in Year 6 began a project on a 'Fantasy Banquet'. The topic was introduced with no immediate links to other work and pupils initially found it difficult to tackle. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in Years 5 and 6 are at times immature and time is wasted, for example when they talk across others in the class.

114. Pupils generally show a good understanding of subject vocabulary. Pupils in Year 1 talked readily about pictures by Rousseau and Stubbs, and showed a good awareness of the use of colour, shade, and perspective. Pupils are generally eager to begin practical activities, and many work carefully and with sustained concentration. Pupils in Year 4 mixed colours carefully as they painted village scenes, sometimes achieving very good effects. In some lessons, the teachers' introductions are too long and pupils do not have long enough to work on the activity. This was the case in Years 1 and 4. By contrast, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils settled down quickly and happily to work on a class collage linked with their weather topic. Pupils recalled terms such as 'batik', and were enjoying learning new techniques.

115. The art co-ordinators are recently appointed and their role has yet to be developed. The school plans to develop an art studio to improve facilities further. Some classrooms are extremely cramped for practical activities. Although pupils and teachers cope with good humour, the limited space restricts opportunities both for working on and for storing larger pieces of work. Pupils benefit from the use of the school kiln, from working with artists in residence, and from opportunities to visit art galleries. The annual art competition and exhibition is a good feature.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. By the end of both key stages, standards are higher than those usually found in other schools. Learning is good, largely due to the expertise of two specialists who have high expectations of pupils' work. In addition, design and technology is well integrated into other aspects of the curriculum and enhances pupils' understanding in several subjects, including science, history, geography, and art, which is one of the school's strengths. The school is particularly good at giving pupils a wide range of opportunities to develop their creative skills through rich cross-curricular links and specialist teaching. For example, pupils designed and made Greek temples, paying attention to detail and accuracy. In science, pupils made supporting structures to support the long boats they designed and produced. Pupils in Year 2 used their imagination to make fashion accessories from a range of materials, and pupils in Year 6 made a very good model of the human body to display the internal organs. By Year 6, pupils design and plan before making, and the evaluating process is well emphasised, although the school recognises the need for pupils to refine this process to improve the quality of the products.

117. Design and technology is well managed by the co-ordinator, who has a clear understanding of the subject. The subject policy is under review, although the richness of the curriculum is seen in the subject's close integration with the high quality art work. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. In consequence, the designing and making skills of all pupils are appropriately developed over time. They take care with their work and that of others which is on display.

GEOGRAPHY

118. Standards achieved by pupils in geography are similar to those expected for their age by the end of both key stages. By Year 2, pupils show confidence in locating places on the globe and on the world map and recognise the continents and oceans. For example, by following the route of 'Barnaby Bear' in his travels to contrasting localities, pupils learn about different means of transport, how time and places differ, and how the climate is influenced by physical features. Pupils use appropriate geographical vocabulary when talking about their work and use maps and globes with confidence. By Year 6, pupils improve their map work by drawing their own maps of the environment near to the school. This work is enhanced by the use of aerial photographs and pictures highlighting aspects of the area which are attractive and those which could be improved. Pupils make particularly good use of their skills in information technology to design and print maps of their own 'treasure islands', showing main physical and human features. Pupils in Year 5 use their investigative skills to find out about rainforests, endangered animal species, and the effect of global warming on the world community.

119. Pupils in Year 6 are given good opportunities to develop their geographical skills, particularly map work, by attending a residential field course. At this centre, pupils contrast physical environments, learn about rock formation, and learn how river valleys are formed.. They practise field sketching and make models of the landscape and display these with photographs in the school. Cross-curricular links are developed when pupils write poems reflecting their response to the environment in themes such as 'Quiet Edale' or 'Memories of Edale'.

120. Of the teaching seen, half was judged to be good and half was satisfactory. Pupils showed most interest in their work when the teachers' good subject knowledge underpinned clear explanations and searching questions. For example, pupils in Year 3 benefited from the teacher's first hand experience of Scotland; this enabled pupils to obtain clear descriptions of weather changes encountered on a journey from Lands End to John O'Groats. Pupils make progress in their understanding of geography, and they develop a concern for environmental issues.

121. National guidelines have been adopted by the school, and assessment procedures have been introduced and the information has begun to guide planning. Information technology is used effectively to support teaching and learning. The curriculum in geography is enhanced through cross-curricular links with several subjects, for example with history, and with English when pupils write poetry during their residential trip. The school has recognised the need in the school development plan to improve resources.

HISTORY

122. Standards achieved by pupils in history are similar to those expected for their age by the end of both key stages. By Year 2, pupils demonstrate a very clear understanding of past and present, and develop their awareness of chronology with the aid of a time line, using artefacts, pictures of the past, and stories about life in other times. Pupils acquire skills of enquiry by finding out about leisure pursuits in the past, using history books and relevant artefacts. They record in some detail how things are different now. By Year 6, pupils learn about selected periods of the history of Britain from Roman times to the present. They understand the reasons behind the Roman invasion of Britain and appreciate the impact of the occupation. Pupils also understand how the monarchy influenced the lives of people in Tudor times and the impact of past decisions on the present. They know that there are many myths and legends derived from Ancient Greece and they understand that some aspects of our culture derive from Greek civilisation, including the origin of the Olympic games, contributions to science, mathematics, language and architecture. Cross-curricular links are forged with art and design and technology when pupils design and make a number of models depicting Greek architecture.

123. Pupils are given good opportunities to examine evidence through visits to archaeological sites. They make effective use of the Internet to obtain additional information and to present their work. Pupils in Year 6 successfully demonstrate different ways of remembering the past through extended writing, and develop their own research skills to find out about topics in history, from books, videos, artefacts and by asking questions. Pupils achieve well over time and, by Year 6, they are confident when talking about the past as they build up their vocabulary of historical terms.

124. The subject is well managed, and the co-ordinator is clear about how to improve the provision further. However, the co-ordinator does not have sufficient opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning in the subject. The clear policy and documentation make effective use of national guidance and this helps to ensure that the skills are developed systematically. There are good procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress but these are in the early stage of development. Pupils' learning is enriched further through visits to museums and places of historical interest.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Standards attained in information technology are above national expectations by the end of both key stages. By Year 2, pupils use information technology well to generate ideas in different forms, including text, tables, pictures and sound. Pupils create simple graphics to illustrate text and enhance presentation by altering font type. They collect and prepare data and enter into a database, create graphs, and discuss the results presented. Pupils in Year 2 were seen programming commands for the Roamer to move a predicted number of stages, turn by a given number of degrees, and move in a different direction.

126. By Year 6, pupils are adept at using information technology for a wide range of purposes. Pupils have the ability to write instructions to produce a regular shape and repeat commands when they make a model of traffic lights and programme them to work in the normal way. They also design a Morse code transmitter and write procedures to send messages. They use Word, Publisher, Clip Art, and a digital camera to combine different forms of information for presentation. They incorporate photographs of individuals and landscape into textural reports. Pupils demonstrate awareness of the audience in their choice of text, graphics and layout, importing spreadsheets, formatting paragraphs, designing a company business card invitation to an open meeting, and designing a company web site. Pupils produce reports such as news items, gather information about the body and prepare work for display. They develop research skills, using CD-ROM to find information on topics being studied. They have a good understanding of the social implications of advances in information technology and its revolutionary impact. Pupils send and receive e-mail and use the Internet to obtain information from web sites.

127. The quality of teaching is very good overall, and two lessons were judged to be excellent. The expertise of the subject technician has a strong influence on the quality of teaching, the impact on the quality of learning, and the progress made by pupils in lessons. Pupils benefit from thoroughly planned lessons which give them good opportunities to develop their confidence when asking questions and making suggestions. The high expectations of the technician generates pupils' enthusiasm, and they are highly motivated by the wide range of tasks which build systematically on their learning. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, and their confidence in the use of information technology is used well to support work in other subjects.

128. Good class management strategies ensure that pupils work in a conducive environment, help each other, and remain attentive throughout the lesson. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning; they show interest in the subject and are eager to use the equipment, which they handle with care. They concentrate well when working individually in the classroom or in pairs in the computer suite. Pupils have good relationships with each other, listen attentively and learn from their mistakes. Pupils' skills and understanding are reinforced, and they achieve well during the popular information technology club which takes place after school.

129. The very good provision is enhanced by the expertise of the full-time information technology assistant. There is a clear policy and detailed scheme of work based on national guidance, and staff receive regular support and training. Information technology is used effectively to support teaching in other subjects of the curriculum.

130. The new suite is well resourced to support regular whole-class teaching and includes control devices and a digital camera. Pupils have their own e-mail address and the school web-site is used to communicate with parents on a regular basis. Each classroom is also equipped with a computer. The school is considered to be a centre of excellence by the local education authority.

MUSIC

131. Music is a strength of the school. Standards of attainment are at levels expected for pupils aged seven, but they are above expected levels for pupils aged 11. By Year 2, pupils sing a range of songs and compose using solfa rhythmic notation, such as scores for the story of 'Peter and the Wolf'. Pupils identify loud and soft sounds and many know the meaning of technical terms such as *piano* and *forte*. Pupils evaluate their recorded work. By Year 6, pupils play pieces and sing unison songs with an awareness of other performers, and record their own compositions with symbols. They are able to harmonise skilfully with controlled phrasing, and synchronise their voices to good effect to produce a good standard of choral singing. Pupils understand the meaning of *tempo*, *tone* and *texture* and use a wide range of technical vocabulary accurately when describing pieces of music from different eras or cultures. Pupils read graphic notation confidently and understand note-values, such as crochets, quavers and minims. They have a good knowledge of famous composers and compare their works.

132. The quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory, and it was judged to be good in half the lessons seen. Pupils benefit significantly from the excellent knowledge and good planning of the subject specialist, who teaches music to all classes. In addition, a significant proportion of pupils make good progress in learning to play instruments during lessons given by part-time music tutors. Throughout the school, good opportunities are provided for pupils to perform to an audience in small groups during lessons. The subject contributes well to pupils' understanding of the richness of cultures other than their own because pupils study music from several parts of the world. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported and achieve appropriately.

133. Pupils made good progress in the lessons seen in Key Stage 1 but satisfactory progress in those seen in Key Stage 2. Pupils were productive and worked at a good pace in Key Stage 1 and responded well to the clear learning intentions the teacher shared with them. In the lessons seen towards the end of Key Stages 2, the inappropriate behaviour of a small but significant proportion of pupils had a negative effect on teaching and learning. This small number of pupils would benefit from more interesting tasks and consistently high expectations of their work and behaviour.

134. The recently-appointed co-ordinator has introduced a good scheme of work and has a clear vision for the subject's future development. The school is piloting new subject guidance which is being used effectively to plan work for pupils in Year 4. Assessment procedures are being developed to help with planning. Good provision is made for extra-curricular music, through activities such as choir practices and a strings club, and pupils have regular opportunities to perform to audiences within the local community. These opportunities enrich pupils' experiences and raise their esteem. The school's good range of musical instruments is used well to support teaching and learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. By the end of both key stages, standards in physical education, including swimming, gymnastics and game skills, are similar to those in other schools. By Year 2, pupils are confident and imaginative when using gymnastic equipment, and they are particularly responsive when the objectives are clearly explained. In dance, pupils are imaginative when interpreting music, although the quality of movement is underdeveloped. By Year 6, all but a few pupils move with confidence and work collaboratively, to achieve average levels of performance expected for their age in gymnastics and games skills. Pupils pass the ball with appropriate pace and accuracy. Pupils in Year 5 were given good opportunities to plan and evaluate their work during gymnastics, although they showed little interest in refining their movements.

136. The quality of teaching and learning was judged to be satisfactory overall, although two of the lessons seen were good and one was unsatisfactory. Pupils were keen to participate, but they made the most gains in their skill development and understanding when the teaching included well-paced practical activities and when pupils were encouraged to think about the quality of their work. In good and satisfactory lessons, the teachers' sound subject knowledge and appropriate planning underpinned clear explanations and an effective use of the available resources. The unsatisfactory teaching lacked pace and included few teaching points. In consequence, pupils made unsatisfactory progress because they were not given enough time to practise and improve their skills. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are challenged by most of the practical activities, though higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently stretched. This is due in part to a lack of detailed subject guidance to ensure that skills are taught systematically throughout the school. However, the school has identified the need in its development plan to review the subject and assess the training needs of its staff. The school makes effective use of outside agencies to enrich the curriculum, and it provides pupils with a good range of learning experiences during extra-curricular activities and at a residential trip for pupils in Year 6.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. Standards in religious education match the level expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Teachers feel well supported by the school's scheme of work, which is closely linked to the Agreed Syllabus, and there is good coverage. Throughout the school, pupils are increasing their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils display basic knowledge of some features of Christianity and other faiths, such as Buddhism. They know that a major element in many faiths is that of caring for one another and for the environment.

138. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils relate some of the concepts of different faiths to their own experiences and go beyond this to discover more about religious beliefs, ideas and structures. They know facts about the main faiths in Britain such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism and Hinduism, and that each has a Supreme Being, a Holy Centre, and key leaders such as Jesus, Moses, Guru Nanak and Muhammad. Pupils also know that each faith has a Holy Text, for example the Qur'an, the Torah, the Guru Granth Sahib and the Bible, and that each gives rules and examples for living. Pupils develop a good understanding that religions share some common features ; for example, the role of festivals and the importance of giving as well as receiving are well understood. Pupils throughout the key stage consider basic religious concepts and ways in which they have been expressed in sacred books, daily living and rituals.

139. The quality of learning is supported by sound teaching and by pupils' satisfactory attitudes to the subject. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory, with equal proportions of good and satisfactory teaching. One lesson was judged unsatisfactory.

140. Most teachers, through their own personal research, are confident in teaching the subject and motivate the pupils through interesting discussion and planned questioning. A good example of this was seen in a lesson in Year 3 where pupils were effectively challenged to apply the Buddhist belief in the 'Middle Way' to their own daily lives. The high quality support received by pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, gives them full and equal access in lessons and allows them to achieve appropriately. Pupils' learning and understanding is well supported by the sensitivity with which teachers approach Christianity, other faiths, and issues raised in lessons. Teaching in both key stages is used well to reinforce moral values and to provide recognition of pupils' own value as individuals. Most pupils throughout the school show real interest and listen attentively to teachers and to one another. They work well together and show confidence when speaking to the class as a whole. They are keen to take part in discussion and question and answer sessions. In lessons where teachers are not confident enough to encourage discussion and reflection, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher, and this results in some inappropriate behaviour. Pupils in Year 6 are not encouraged to make enough use of their research skills in lessons, for example when they studied different styles of writing in the Bible.

141. The co-ordinator manages the subject effectively. The importance of equality of opportunity and the need to encourage respect for, and understanding of, other faiths and cultures is emphasised appropriately in lessons. The teaching of religious education is supported by assemblies, visiting speakers, and visits to places of worship. The wide range of stimulating artefacts is supplemented through a loan scheme to which the school contributes.