

INSPECTION REPORT

Ashlands C of E First School
Crewkerne

LEA area : Somerset

Unique Reference Number : 123749

Inspection Number: 183343

Headteacher : Mr M Tatlock

Reporting inspector : Mrs S M Saunders-Singer
23050

Dates of inspection : 4th – 8th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707755

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

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

Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the appropriate authority must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. Every registered parent of a registered pupil at the school should receive a free copy of the summary of the report within ten working days of receipt of the summary by the appropriate authority. A charge not exceeding the cost of supply may be made by the appropriate authority for any other copies of the report and/or its summary provided to any person who asks for one.

The appropriate authority should make a copy of the report and the summary available for inspection by members of the public at such times and at such a place as may be reasonable

Any enquiries about this legislation should be addressed to the OFSTED Compliance Helpline
Tel. 0171421 6567

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	First
Type of control :	C of E Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils :	4 to 9
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	North Street Crewkerne Somerset TA 18 7AL
Telephone number :	(01460) 73437
Fax number :	(01460) 73437
Appropriate authority :	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr C Haynes
Date of previous inspection :	12 th July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs S M Saunders-Singer, RgI	English Religious education Design and technology History Art Under fives	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Teaching Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Leadership and management
Mr P Andrew, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Accommodation
Mr D Penney	Mathematics Science Information technology Geography Music Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Curriculum and assessment Staffing and learning resources Efficiency

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Limited

7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

Tel: (0117) 934 9944

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

The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well
Where the school has weaknesses
How the school has improved since the last inspection
Standards in subjects
Quality of teaching
Other aspects of the school
The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school 1 - 3
Key indicators 4

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress 5 - 22
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 23 - 30
Attendance 31 - 32

Quality of education provided

Teaching 33 - 41
The curriculum and assessment 42 - 49
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 50 - 56
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 57 - 64
Partnership with parents and the community 65 - 69

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management 70 - 74
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 75 - 79
The efficiency of the school 80 - 84

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five 85 - 95

English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education 96 - 135

Other subjects or courses 136 - 151

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 152 - 155

Data and indicators 156

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

Provision for social and moral development is very good and the school promotes personal development very well, with the result that pupils' behaviour and relationships in the school are very good and pupils have good attitudes to learning.

- .Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; the school deploys the specialist staff well and pupils are enabled to make good progress.
- .Provision for children under five is good.
- .The curriculum is broad and balanced.
- .Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good.
- .Teaching is good, overall.
- .Resources are used efficiently.
- .The school gives good value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

Senior staff do not have an effective monitoring role.

I.Accommodation is inadequate for the full delivery of the entitlement for under fives and for physical education. It presents a number of health and safety concerns.

II.Information technology and design and technology are not fully developed; the planned work has not been completed.

III.Effective and regular communication with all sections of the school population is not ensured.

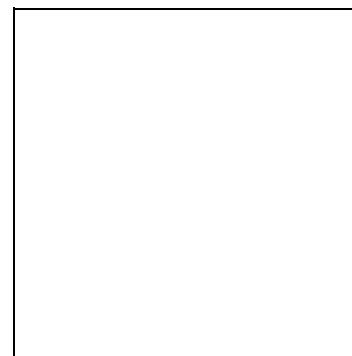
The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made improvements in most of the areas identified by the last inspection report in 1996. Successful developments in curriculum planning, producing schemes of work for all subjects and assessment procedures have been made. Analysis of assessment data has begun to give useful information about standards in the school, although pupils' progress is not yet effectively tracked. Job descriptions are now clear and staff know their roles and responsibilities. Standards in English and science are improving, although not sufficiently in mathematics or in information technology. The school has set realistic targets. It is soundly placed to reach these targets and make further improvements.

Standards in subjects

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
Reading	C	C
Writing	C	D
Mathematics	D	E



The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests. Comparison with similar schools and with all schools is adversely affected by the present take up of free school meals statistic which records a far lower percentage than those known to be eligible. This places the school in an unrealistic band for comparison. The table has been edited accordingly:

There is evidence of improvement in the 1999 results. Comparison with similar schools from available data suggests that, in reading and writing, standards are in line with national averages, while in mathematics, standards are below average. This represents an improvement on last year's tests in reading and writing. The work seen in religious education is in line with standards expected but, in information technology, standards are below average. Standards in history, art and music are in line with expectations in those subjects. Insufficient work was seen in geography and design technology to make a judgement. Children under five are working towards achieving the desirable learning outcomes by the time they reach school age. Progress in speaking and listening and in personal and social areas of experience is particularly good.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Very good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
Information technology	None seen	None seen	None seen
Religious education	None seen	Good	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Good	Satisfactory

Teaching is satisfactory and better in 91 percent of all lessons. In 9 per cent it is very good and less than satisfactory in a further 9 per cent. In 49 percent of all lessons the teaching is good. There is a range of quality in each key stage, but, overall, teaching seen in the inspection is good. Very good teaching was seen in Reception literacy and numeracy and some Year 3 and 4 music. Good teaching was seen in each key stage in literacy and science; overall, in the under fives; in physical education, art and religious education at Key Stage 1 and in some numeracy in Key Stage 2.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour is very good. Staff have high expectations and pupils respond well.
Attendance	Good and above the national average. Unauthorised absences are below the national average.
Ethos*	Attitudes to learning are good, pupils try hard and are well motivated. Relationships are very good. The school is committed to raising standards.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory, overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. There is no regular monitoring by senior managers to evaluate the school's planned developments. Governors are well informed and committed.
Curriculum and assessment	Good; broad and balanced for all pupils including the under-fives. Planning is good and is influenced well in the long and short term by good assessment procedures, although assessments are not used to track the rate of pupil progress.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision. Well qualified and experienced staff, well managed. The school has a deep commitment to the needs and inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good development of social and moral aspects and sound development of spiritual and cultural aspects.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good numbers of experienced and well qualified staff. Non teaching assistants make significant contributions to pupils' learning. Resources are adequate in number and quality. Accommodation is well used, clean and generally soundly maintained but is unsatisfactory for the delivery of the under-fives outdoor curriculum and for physical education through the school.
Value for money	The school has sustained good value for money since the last inspection.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>IV. Attitudes and values that the school promotes.</p> <p>V. Head and teachers are approachable with problems.</p> <p>VI. The quality of education received by the pupils.</p>	<p>T</p> <p>Q</p> <p>from t</p> <p>In</p> <p>reading</p> <p>C</p> <p>sanctio</p>

The inspecting team agree with the positive comments made by the parents. Reports use statements generated by teachers on an electronic database and, while the comments made are accurate, the range of comments is insufficient to give more personalised views. Teachers seem to be approachable and eager to meet parents at the end of the school day or at arranged times and the team found suitable systems in place to support those making complaints. Implementation of the incremental behaviour sanctions is consistent between staff, although the level at which parents are contacted is not always clear. The quantity of information for parents is appropriate, but the school has not formulated a

check system to ensure that parents receive the information. There are inconsistencies in a potentially effective reading partnership between the school, pupils and parents.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise standards still further the head teacher and governors should:

i. develop and implement procedures to ensure that all staff with management responsibilities monitor standards and quality of provision: namely the headteacher for the whole school; deputy headteacher for identified responsibilities; core subject managers for their subjects (paragraphs 71, 81, 83, 106, 118, 123 and 129);

ii. develop the roles and responsibilities of senior staff to enable management tasks to be shared more equitably and appropriately (paragraphs 71 and 81);

iii. complete the planned developments in information technology and design technology (45, 72, 130 and 149);

iv. develop systems to ensure that lines of communication, particularly with non-teaching assistants and parents, are effective (paragraphs 39, 41, 61, 65, 69 and 75); and

v. take all possible steps to improve the accommodation, address the health and safety concerns and secure provision for physical education and the under-fives outdoor curriculum (paragraphs 43, 47, 48, 63, 77, 95, 144, 145 and 146).

v. ***Other less serious weaknesses***

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- the development of marking as an integral element in pupils' assessment procedures (paragraphs 37, 72 and 106).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Ashlands C of E First school is situated on the southern outskirts of Crewkerne. The town is an ancient one but has lost its traditional employment bases over recent years. The school is one of two serving the town. Pupils attend from outside the immediate catchment area and there is a bus that brings a number of pupils from the opposite side of the town. There are a small but significant number of settled traveller families within the catchment of the school. The local housing includes a mixture of local authority owned and privately owned older properties. There are 138 pupils on roll. Numbers on roll have been falling over recent years. The school is smaller than the national average size for schools of the same type. Children enter the school in September of the year in which they are five in accordance with the school's and local authority's admission policy. At the time of the inspection there were 20 children under five in the school. There is one reception class. The most recent baseline assessments show a full range of attainment on entry to school, including a small number of higher attaining pupils. However, there are significant numbers of pupils with below average attainment on entry and few higher attaining pupils in each year group. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs is particularly high in some year groups. Overall, attainment on entry is below average. The balance of boys and girls in the school is even, although, in some year groups, there is considerable imbalance. In Year 3, for example, there are 22 boys and 11 girls, while in Year 2 there are 7 boys and 16 girls. Class sizes vary from the Reception/ Year 1 classes of 25 and 27, to the Year 3 class of 33 pupils and Year 4 class of 30 pupils. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language at 0.7 per cent is well below the national average. There are 34 pupils on the special education needs register and a number have been recently identified, bringing the percentage to nearly 25 per cent of the school population. This is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of educational needs is well below the national average. However, the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is considerably higher (10 per cent) than recorded (5.6 per cent) but this is not reflected in the numbers claiming the meals. This has an adverse effect both on the monies received by the school calculated from the figures and the banding of the school in comparison with others regarding test results.
2. The school's aims are appropriate and include a commitment to encourage pupils to develop their personal, social, spiritual, emotional and physical abilities, to be successful learners supported by a happy and caring environment. The school aims to value and celebrate pupils' personal achievements and foster the partnerships between the home and school.
3. The school's priorities for development have been defined in the school development plan to address priorities raised in the previous inspection report. These include the continued development of literacy, numeracy and information technology, the revision of the school development plan to include curriculum priorities and the cost of development. The school is in the process of setting specific attainment targets to continue the commitment to raising standards both internally and with the partner middle school.

4. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998 (97)	10 (13)	18 (18)	28 (31)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	9 (5)	9 (10)	9 (14)
	Girls	14 (15)	13 (16)	15 (13)
	Total	23 (20)	75 (84)	24 (27)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82 (65)	75 (84)	86 (87)
	National	81 (80)	85 (80)	86 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	9 (9)	9 (13)	7 (13)
	Girls	14 (16)	15 (16)	13 (16)
	Total	23 (25)	24 (29)	20 (29)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82 (81)	86 (94)	71 (94)
	National	81 (80)	85 (84)	86 (85)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.8
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.2
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	9
Satisfactory or better	91
Less than satisfactory	9

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

4. Attainment and progress

1. Attainment, overall, is broadly in line with national averages and pupils make satisfactory progress. When cohort sizes are small, as they are in this school, this often results in considerable variation in schools' average National Curriculum test results from one year to the next. Care should be exercised when interpreting these results and standards should not be judged from them alone.
2. In the National Curriculum tests in 1998, the percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 who achieved the nationally expected level was close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving higher levels in the same year was above the national average in reading and writing, but was below it in mathematics.
3. When the results of all pupils in that year group are considered and averaged, the performance of pupils in reading and writing was close to the national average, while their performance in mathematics was below the national average.
4. All schools, nationally, are also compared to others of similar type. The main indicator for this is the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This number is considerably higher than the numbers who take up their eligibility. When compared to other such schools, the average performance of pupils in the National Curriculum tests in 1998 was close to the average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics.
5. The reason for the difference between these figures and those which compare the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels is to do with the proportion of pupils in the cohort who are either high or low attaining. This particular cohort contained a comparatively large number of pupils who were at either end of the continuum and, so, while fewer pupils achieved expected levels than in other similar schools, overall the figures balanced.
6. In the tests in 1998, girls performed better than boys in reading. In writing and mathematics, however, boys performed better than girls. Over a period of three years, from 1996 to 1998 inclusive, girls performed significantly better than boys in reading. Girls, overall, performed at levels which were well above the national average, while boys' results were below the national average. Over the same period of time, girls performed marginally better in writing and the boys slightly better in mathematics.
7. Following a dip in 1997, the school's results in reading in 1998 were back at the 1996 levels, as they were in writing. In mathematics, there has been a steady decline in standards over these three years. However, this is somewhat misleading because the proportion of the 1996 cohort which forms the baseline for this comparison, who were higher attaining, was abnormally high for the school. The school's results for 1999 show very similar percentages of pupils achieving the expected levels in all three tests as there were in 1998. The school has sustained standards, overall, since the last inspection. There are no national comparative statistics yet for 1999.
8. There is a wide variation in the standards of children's attainment when they first join the school at the age of 4 years. There are some high achieving children, but, on average, children's attainment is below average in reading, writing and mathematics. It is well below expected levels in speaking and listening and in personal and social development.

9. In the Reception class and again in Year 1 in particular, pupils make good progress, especially in developing their personal, social, speaking and listening skills. This creates a good basis for pupils' learning. These gains are soundly reinforced in each class, as pupils move through the school. This makes a good contribution to the standards achieved by the time the pupils transfer to the next school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school in relation to their prior attainment.
10. Children aged under five in the Reception class are beginning to listen attentively for short periods of time, although, overall, listening and writing skills are below average. They are beginning to know some letters and the sounds they represent and are beginning to write their names, recognising some letters. Children are eager to learn the characters from the reading scheme and are generally interested in books, although some do not have well developed book skills.
11. Children are confident to speak in small and whole class groups, but their vocabulary is often limited to short sentences and commands. Children are making good progress particularly in the speaking and listening aspects of English. In mathematics skills, children are beginning to count to 5, know shapes and positional language like "under" and "in front". They match like objects accurately. Physical development in the classroom is improving and children cut, stick and fasten construction effectively. In knowledge and understanding of the world, children appreciate natural objects and use "push" and "pull" correctly. Creative development is developing through opportunities to paint and draw, manipulate malleable materials and build models. The children sing happily and have a growing collection of memorised songs. Personal and social skills are not always well developed, but children are making good progress in assimilating the rules and routines of the classroom.
12. In English, the majority of pupils on entry to Key Stage 1 have a reasonably varied vocabulary; they take turns to speak, usually confidently in simple sentences. The majority are developing early reading skills and a number are eager readers. They enjoy story telling, recognise rhymes and re-tell well-known stories generally accurately and in sequence. Many are beginning to write their names and a small number of words from memory. Letters are generally neat and well formed. Progress is good throughout Key Stage 1 in speaking and particularly in listening. It is sound in reading, phonics, spelling and handwriting. It is broadly satisfactory in writing. Pupils develop sight word and phonic skills in reading and letter formation develops appropriately. By the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils are reading appropriately or better for their age, using sound, word and picture clues. They enjoy books and read with enthusiasm and expression. These pupils also sustain a suitable amount of unaided writing. Many pupils spell simple words, generally correctly, from memory and the majority are developing consistent handwriting patterns. They speak clearly and with more confidence to tell a story, respond to a question or report news. Taking turns and listening to teachers and other pupils is improving, but there are still a number whose listening skills are not well developed. Year 2 children present themselves as attentive and they communicate more confidently. They enjoy literacy sessions and show interest in the written and spoken word. Overall, levels of attainment are broadly in line with those expected nationally.
13. There is steady reading progress for most pupils in Years 3 and 4 of Key Stage 2; pupils grow in confidence with regard to reading to themselves and to the class. They develop library skills satisfactorily and enjoy finding information from books and worksheets, although independent research skills are not fully developed by the end of Year 4. While pupils enjoy using independent research and writing skills, for example in history, they are not yet able to use questioning sufficiently effectively to gain facts and inform their learning fully. By the end of Year 4, many pupils are attaining in line with the national average in reading, speaking, listening

and writing. Speaking in class, discussion for work purposes and answering questions clearly are well developed and, by Year 4, pupils enter into discussion confidently. They are showing some more extended writing of accounts in other subjects, such as history and religious education and the use of increasingly vivid vocabulary, for example, in poetry. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

14. In mathematics, pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 2 have a reasonable grasp of place value and know that the order of elements in an addition sum does not affect the total. They name an appropriate range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and the higher attaining pupils are beginning to identify correctly the number of faces, edges and corners when they classify these shapes. They achieve standards that are close to those expected of pupils of this age. Year 4 pupils, however, achieve standards that are below those expected. They have an insecure grasp of number bonds and this inhibits their attainment. They count on and back securely in twos and tens. They are beginning to devise their own methods of recording the results of their work, for example, when subtracting. The higher attaining pupils check the reasonableness of their answers satisfactorily.
15. In science, pupils make sound progress throughout the school. There is evidence of good progress in some aspects of the subject in Year 4. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected. Nearly all pupils name a variety of forces correctly and know that forces can change the shapes of various materials. They know the effects of gravity and friction on objects. In Year 4, pupils know the difference between weight and mass and the higher attaining pupils explain this correctly. They use their mathematical capabilities soundly to read a variety of scales with reasonable accuracy when, for example, investigating forces. The majority of pupils know that objects do not move when the forces acting on them balance. While overall standards are in line with those expected for pupils of this age, there are aspects of the subject in which they achieve higher standards.
16. Pupils' attainment in information technology is below the levels expected, overall, because the hardware necessary to deliver the full subject curriculum to the standards required has only just been delivered to the school. In those aspects of the subject for which there is current evidence, pupils achieve standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 that are close to those expected of pupils of their respective ages and make satisfactory progress. In their work on religious education, pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus and make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
17. Because of the timing of the inspection within the school's topic cycle, it was not possible to gather enough evidence of pupils' work in geography and design and technology for reliable judgements to be made about the progress pupils are making. In art, history, music and physical education, pupils make generally satisfactory progress throughout the school, although there are limitations for the higher attaining pupils in physical education that are posed by the nature of the accommodation and the site.
18. Pupils use their literacy skills well across the curriculum. In religious education, history, geography and science writing is used to record learning, to write descriptively or creatively. Pupils respond well to the encouragement to speak and listen through the school and pupils are increasingly willing to take turns to speak, value each other's contributions and express views and attitudes as they progress through the school. They use their numeracy skills soundly across the curriculum. They draw imaginary maps to scale, using a computer program and record their science results in a suitable range of ways, including tables and Venn diagrams.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

19. Social and personal development for the under fives children is good from a low baseline. Children settle well into the school environment; they show increasing confidence and self-respect and try hard to meet teachers' expectation of behaviour in learning and playing situations. They are secure and happy and are confident in their class and are responding well to the class organisation including the teaching staff job-share. Relationships with the class teachers and the classroom assistant are establishing effectively and the children respond willingly to the happy and ordered learning environment. The children participate enthusiastically in playtimes and are secure within the school environment. Behaviour is good, overall, although there are a number of children, both boys and girls who find listening to instructions, sitting still and the discipline within the class more difficult than others. However, generally, they make significant progress in social and personal development. Children are well aware of right and wrong and are learning what is acceptable behaviour in school. They are beginning to work in groups co-operatively and are increasingly willing to take turns and share fairly. Resources are carefully used and well tidied away. Children are eager and enthusiastic. They show a range of feelings in response to stories and are beginning to show care and concern for others. They settle quickly to their tasks and are eager to share their work, for example, in literacy and numeracy. They concentrate for increasing periods of time and are willing to persevere, for example, in making construction models or with their writing tasks.

20. Overall, in the school, the pupils' good attitudes to work and their very good behaviour and personal development have been maintained since the school's previous inspection. There have been no exclusions. Parents also report that, generally, their children enjoy coming to school and are happy there. Pupils sustain concentration and stay on task throughout lessons, even those that are extended, such as the Literacy Hour. While there are sometimes poor listening skills and challenging behaviour shown in Reception and Year 1, there is a marked improvement in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour through the school since those reported in the last inspection. Increasingly, pupils persevere and complete the tasks set. Attitudes towards the presentation of work improve, particularly in Year 4. There are examples of neat work through the school.

21. Pupils respond well to teachers' skilful questioning. Development of thinking skills is evident in pupils' answers and their responses to challenges, for example, in numeracy and science. In religious education and history, pupils respond well to the feelings and attitudes they encounter. Examples are seen in the prayers written by pupils, the thoughts on Remembrance Day 1998, for example. Pupils behave responsibly when working away from immediate adult control, for example, on the computers. Pupils have developed a satisfactory capacity for personal study, although the opportunities for personal study and research are not fully utilised in Years 3 and 4. However, these older pupils have good skills, for example in knowing about contents and index pages of reference books and they can work independently to find out information for their topics. Many pupils understand the order of the alphabet securely from Year 2 so that they use wordbooks and dictionaries increasingly independently in Years 3 and 4.

22. Pupils with special educational needs respond very positively to the support given to them by all adults, especially the non-teaching assistants assigned to them and to the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) when she works with them in class.

23. All the staff work hard to encourage the very good behaviour of pupils during lessons and mid-day meal times. Pupils behave respectfully during the acts of collective worship and they value each other's efforts generously during Monday's celebration assembly. Pupils enter and exit the hall for assembly quietly. Lunchtimes are quiet and orderly. Behaviour in the playground, in classrooms and around the rest of the school is very good. Only on rare occasions are pupils uncooperative. Incidents of bullying are very rare and all pupils are very clear about the rewards and sanctions systems in operation. Pupils are courteous and polite to visitors. Parents are generally positive about the good behaviour, overall, although some felt that the sanctions through detention are too arbitrary. The inspecting team found that the system is suitably incremental and that pupils

understand the system well and respect it. They also value the “fresh start” to each week. Pupils are very helpful both to adults and other pupils and work well in pairs and larger groups. They show respect for personal property and are very careful with resources belonging to the school, for example, when experimenting with new art media and in using and replacing physical education equipment.

24. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Members of staff provide good role models. Pupils respond well to the respect shown to them by adults. They have caring attitudes to each other and to teachers and other staff. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated. Pupils have developed good tolerance and understanding of the differences between other people’s values and opinions; much of this has been effectively promoted through ‘circle time’ and through the celebration of all examples of effort and success whether academic or social. Pupils’ understanding of the significant differences and similarities between Christianity and another religions is beginning to develop. In lessons, pupils listen increasingly carefully to each other, they respect others’ ideas. They work harmoniously throughout the school in pairs, for example, at the computers. They share equipment effectively, such as in science, art and physical education lessons.

25. Pupils’ personal development is very good, overall. Their independent research skills are satisfactory. Their problem-solving skills in mathematics and science are well developed. Day-to-day responsibilities are routinely accepted by pupils from Year 1 onwards and the class captain role, changed daily, means that all pupils have regular opportunities to take responsibility. They perform the tasks associated with the role well. Pupils clear up after eating their mid day meal in their classrooms, sensibly and quietly. Pupils give good support to a range of local and national charities.

26. The good attitudes to learning, the very good behaviour and personal development of the pupils contribute significantly to the school’s good ethos.

Attendance

27. Attendance at the school is good. It is above the national average and the level of unauthorised absence is less than half the national figures. The details are attendance 94 per cent, authorised absence 5.8 per cent and unauthorised absence 0.2 per cent. This level of attendance provides a firm base for the pupil's attainment and progress and is broadly similar to attendance at the time of the last inspection. There are no patterns of absence for particular groups of pupils. Registers are accurately maintained and monitored regularly. Pupils arrive at school punctually and lessons begin on time.

28. The numbers of children leaving and joining the school is at a relatively high level. The figures show that, in year two, 81 per cent of the children started in reception, but, in Year 4, only 68 per cent started in reception, whilst the overall numbers in these year groups have remained constant. This has an effect on pupils’ progress and sometimes attitudes to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

29. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and contributes effectively to the good progress made by the children under five and the sound academic progress made by pupils though the school. Progress at Key Stage 1 is particularly strong in speaking and listening, in personal and social development and in attitudes to learning. The standards of teaching, overall, have been maintained since the last inspection and have been improved in relation to the identification of learning aims in longer term planning, supported well by effective schemes of work. In nine per cent of lessons, the teaching is very good. A further 49 percent of all teaching observed is good and 31 per cent of teaching

is satisfactory. In the nine per cent of lessons where there were unsatisfactory aspects, the pace of lessons is adversely effected by the poor listening skills of some pupils and the subsequent loss of teaching momentum in lessons while rectifying this. There is also some lack of subject knowledge in music and physical education. Teachers throughout the school are skilful in their organisation and management of positive and effective learning environments in which all pupils, including the youngest entrants, are encouraged and valued and are enabled to make progress. Teaching for the under-fives children on entry to the school is knowledgeable and effective. Very good teaching was observed in literacy and numeracy in Reception and in music for Years 3 and 4. Teaching of the Literacy Hour sessions is never less than sound; it is very good in a small number and good in half the sessions observed. The teaching is well supported by the literacy framework. Teaching in the newly implemented numeracy sessions is satisfactory, overall, and teachers are responding positively to the very recent training received. Examples of good teaching were seen in art, religious education and physical education at Key Stage 1, in numeracy in Key Stage 2 and in science at both key stages. Owing to time and timetable restrictions, teaching in history, geography and design technology was not observed. No teaching was seen in information technology, but teachers support pupils effectively in developing skills at both key stages.

30. Where the teaching is very good, lessons are characterised by the quality of subject knowledge. Here, consistent pace and challenges are delivered in a secure and controlled but lively atmosphere of shared learning that supports pupils' progress well. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' effort and behaviour; this is a significant strength that supports and encourages the pupils to learn successfully, for example, in some music at Key Stage 2 and in some literacy and numeracy sessions in Reception. In the good teaching observed, teachers' clear explanations and imparting of knowledge have a positive effect on pupils' understanding and subsequent learning. Teachers are knowledgeable and convey enthusiasm for the subject to the pupils, for example, in literacy, some numeracy and science. Teachers' ability to sustain pupils' interest and curiosity for learning within a disciplined and purposeful environment is particularly evident in Reception and consistent, persistent expectations of good listening and behaviour make a significant impact on pupils' progress in Reception and Year 1 classes. Where teaching is good and better, teachers use questioning skilfully to encourage pupils' thinking skills. They revise and use pupils' earlier learning to help pupils form ideas and opinions. The brisk pace of learning and activity is maintained in these good lessons. Pupils of all levels of attainment are appropriately challenged; this includes pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils in each year group. In the few sessions where there were unsatisfactory elements, lack of subject knowledge reduces appropriate pace and challenge and the poor listening skills of some pupils effectively sabotage the momentum of the learning as the teachers have constantly to reinforce behaviour codes rather than teaching.

31. Teaching for the under fives is good, overall, in language and literacy, creative, physical and mathematical areas of experience. It is sound in the knowledge and understanding of the world area of experience. In some literacy and numeracy sessions for these youngest children, teaching is very good.

32. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers are well aware of pupils' individual needs and capabilities and make good provision for them within their lessons. Non-teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the progress of these pupils, because they build up very good relationships with them. All members of staff within the school value all pupils, including those with special educational needs, for the unique gifts they have and they make very successful efforts to include them as valued members of the class in all activities.

33. Assessment opportunities are identified in lesson planning and inform teachers' future planning in the short term, well. Assessments are effective and are consistently used across the school. These include the information from the baseline assessments on entry to statutory schooling. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Marking, however, is not sufficiently developed across the

school to give consistent support to pupils or to set targets for further learning.

34. The teachers have developed the yearly and termly curriculum plans effectively and use them consistently. They are based on the effective schemes of work successfully produced since the last inspection. Plans for the topics are good. They are produced by the teaching staff and key stage teams and cover the breadth and balance of the curriculum well. The majority of teachers' individual daily plans are detailed; informed by their knowledge of the pupils and the effective organisation of classes. However, these daily plans do not always identify learning objectives for the sessions or assessment opportunities where appropriate. Teachers know their pupils well and use their informal observations skilfully to match tasks to pupils appropriately, but the useful "I can do" statements are not used to ensure that subject specific skills are developed progressively.

35. The school's agreed behaviour policy gives a structure and framework to teachers' expectations of behaviour and pupils' awareness of acceptable conduct in lessons and around the school. It is implemented effectively and has a very positive impact on the atmosphere and attitude to learning. The school has a very good approach to equal opportunities. These aspects have been maintained since the last inspection. Homework is satisfactorily established and, throughout the school, children take books home to read and enjoy. However, parents were unsure of the function of the reading record book and its use and indeed there is variable use in the school. Where it is working most successfully, parents, pupils and teachers are involved in the recording of books enjoyed and opportunities for dialogue are well used. Teachers use homework informally to extend pupils' learning through the involvement of families in gathering information and more regularly for spelling and tables practice. Use of homework is generally satisfactory. However, the school has not fully developed the notion that learning extends beyond the school day. Parents expressed concerns that there is too little preparation for the demands of the homework in the next stage of schooling and the inspecting team agrees with this view. However, overall, teachers prepare pupils well for the next school.

36. In most lessons observed, the teaching is soundly supported by appropriate use of resources and activities to extend the planned learning objectives. Classroom management is effective in the majority of classes and lesson time is used productively. Classroom ethos is positive and productive. Lessons start on time. Teachers have established a strong team that supports pupils' continuity of learning well and, as teachers plan together, continuity of provision across year groups is assured.

37. The good numbers of education support staff are well informed and effective. Their directed contributions are highly valued and individuals are very well deployed by the teaching staff, although they are not sufficiently involved in the planning process and communication with teachers and senior managers is not always secure. However, their input makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and positive attitudes to school. The staff use the available accommodation well. Displays are bright and often well presented including examples of pupils' work across the curriculum which enrich the learning environment.

The curriculum and assessment

38. The curriculum is broad and balanced over time. It fulfils all statutory requirements, including those for special educational needs, sex education and religious education; this is an improvement since the previous inspection because the statutory requirements to ensure that pupils experience competitive games have been relaxed. Teaching time is in line with recommendations in Key Stage 2 and exceeds them in Key Stage 1.

39. The curriculum promotes pupils' intellectual development soundly and their personal development very well. There are, however, limitations on pupils' physical development, particularly that of the higher attaining pupils, because of the unsatisfactory nature of the accommodation and site.

There are also limitations on the development of the curriculum for children aged under five which arise from there being no ready access for these children to a designated and suitable outside area to enable them to explore and develop their physical capabilities. In this, there has been no change since the previous inspection.

40. The planning for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their individual education plans are very relevant to their needs and capabilities and pupils are given extra adult support within class activities. This makes a very good contribution to their progress, not only in intellectual terms, but also in their sense of fully belonging to the school community. The school makes good efforts to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils. The school's commitment to these pupils is deep. It is effective because of the efforts of all members of staff, but particularly of the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the designated non-teaching assistants. All required reviews are carried out regularly and to a high standard. The high standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.

41. The curriculum provided has good relevance to pupils' needs and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. It is planned with good regard to the requirements of the National Curriculum in a series of topics over a two-year cycle. These topics emphasise the scientific, geographic and historical elements of the required curriculum. In addition to this arrangement, other subjects, most notably English and mathematics, are taught regularly and discretely. English is planned well using the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy and the school has very recently adopted the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines to inform its planning for mathematics. Personal and health education is included in the science provision and the school uses "circle" times effectively to develop skills of communication and personal development. Art and music provision introduces pupils satisfactorily to appreciation of the arts. Design technology is identified by the school as a subject for further development. The scheme of work supports learning well, but enlargement of the process to include evaluation by pupils of their work is not sufficiently developed.

42. The school's planning systems are good. There are schemes of work for all subjects, which is an improvement since the last inspection, and they fully reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. These schemes are arranged into three overlapping 'bands'; this system ensures good levels of progression between year groups and key stages. The school has devised a good system of "I can do..." statements, which act not only as a good record of pupils' achievements, but also are used to frame the focus of each topic. This is a very good system that ensures that the purpose of the topic is clear to all and focuses the efforts of teachers and pupils alike. Teachers' planning for lessons is sound, but the objectives of the lesson are often stated in terms of what the activities are rather than what the pupils are expected to learn.

43. Planning for the under-fives is good. It takes account of the desirable learning outcomes to which children are working and ensures a good range of experiences and skills development, including, as it does, opportunities for adult initiated activities, child-initiated activities and purposeful play. There are restrictions on the outdoor curriculum for the under fives because of the limitations of the site. Planning is detailed and very well informed. Both job share teachers plan together, so ensuring continuity of experience for the children, including the transfer to national curriculum based work as children reach statutory school age. Throughout the school, teachers plan their work together and have frequent informal contact with each other. In addition, there are regular key stage meetings to address areas of common concern. This system has a good effect on the continuity of experience for pupils. However, the standards of pupils' work and the quality of the provision are not regularly and formally monitored by senior staff and so the school cannot objectively and accurately evaluate the effects of its efforts on raising the levels of pupils' attainment.

44. The provision for extra-curricular activities is just satisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. There are problems associated with pupils travelling home by bus and also by

the nature of the site. Some instrument tuition is available for guitar and violin. A range of activities is offered. This is, however, limited to drama and library activities and team games such as football or cricket in season. There is a reasonable uptake that includes girls. The curriculum is enriched by visits to sites of local interest and by visits to the school of staff from local museums, demonstrating historical artefacts.

45. The school's assessment procedures are good, overall, and the improvements that have already been clearly identified in the school's current development planning are appropriate and include the establishment of a consistent marking policy. This will facilitate the planned setting of targets for improvements and the development of portfolios of pupils' work that are levelled according to the National Curriculum level descriptors. The "I can do..." statements are good and are used well to establish pupils' levels of attainment. They are, however, not used to plan future work or to ensure that subject specific skills are developed progressively. For example, when pupils return to a topic later in their school experience, there is no review or overview to ensure that pupils are meeting skills which extend and challenge their learning and progress. Teachers use their daily assessing of pupils' progress well to modify their plans to meet the needs of their pupils. The use of continuing assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very good and routinely leads to precise and effective responses to individual needs. These findings substantially reflect those of the previous inspection.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

46. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. The school is effective in promoting all the main aspects and statutory requirements are fully met. Overall, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection with regard to developing and taking responsibility and leadership roles through the class captaincies. The school has maintained other aspects of this area of development well since the last inspection.

47. In the under-fives, many children settle well and respond positively to the adults and to other children and make significant progress in social and personal development. However, there is a significant number whose listening and personal skills are not well developed, but who are generally trying hard and are making progress. Children are increasingly aware of right and wrong and what is acceptable behaviour. Overall, in the Reception class the under fives children are beginning to work co-operatively in groups, although many are more self centred and play or work alone more frequently. Some are willing to take turns and share fairly. Children are eager and receptive and are developing relationships with their peers and with the adults with whom they come into contact.

48. Spiritual development is sound. Lessons in religious education and in personal, social and health education support pupils' spiritual development satisfactorily. Lessons reflect a growth in awareness of our beautiful world, of God and of those things that have importance to children. The school promotes the essential Christian culture of respecting the individual in spite of their actions very well and this underpins the ethos of the school. The spiritual quality in the acts of collective worship for the whole school is enhanced by the calm atmosphere, sufficient time for quiet prayer and the sharing of prayers. However, opportunities to promote personal insight through quiet reflection are not sufficiently developed.

49. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is a clear code of behaviour with a printed behaviour policy. School rules are well known and pupils' rules on display in classes also encourage personal development, for example, these include encouragement for every one to work hard and let others get on with their work: "look after your own things and other people; be polite and friendly; listen to one another; care about others". The approach and attitudes of the headteacher and staff provide pupils with good guidance on right and wrong and on the values of fairness and honesty. There are very well established, good, reward systems and a celebration of awards assembly weekly. Each pupil in each class has a turn to be Class Captain for a day at a time,

wear a badge during their designated day and carry out a number of specific responsibilities, for example taking registers to the secretary. Responsibilities increase through the school and in Year 4 pupils regularly and efficiently prepare the hall for assembly. Moral issues are explored thoroughly through personal and social education and in assemblies and lessons.

50. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. From beginning school, children are encouraged to relate well to each other, to take turns and to share willingly. Good co-operation is ensured in the many times pupils work in pairs or groups, often by mixed gender. This is particularly noticeable in the way the school establishes respect for other people and is particularly successful in the inclusion of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. There is a clear message that everyone is accepted and the school makes very good and successful provision for pupils with special educational needs that ensures that they are accepted fully by all members of the school community. They take part fully in all activities, for example swimming, because the school has invested a great deal of time, effort and finance in ensuring a high level of adult supervision.

51. The school also encourages respect for the neighbourhood and the wider environment. A number of activities for science, history and geography are arranged through visits out of the school. These encourage good social integration outside the classroom.

52. The cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils are given a secure knowledge of their own and other cultures through their lessons in science, geography, art, literacy and history and through visits to a wide range of local sites. The school makes good use of the local library and resource centres in the community to encourage cultural awareness. However, there is a lack of awareness of the wider issues and the school misses some opportunities to give a positive direction for celebrating wider cultural diversity.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

53. The school provides a friendly and caring environment in which the children can develop their full potential. The school policies for support, guidance and pupil welfare are satisfactory and are generally consistently applied across the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Their needs are monitored regularly and contact with the necessary outside agencies is good. Their IEPs identify suitable targets for improvement, including, as appropriate, behavioural ones.

54. The policies for monitoring attendance and the reasons for absence are good and thoroughly implemented. The marking of registers at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions is carried out efficiently in a calm, friendly and polite manner. The attendance details are collated by the school secretary each day and this ensures that there is detailed control of all the relevant information and action taken when required. The effectiveness of the policies is reflected in the good attendance rate at the school.

55. The school retains systematic records on all the pupils so that their achievement, progress, attendance and welfare is monitored. However this information is not integrated to provide one reference source for each pupil. A personal folder for each individual contains copies of annual reports, test results and attendance; family details and any special medical needs are recorded on a computer system and finally, records of pupils' academic attainment and progress are held by the teachers. The information on attainment and progress is being well used and further developed to give overall class assessments. However, at present the system is not sufficiently coherent to enhance the guidance and the support the school gives to the pupils.

56. The annual reports to parents are of sound quality and comply with statutory requirements. Some parents were concerned that there are too many comments that are the same on

reports for different children and that this meant that the school was not reporting adequately on individual children. While it is true that there are many comments that are the same, this is to do with the way that the school has organised report production to maximise the effective and efficient use of teachers' classroom contact time. The school has successfully made great efforts to produce banks of statements that accurately reflect what pupils have achieved in the year. The school is well aware of the need to expand this bank of comments to reflect pupils' achievements in a more varied fashion.

57. The school has a clear and simple set of rules covering behaviour and discipline. Behaviour of the pupils is very good and this reflects the manner in which the behaviour policy is, in general, consistently implemented by all the staff across the school, although the level at which parents are involved is not always clear. The job descriptions of all the non-teaching staff clearly indicate their involvement in behaviour management and the school benefits from this involvement.

58. The arrangements for the induction of children into the Reception class are good. They are well established and organised carefully to support both children and parents. The good levels of support and guidance are maintained through the children's time in the Reception classes. The transfer arrangements for the Year 4 pupils to the middle school are well planned and ensure a smooth change of school. There is close liaison with the middle school on curriculum aspects and particularly with the special educational needs pupils. The transfer arrangements have been further improved since the last inspection.

59. There are good procedures in place for monitoring child protection and there is a named member of staff to ensure that procedures are followed. There is close co-operation with outside agencies, for example with the school nurse covering health and welfare. The standard health and safety routine checks are carried out at appropriate intervals, but the management may wish to consider increasing the frequency of fire drills.

60. Overall, the school has maintained the levels of support, guidance and pupil welfare reported in the last inspection. Safety issues of the difficult site are an on-going concern and the school is making every effort to improve these.

Partnership with parents and the community

61. There is an active Friends of the School association that supports the school in a number of ways. The association raises additional funds each year amounting to between £1500 and £2000. These moneys are effectively used, after consultation with the teachers, to buy additional facilities to enhance the education of the pupils. The association is responsible for providing adults to operate the school library on three days each week and also, jointly with the school, produces the newsletter. Thus, an enthusiastic core of parents are involved in supporting the school and the education of the children. However, there is limited use of parent helpers in the classrooms and no encouragement to help on school visits. There is a feeling amongst some parents that the school is not too enthusiastic about encouraging parental help. The school, on the other hand, believes that many parents have not the free time to help. Unfortunately, many parents do not fully understand the school's policy on taking books home to read and the use of reading diaries lacks consistency. Overall, the involvement of parents in their children's learning is satisfactory and while there has been some development since the last inspection, particularly in communicating curriculum initiatives, there are opportunities for strengthening the involvement.

62. The quality of information provided by the school is satisfactory, with letters to all parents on the curriculum to be followed each term. The variety and flow of information is enhanced by the termly newsletter. Information to parents at the beginning of their children's life in the school is good. However, at the parents' meeting it was said that the annual school reports are very impersonal, contain many standardised phrases and gave no indication of the progress that had been made. The

inspectors concur with this view and find that whilst the format of the report is potentially good there is an opportunity to expand the bank of comments used in the system developed by the school to inform parents on their children's attainment and progress. The school acknowledges this and plans to expand the phrase bank. The parents emphasised that at organised meetings to discuss progress there is a more positive and informative approach.

63. The partnership between the school and the parents of pupils with special educational needs is sound. Parents are suitably involved in the review of statements of educational needs.

64. The school organises a series of visits to enrich the educational and cultural experiences of the children. In addition visitors have come to the school. For example, the South Somerset Museum Service has been helpful with period artefacts and costumes to enrich the history experiences of the pupils.

65. Part of the catchment area for the school is on the other side of the town and children from this area are brought to school by bus. This reduces the opportunities for daily contact with parents. This problem was mentioned in the last report and efforts to further improve the contact and communication with the parents, overall, have not been wholly successful in informing parents about initiatives, routines or aims of the school.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management, overall, is sound. The headteacher provides a thoughtful, articulate and deeply held philosophy which underpins his vision of the school and which gives good education direction to the school. He has been successful in moving the school forward and in developing a range of imaginative and innovative initiatives, some of which have been taken up by the local authority as exemplars. He communicates his enthusiasm to pupils very well and is confident and successful in his dealings with pupils. Recent analyses of assessment data are beginning to inform planning and raise standards in the school. The headteacher knows the school and its community very well and is sympathetic and sensitive to their needs. He communicates this empathy well to the teaching staff and the resulting sensitivity underpins the life of the school; the ethos of the school is good. The aims and values of the school are very well reflected in its work. Examples include the very good provision for and management both of special educational needs and the under-fives and the management of the job share in the Reception class.

67. The agreed roles and responsibilities of staff, including the deputy headteacher and subject stewards, are now established and itemised in job descriptions. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, there are areas of responsibility, at present retained by the headteacher, which are not delegated to ease his work load, release him for classroom contact or strengthen the role of the deputy. Routine administrative tasks, communication and team building with the non-teaching assistants and assuring the communication links with parents are examples. The teaching staff work soundly as a team and are working effectively to a common purpose. The subject stewardship organisation is an imaginative deployment of staff who may not be specialist in subjects, but who are able and willing to support their colleagues. The literacy initiative has been well implemented and is now established in the school; the numeracy strategy has been soundly organised and is newly in place. Curriculum and assessment procedures have been well developed since the last inspection. However, there is no regular monitoring of the delivery of these initiatives by the headteacher, by senior managers (deputy headteacher or Key Stage 1 and 2 coordinators) or by the governing body. Therefore assessment of the quality and evaluation of the effectiveness of these developments, overall, have not been effectively addressed since the findings of the last inspection. The school acknowledges this as the next stage for development.

68. Development planning is effectively recorded in the school development plan. This document is well set out, detailed and suitably costed. Appropriate priorities and specific targets are identified and provide a clear plan of action. There has been variable success in reaching the targets since the last inspection; good progress has been made with the development of the schemes of work in all subjects, development of a good assessment programme to guide teachers' planning, meeting the needs of more able pupils. A number of the goals have been put on hold in order to meet the demands of the literacy and numeracy strategies; for example, fully developing information technology and design technology. As in the case of the whole school marking policy, these are initiatives which are central to raising standards and pupils' awareness but are insufficiently developed. However, overall the school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection and is soundly placed to continue those improvements.

69. The governing body has undergone considerable change over the last year. There are three newly elected governors and there have been two unavoidable changes of chair, one in tragic circumstances. The recently elected chairman has established a positive and productive dialogue with the headteacher. The well-established working party organisation has provided stability with longer serving governors taking chairs of these. There is a core of experienced, well informed and knowledgeable governors who have a secure and strategic view of the school and its development and who are well aware of the standards, management and financial issues pertaining in the school, including their role in monitoring the school's effectiveness. They are articulate and energetic in support of the school. There are named governors who have taken responsibility for literacy, numeracy, special educational needs and, through the curriculum working party, governors have satisfactory knowledge of the curriculum.

70. The school has a good policy for special educational needs. This is translated into practice very well; a deep commitment to providing for pupils with special educational needs permeates the school at every level. All legal requirements are met and the reporting of the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are sound.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

71. The school has a good number of well-qualified and experienced teachers at all stages, including for the under-fives. The job share in the Reception class is effective. The good level of staffing enables the required curriculum to be delivered effectively. Teachers are soundly deployed and work well as a team. Their job descriptions are appropriate and they understand their roles and responsibilities satisfactorily. There are a good number of non-teaching and special needs assistants who have good levels of experience. They are deployed very well to support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. These findings are the same as the last inspection. However, the extent to which support staff are used in assessing and planning work for pupils in their care is not consistent between classes. In some cases, non-teaching staff and teachers are not sufficiently involved in dialogue to make best use of non-teaching staff's expertise and knowledge and levels of communication are not always assured between staff members.

72. The professional development of staff is linked very closely to the developing demands of the curriculum as evidenced in the school's development plans, for example the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This system is sound and has had a good impact on raising the quality of teaching in those areas. The school's appraisal cycle is sound and the links between this and improvements in provision and standards are satisfactory, overall.

73. The school building is Victorian with some additions and modifications. The site slopes steeply down from the road and whilst there is a large area it is difficult to utilise for modern school activities. The management makes the best possible use of the facilities. The exterior of the building is in good repair and the interior has benefited from recent improvements to wall surfaces, is clean and generally suitably maintained. Overall, however, the accommodation is not satisfactory for the delivery of the full curriculum. The class room accommodation is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, a spacious library has been created and an information technology suite incorporated. However, the hall is not suitable for the delivery of the physical education curriculum. There is insufficient room for equipment storage or use. There are several safety hazards, for example the large iron radiators, central heating pipes and large blackboard. The school is aware of these hazards and extreme care is taken in structuring the physical education lessons accordingly. In the playground there is not a suitable area for the under fives. There is no grassed area suitable for sports and ball games and this inhibits the physical education curriculum and the development of extra curricular activities.

74. The school is aware of the security issues arising from the layout of the site and is taking steps to improve and adapt a difficult site indoors and out.

75. The learning resources are adequate in quantity and quality. The school has a good system of planning for renewal and expansion of these resources that is tied tightly into the topic cycle and the requirements of the school's development plan. The library has a satisfactory stock of books and further fiction books are to be found in classrooms. The school has very recently taken delivery of a number of personal computers to enable them to complete the development of this area of the curriculum that had been planned to take place earlier in the year. There is now a satisfactory number of computers, some of which are modern. The school makes effective use of visitors and visits to, for example, museums and the local environment, to enhance the curriculum. The school's resources have improved since the last inspection.

The efficiency of the school

76. The school's financial planning systems are good, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Governors are fully involved, as appropriate, in the planning and review of the budget. The school's priorities for improvement are clearly identified in its development plan. Budget headings are appropriate and funds are allocated sensibly to ensure that the school's identified

priorities are met. The school gives good attention to possible alternative spending patterns. The school has met the requirements of the latest auditor's report.

77. The teachers are deployed sensibly according to need and expertise. The job share in the under-fives Reception classroom is very well managed, as is the provision for under-fives, overall. Teachers who are subject stewards do not have adequate time allowance to enable them to fulfil their management roles; this is unsatisfactory. The school has already identified this as a priority and has begun to address it through its current development plan. The use and deployment of support staff, particularly the non-teaching assistants who have responsibility for pupils with special educational needs, are very good. The school has made a deliberate decision to fund this area of their work highly; this is a good decision that has a very good effect on these pupils' progress.

78. Teachers use the learning resources soundly to further the aims of their lessons and use the accommodation satisfactorily, overall. Considering the considerable safety implications of using the hall for physical education lessons, teachers use this part of the accommodation well.

79. Financial control procedures are satisfactory. Adequate information is available to the governors and finances are kept in good order. However, too many routine procedures make too much demand on the time of senior managers, particularly the headteacher. The administration of the school is good. It gives good support to the running of the school and supports the efforts of the teachers well.

80. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are generally below average, particularly so in speaking, listening and personal and social development. The school makes good provision for their social development and pupils' personal development is very good. They make good progress in their learning in their early years in the school and sound progress elsewhere with the result that their levels of attainment on transfer to their next school are, broadly speaking, close to those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment throughout the school and are supported very well. The school's curriculum planning and assessment procedures are good. There is a good educational direction for the school and it is run with good levels of efficiency. Many of the developments needed to improve still further have been clearly identified in the current school development plan. For these reasons, the school gives good value for money, as it did at the time of the previous inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

81. Provision for the 20 children under five is provided in the Reception class. Children attend part time sessions for half a term, increasing hours to include lunch and then whole day sessions after October half term. At the time of the inspection four children in the class had celebrated their fifth birthday.

82. The induction procedures are well established. Good levels of information give details of what the parents and children can expect on entry to the school. The program includes visits to the playgroup by both class teachers and visits to the children's future class. Overall, provision for the under fives is very well organised. It is much appreciated by the majority of parents. The adult input in the Reception class is of high quality; an established job share divides the working week between two teachers. Teachers and support staff work most effectively as a team. They are very knowledgeable and informed about young children's learning needs. Routines are consistent and the children experience a good balance of class teaching time, purposeful play and teacher initiated activity. Teachers' expertise and the impact of their good and very good teaching in Reception has resulted in children making good progress in settling and socialising and sound progress in their learning to date, although many enter school with below average attainment particularly in speaking and listening and personal and social skills.

83. Overall, children under-five respond well; they show increasing confidence and self-respect and are learning what the expectations of behaviour in school are. Children are secure and happy in the playground and their classroom. They are responding generally well to the sessions and to the class organisation between class teachers and their assistant. Behaviour is variable; when children are listening carefully they are on task and purposeful but there are times when their listening is not good and some children are disruptive and distract others. Many children settle well and respond positively to the adults and to other children and make significant progress in their social and personal development. However, there is a significant number whose listening and personal skills are not well developed, but who are generally trying hard and are making progress. Children are increasingly aware of right and wrong and what is acceptable behaviour. Overall, in the Reception class the under-fives children are beginning to work co-operatively in groups, although many are more self centred and play or work alone more frequently. Some are willing to take turns and share fairly. Resources are generally carefully used and enthusiastically tidied away. Children are eager and receptive and are developing relationships with their peers and with the adults with whom they come into contact. They are beginning to show a range of feelings in response to stories and to show care and concern for others. Some children settle quickly to their tasks. Most are eager to share their work, for example in literacy. They concentrate for short periods and are beginning to persevere. Teachers give children very good role models.

84. The majority of children make sound progress in all areas of language and literacy skills, overall, and are working towards attaining the targets of the desirable learning objectives on entry to statutory schooling. Children are beginning to listen more attentively to stories, songs and rhymes, to adults in teaching situations and to each other when working or playing together and through the shared text sessions in literacy. The children talk about their experiences and share their interest in their learning, in small groups and to the whole group, but often their vocabulary is limited. Children express their thoughts and feelings simply. Role-play opportunities are used well, for example through the kitchen in the Reception class where both boys and girls spend time. Books are generally used carefully. Children are beginning to have favourite characters and can name them and know the reading scheme characters. They listen increasingly carefully to instructions and most understand their tasks. Children are well aware that pictures and words have meaning and the majority of children in

the Reception class are making sound progress. Some are showing early reading skills by beginning to recognise rhymes, know their own names, identify some rhymes and by trying to predict story endings. These children are beginning to write their names and are confident to attempt to write. Teaching in the language and literacy element of the curriculum in the Reception classes is good and very good and this is reflected in the secure knowledge and good planning of the Literacy sessions. Children enjoy activities and learning in this area and they are eager to participate.

85. Attainment in mathematical skills is broadly at levels expected at this age and children are working towards reaching the Desirable Learning Outcomes on entry to compulsory schooling. Most children are beginning to sort and classify everyday objects in like sets and they are developing an awareness of shape. The vocabulary of mathematics is developing and children are learning positional words like “above”, “below”, “next to”. Some children under five are achieving appropriate skills in numeracy for the age and stage, count to 3 and match objects to numbers to 3 accurately. The children recognise and begin to recreate mathematical patterns in printing in art and they are beginning to compare, match, order, sort and count, using a variety of objects, for example cups and saucers in the role play area. Progress is satisfactory, overall, but is good in some sessions where, for example children are beginning to understand “three-ness”. Teaching is based on secure knowledge, good organisation of children and resources and differentiated activities match learning with children’s needs effectively. Children’s responses are positive; they enjoy their mathematical experiences.

86. All the elements of knowledge and understanding of the world are experienced by the children during their longer term Reception experience and they are working towards the expectations of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Their attainment in historical skills is as expected. They talk about their families and about past and present and are beginning to have an understanding of old and new, for example old and new toys. Attainment in geographical skills is in line with expectations. Children talk about their environment and show early geographical skills in their awareness and observations of the daily weather features related to playtime and in their routes within their classroom and beyond. Children are beginning to question why things happen and how things work, they are interested in pull and push in relation to how toys move. They explore and select materials for tasks and use cutting, joining and building for a variety of purposes. The children use the computer with enthusiasm and are beginning to develop sound keyboard skills to use an art drawing program. Teaching observed in the technology and science elements of the curriculum is satisfactory. Resources are varied, of good quality and appropriate to this age group. Progress is sound, overall, at this early stage of the children’s experience.

87. In their physical development children are attaining below expectations. Progress is satisfactory, but, in the sessions seen, is hampered by the children’s poor listening and some of the group’s behaviour. They show some imagination and increasing control of movement, co-ordination and a growing awareness of space. When they do listen and cooperate, they respond well to direction. The children respond well to rhythm and some were quick to recognise the rhythm in repeated phrases during a newly learned action song. Children handle scissors, small construction and malleable materials with increasing control and accuracy. Teaching of the physical development element of the curriculum is good, overall, and is sufficiently skilful to maintain the pace of the lessons in spite of the children’s immaturity. There is an insufficient range of outdoor equipment developed to provide a range of levels, textures and structured out door learning for the under fives. This is an area for development.

88. Attainment in creative development is in line with expected levels at this age. Progress, overall, is satisfactory. Children make sound progress in the use of colour and texture in their paintings and pictures and are happy to paint large individual pictures and provide captions to explain their content. They make functional models using the construction kits. In music, children sing with confidence and enjoyment from their growing repertoire of remembered songs. Teaching, overall, is good; teachers are skilful in questioning children about their work in this area of experience.

Interventions by all members of staff while children are using construction or malleable materials encourage children to think and respond, use their speaking skills and extend their vocabulary. Children respond well to these elements of their learning. Opportunities to develop children's imaginative and exploratory play is provided through the well used and resourced role play area and construction materials.

89. Attainment on entry to the school, as indicated in the baseline assessment, shows a full range of attainment although there are few higher attaining children. The largest proportion of children have below average attainment. Teachers keep good and useful records of children's work and track their progress in learning. Records from the children's pre-school experiences give a useful starting point to corroborate the Baseline assessments and inform the Reception teachers' planning of activities, well. There is accurate recording of the children's progressive skills acquisition and the class teachers are well aware of the progress children are making even at such an early stage of the year. Transition to the requirements of the National Curriculum is made in response to the needs of the children. Long term curriculum plans are broad and balanced and have been very knowledgeably produced. These plans provide an informed and effective framework for the development of the children's learning needs and the planning of the transition from the Desirable Learning Outcomes to the requirements of the National Curriculum. This ensures continuity and progression between the Reception and Year 1 curriculum.

90. Teaching for the under-fives is good in the majority of sessions and is at times, very good. Teachers are very experienced and have considerable knowledge and expertise in this demanding area of teaching. Very good use is made of teacher expertise to enhance the youngest children's experience. This is maintained throughout Reception and the quality of the teamwork between the job sharing teachers is notable. Teaching is well supported by the teaching assistant. Roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and there is a very positive atmosphere for learning. There is a strong team approach in the classroom in which each member's input is highly valuable and valued. The team's skills have a good impact on the children's learning and the children are making sound progress to date and are working towards meeting the Desirable Learning Objectives by the age of five.

91. Resources are generally good and support the planned curriculum in meeting curriculum requirements well. A computer and printer are readily accessible. There is a suitable range of listening centres and taped stories. However, as previously mentioned, the range of textures and levels to develop imaginative play outside for the youngest children is not satisfactory, although the outside playground is not restricted in space. The youngest pupils do not at present have access to the full range of outdoor play activities which are a feature of the under fives curriculum. The accommodation is suitable for the class size and the space is used well. The classroom is light and airy. Natural objects, interesting displays and bright celebrations of children's work enrich the learning environment very well. Overall provision for the under fives has been maintained since the last inspection and is a strength of the school.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

English

92. In the National Curriculum tests of 1998, at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils who reached the nationally expected Level 2 was close to the national average in reading and writing. The percentage attaining the higher Level 3 was higher than the national average in reading and writing. Compared with all schools, performance in English is close to the national average and compared with similar schools attainment is in line with the national average in reading but is below the average in writing. Girls performed better than boys in reading in the 1998 tests, but in writing, boys performed better than girls, although when taken over the three years from 1996 – 9 girls perform marginally better in writing than boys and their performance in reading is significantly better. These averages are better in the 1998 tests than in those of 1997 in both reading and writing. The results of 1996 represent a cohort of pupils within which there were unusually high numbers of higher attaining pupils than is usual for the school. This is an example of the variations in results from year to year when cohorts of pupils are relatively small. Results in the 1999 tests show that levels are broadly similar to 1998, although there are no national comparative figures as yet. This is supported by the observations and scrutiny made during the inspection.

93. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school, although there are few high attaining children. Baseline assessments show that, on average, children's attainment is below average in reading and writing and is well below in speaking and listening.

94. A significant number of pupils on entry to Key Stage 1 have made good progress from the low baseline and show language skills which are broadly average. By the end of the key stage, they have a reasonably varied vocabulary; they take turns to speak, usually confidently in simple sentences. Many have satisfactory book skills, they treat books with care. A number are eager readers. They enjoy story telling – “The enormous turnip” for example, recognise rhymes and rhyming patterns and retell well-known stories broadly accurately and in sequence. They have a growing repertoire of initial sounds. They write their names and a number of words from memory. Generally letters are neat and well formed and pupils write increasingly confidently through the good range of experiences, for example narrative writing about holidays and class poems as well as through the literacy word work. Pupils develop sight, word and phonic skills in reading and letter formation develops appropriately.

95. In Year 3, pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction, they use simple dictionaries and word books and are beginning to use their knowledge of alphabetical order to find words. Pupils in Year 3 select data from texts to give answers to teachers' questions. Their vocabulary is beginning to extend and there are examples of imaginative choices of words, for example to be used in place of “said”. They know what the function of a contents page is and explain clearly how to use it. A third of the pupils are reading appropriately or better for their age, using sound, word and picture clues. They enjoy books and some pupils read with enthusiasm and expression, particularly in the group reading sessions where teachers model reading skills effectively. Pupils are beginning to understand how to evaluate a book's contents and some are beginning to have a list of known or favourite authors. These pupils also sustain more unaided writing. Many pupils spell simple words without support and the majority are developing consistent handwriting patterns. They speak clearly and with more confidence to tell a story, respond to a question or report news. Turn taking and listening to teachers and other pupils is maturing and listening skills are much improved

96. Pupils in Year 4 listen closely to shared texts, they are confident and eager to share their views and ideas. Reading is more confident, individually and in groups, and pupils read with expression. They are working at appropriate levels for the stage of the year. In Year 4, pupils regularly improve text and edit their work. They know how to use powerful verbs to improve meaning and vary

vocabulary and understand and use past and present tenses. Speech marks, exclamation and question marks are accurately used and pupils are beginning to produce thoughtful and well-presented work. The majority of pupils are confident readers. They understand and use research skills and are confident in the library to find appropriate texts. Many pupils have at least one favourite author. They use dictionaries effectively.

97. Overall, levels of attainment in reading are broadly in line with those expected nationally, but they are below average in writing and speaking and listening. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

98. Progress in English is satisfactory throughout the school but is good in speaking and listening at Key Stage 1. Their speaking and listening skills are well supported through a good range of activities and pupils' vocabulary is beginning to be extended and developed through subject specific vocabulary, for example in science, numeracy and history. This progress is supported by the good teaching that focuses learning objectives clearly and by the effective implementation of the literacy strategy. Pupils are making good progress in using literacy skills through, for example, the writing of prayers or descriptions of church visits, in personal and social education "how we help people", in science report writing, in history by generating questions to ask adults about the school as it was. Progress is good throughout Key Stage 1 in reading, phonics, spelling and handwriting. It is broadly satisfactory in writing but there are examples of good progress through the school. The presentation of writing develops steadily and many pupils take pride in their work, producing neat and well-formed writing. However, not all pupils in Year 2 are joining their writing fully. The school recognises this as an area for further development. Pupils use their reading skills throughout the curriculum to support their work, although some pupils whose reading is below average could be hampered by their difficulty in reading work sheets for example in science, or instructions in numeracy tasks. Teachers and non teaching assistants are careful to ensure that this is not so. Pupils use information technology satisfactorily in English to write and print their work. This is an improvement since the last inspection, although there are areas still to develop and which the school has identified in the school development plan for information technology.

99. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good in talking, writing and in reading. Younger pupils make progress in their ability to recognise sight words and blend sounds into words. They also progress in their ability to discuss, make suggestions and answer questions. As they move through the school, confidence grows and many develop positive self esteem and motivation towards reading, writing and presenting their own ideas. These pupils make good progress, well supported by class teachers and learning assistants in lessons against the targets set within individual education plans. Regular assessments inform teachers' plans and appropriate extension activities are provided according to pupils' needs; this has a positive effect on pupils' progress.

100. Pupils throughout the school enjoy English. They respond well to questions in class from teachers and visitors. Many are enthusiastic readers. They work well in individual reading and writing settings, collaborate in pairs, when given the opportunity and discuss constructively in larger groups. They behave well and are enthusiastic about the literacy activities and shared texts. They respond well and they value the work of others. They give and take constructive suggestions where appropriate and in general have positive attitudes to all aspects of English.

101. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is good or very good in the majority of literacy lessons through the school. Teaching style and delivery provide good role models for speaking and listening. Where the teaching is most effective, teachers have consistent expectations of pupils' listening. Teachers are knowledgeable; they use appropriate and specific language well and choose interesting and appropriate

texts to interest the pupils. Importance is placed on the teaching of reading and the enjoyment to be gained from text through guided reading sessions. In good and very good lessons through the school, pupils enjoy the use of appropriate shared texts; teachers make good use of the teaching points provided by the text. Throughout the school, teachers use good, skilful questioning to draw out pupils' ideas. Where pace and challenge are brisk, teachers and pupils have good rapport and discuss topics purposefully; this is true across the curriculum and examples are seen in personal and social education and religious education. The scheme of work is well supported by the literacy strategy and English has a high profile in the school. The teaching is well supported by the classroom assistants' input.

102. Co-ordination is satisfactory, overall. The coordinator is knowledgeable and well informed; the literacy strategy has been implemented efficiently and is well established through the school. The school is part of a local authority focus project to enhance the literacy provision and the coordinator and key teachers are enthusiastic about the additional input. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Assessment procedures are good; there are regular checks on pupils' attainment in reading. Word recognition and work are collated, levelled and moderated by the staff and in the local family of schools. These examples are used well to plan further work for pupils and to inform teachers about expected levels of work against national standards. There is a useful portfolio of pupils' work within the literacy audit, which helps teachers to show consistency in judging the standards of pupils' work. Teacher assessments are broadly accurate. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and accurately, but marking does not include dialogue between the teacher and the pupil consistently, although there are some good examples in the school. However, the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor the literacy strategy and does not have the opportunity to monitor planning beyond involvement with year group planning sessions. This lack of monitoring is unsatisfactory and is inefficient use of knowledge and expertise.

103. The school has responded well to the key issue of the last inspection with regard to the refurbishment of the library and reading resources, particularly for higher attaining pupils. There is now a good range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction, in classes and the library. Library stock is satisfactory, overall, and supports the broad curriculum soundly, although less well stocked are, for example, the categories of design technology, art, music, multi-cultural and multi-faith texts. Reading books are in good condition and the school makes good use of the local authority's library/resource loan scheme. Local authority museum visits have also enriched the pupils' experience in history and subsequently in their writing related to these costumed visitors. Resources for literacy have been well funded and there is a good range of texts and "big books". The library and topic books are well supplemented by local authority loans. Book corners in each classroom provide valuable learning areas although these are not fully developed as enticing areas with, for example, interesting information about pupils' favourite authors, class books of shared writing by the class in attractively decorated corners. Library skills are soundly developed overall and the pupils benefit from the regular parent attendance. Library monitors from the Year 3 and 4 classes are efficient librarians. Pupils choose library books to take home and in some classes there is useful dialogue between teachers, pupils and parents about books read and enjoyed, for example, following up detail about ease of reading. However, the system is not consistent through the school and there seems to be misunderstanding about the dual role of guided reading books in classes and the library choice reading books. While the school has provided information and parents' curriculum evening about the literacy strategy and its organisation, this has not yet been assimilated by all parents.

Mathematics

104. In the National Curriculum tests in 1998, the percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 who achieved the nationally expected level was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving higher levels in the same year was below the national average. When the results of all pupils in that year group are considered and averaged, the performance of pupils in mathematics

was below the national average. When compared to similar schools, the average performance of pupils was well below average.

105. In the tests in 1998, the boys performed better than the girls. Over a period of three years, from 1996 to 1998 inclusive, the boys performed slightly better than the girls. There has been a steady decline in standards over these three years. The school's results for 1999 show very similar percentages of pupils achieving the expected levels as there were in 1998. There are no national comparative statistics yet.

106. The standards that children attain on entry to the school at the age of four years are below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, including the majority of pupils with special educational needs. A small number of pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in their understanding and correct use of mathematical language. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are achieving standards that are in line with those expected of pupils of their age but the standards being achieved currently in Year 4 are below those to be expected. Standards at Key Stage 1 have been maintained since the last inspection but in Key Stage 2 attainment is below average. However, when cohort sizes are small, as they are in this school, this often results in considerable variation in schools' average National Curriculum test results from one year to the next. Care should be exercised when interpreting these results and standards should not be judged from them alone.

107. The difference between the findings of the inspection and the National Curriculum tests is due to the difference in the attainment range in the two cohorts. Within the current Year 2 class there is a greater proportion of pupils who are attaining at or above the standards expected of pupils of this age.

108. In Year 1, pupils compare the length of two objects satisfactorily. With help, they organise the results of their enquiries to eliminate wrong conclusions and record their results in a limited variety of ways. Many pupils in this year group have limited concentration spans and difficulty with listening satisfactorily to what they have to do; this adversely affects the progress that they and their peers make. Nevertheless, the higher attaining pupils have a sound grasp of the language of length, for example long, short and tall. Pupils in Year 2 have a reasonable grasp of place value and know that the order of elements in an addition sum does not affect the total. They name an appropriate range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and the higher attaining pupils are beginning to identify correctly the number of faces, edges and corners when they classify these shapes.

109. Pupils in Year 3 recognise correctly the patterns of three, four, five, six and ten when working with numbers up to 100. The higher attaining pupils recognise patterns of odd and even numbers. Pupils generally add tens and units securely, although the lower attaining pupils are not able to 'carry' numbers securely. In Year 4, pupils have an insecure grasp of number bonds and this inhibits their attainment. They count on and back securely in twos and tens. They are beginning to devise their own methods of recording the results of their work, for example, when subtracting. The higher attaining pupils check the reasonableness of their answers satisfactorily. They identify the properties of two- and three- dimensional shapes correctly and classify them accordingly. They have a satisfactory grasp of data collection, representation and interpretation.

110. Pupils use their numeracy skills soundly across the curriculum. They draw imaginary maps to scale using a computer program and record their science results in a suitable range of ways including tables and Venn diagrams. The school's method of planning ensures that many suitable opportunities for such work are clearly identified within each topic each term.

111. Pupils' attitudes to their work are generally good. They listen attentively to their teachers and settle well to their tasks. They are interested in their work and concentrate for a suitable

length of time, sharing ideas and equipment well. Very nearly all pupils, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4, behave well and this makes a good contribution to their learning. They relate very well to pupils with special educational needs, including them naturally in their groups. However, they do not present their work neatly enough in some classes and this detracts from both their accuracy and the status accorded to the subject.

112. In addition, there is a small group of pupils, particularly in the youngest classes, who find it very difficult to listen and behave appropriately. This causes some disruption to the pace and flow of some lessons while the adults in the room settle these pupils and affecting the progress that the pupils are capable of making in those lessons.

113. The quality of the teaching is never less than satisfactory and is good in nearly half of the lessons. Teachers plan their work meticulously and choose activities well to further the aims of the lesson and to interest the pupils. Teachers are beginning to be successful in integrating the organisational changes required by the recent introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines into their practice. However, in some classes the quality of the questioning in the initial and final sessions is not yet sufficient to raise the pace and standards of pupils' mental strategies. Teachers manage pupils well and the relationships between pupils and adults, and between pupils themselves, are very good; this is a major contributory factor to the pupils' good behaviour and to their progress. The non-teaching assistants and other adults supporting teachers in class make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

114. The school has only very recently received the documentation necessary to introduce the full requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. It has not been possible, therefore, for the staff to assess fully the implications of this on organisation and practice. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with staff reveal that planning systems are secure and that assessment opportunities are woven into the planning process very well. The school has already recognised that the use of assessment data is an area for further development; this is clearly reflected in the school's current development plan. The subject stewards have produced a full and detailed audit of the subject, which provides a very good basis for the necessary further developments. However, they do not receive the non-contact time necessary to enable them to fulfil their management responsibility and to help to develop the subject effectively. Resources are adequate and there is a suitable allocation of funds within this year's budget to enable further resources to be bought to meet the increased demands of the National Numeracy Strategy.

Science

115. Attainment, overall, in science is in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. Teacher assessments of pupils' levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 show that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels was well below the national average, but that the proportion achieving the higher levels was close to the national average. This group of pupils is now in Year 4 and they are achieving levels close to those expected of pupils of their age. In some aspects, for example, their knowledge of scientific terms to do with forces, the higher attaining pupils are exceeding the levels of attainment expected. Pupils in Year 2, who are at the end of Key Stage 1, achieve standards that are in line with those expected nationally. Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make generally satisfactory progress, but their language development is often good

116. No science lessons were observed in Year 1. Through discussion with pupils and the scrutiny of work on display, it is evident that pupils' levels of achievement are appropriate for their age. They use the terms "push" and "pull" correctly, for example, when retelling the story of the Enormous Turnip. They know that objects will move when pushed or pulled. Pupils in Year 2 know that forces acting on an object may change its shape. Many pupils name a number of different types of

common force, such as twist, squeeze and roll, as well as push and pull. They record their findings in their own words mainly to a common format, although the higher achieving pupils are beginning to devise their own methods of recording. Year 3 pupils know that a magnet works on some materials and not on others. Through their developing understanding of testing techniques, they realise that some magnets are more powerful than others. They make sound predictions, based on previous learning. In Year 4, pupils know that objects will not move if the forces acting on them are balanced, for example the upthrust of water counteracting the effects of gravity on a boat. They know, and the higher attaining pupils explain correctly, the difference between mass and weight. They use their mathematical skills to read scales with reasonable accuracy on a Newton meter, with the higher attaining pupils explaining in simple terms the effect of forces on the spring in the meter.

117. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good, sometimes very good. They listen attentively to their teachers and relationships throughout the school are very good. They use equipment sensibly and safely. They collaborate well and naturally include pupils with special educational needs into their enquiries. They share resources with good humour and behave well. They concentrate well and remain on task for good periods of time.

118. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and plan their work well. The focus of the lessons is sharp and activities are chosen well to match the needs of the lesson and to be relevant to the pupils' experiences. Teachers set tasks clearly and share the purpose of the lesson with the pupils, which helps them to know not only what they have to do but why. Teachers manage pupils well and relationships are very good between all adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves. Teachers move around the room constantly to help, prompt and assess pupils, with the result that pupils are seldom unoccupied. Resources are suitable and are used well.

119. The curriculum fulfils all statutory requirements. It is planned well over a two-year cycle to ensure that all required elements are covered. Assessment opportunities are clearly identified in the planning, which gives a very good sense of cohesiveness to the subject. However, the school has already, appropriately, identified that the use of assessment to support the progressive development of pupils' skills over a series of topics is an area for further development. The subject stewards receive no non-contact time to enable them to monitor the quality of provision or to evaluate its effects on the standards that pupils are attaining and, thus, to fulfil their management responsibilities. This is unsatisfactory. Resources are adequate for the effective delivery of the subject although it is not easy to use the site to support work on the Life Processes and Living Things element of the curriculum because of the steep nature of some of the natural slopes.

Information technology

120. Little work in this subject was seen during the inspection. Judgements are also made, therefore, following: the scrutiny of pupils' work on walls, in books and on disk; the scrutiny of teachers' plans and records; talking with teachers and pupils and looking at the scheme of work. Pupils' attainment in information technology is below the levels expected, overall, because the hardware necessary to deliver the full subject curriculum to the standards required has only just been delivered to the school. In those aspects of the subject for which there is current evidence, pupils achieve standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 that are close to those expected of pupils of their respective ages and make satisfactory progress. Information technology has not been developed sufficiently in response to the requirements of the last inspection report.

121. Pupils' levels of attainment in the work seen are satisfactory and they make sound progress over time. In Year 1, pupils use a simple program to draw a teddy bear by dragging and dropping parts of the body. They assemble recognisable drawings, which they adapt delightfully through the use of pencil and crayon. They print their work with help. Year 2 pupils assemble a wheeled vehicle to illustrate their work in science. They have developed their mouse skills

satisfactorily and work confidently. Many pupils print their work themselves. They type text accurately although the speed of the typing is often slow. In Year 3, pupils use the mouse with growing confidence and speed. They control quite complex screen images securely, for example, to switch on some lights. They drag and drop images accurately and confidently. In both Year 3 and Year 4 there is evidence on disk of good use of computer programs to support work in geography through, for example, drawing imaginary maps to scale. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by use of support programs in information technology and they make satisfactory progress.

122. Pupils enjoy their information technology experiences. They handle the equipment carefully and behave well. They share their time on screen equitably, relate well to each other and to adults and are keen to show what it is they are doing.

123. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory, although no direct class teaching was observed. Teachers have sound levels of knowledge of the software to enable them to choose programs suitable for the purpose and to respond to pupils' needs effectively. Their planning is clear, even though there is no identified period on any class timetables to enable them to deliver a specific, skills-based lesson.

124. The planning for the subject is basically sound. There is a satisfactory scheme of work that covers all the required elements of the National Curriculum content and opportunities to use information technology are shown on topic plans. There is, however, no clearly identified progression of required skills; this is an area that the school has already identified as being for development and it is clearly shown in the current development plan.

125. The developments required following the previous inspection have been implemented, but the hardware and software developments nationally since then have rendered many of those developments obsolete. The school has an adequate supply of old hardware currently in use. It has, within the fortnight prior to the inspection, received the computers to enable them to set up a small suite and to link to the Internet through the funding associated with the National Grid for Learning. This is a good development, long awaited by the school, which is eager to improve its provision still further and to make more efficient use of the available technology. The subject stewards have no time free from their own class to monitor and evaluate the standards of pupils' and teachers' work in the subject. This is an area for development that is already in the school's current development plan.

129.

Religious education

126. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1 and by pupils in Year 3 and 4 in Key Stage 2. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, when pupils' attainment was deemed appropriate to their ages. Progress of pupils is satisfactory, overall, including learning about other major faiths and cultural traditions, although this is less well developed than other areas of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and are well supported in religious education.

127. By the end of the Key Stage 1, most pupils have a satisfactory grasp of the content of simple Bible stories. By helping to prepare for Christian festivals throughout the year, pupils know about the devotional elements within religion and recall clearly details of well-known events, such as the Nativity and Easter. Pupils explore and respond well to life experiences, for example, by showing care for others and appreciating the part played by families and friends in their lives. Pupils' thoughts, prayers and poems reflect on people who care for them, on their local environment and how and why they share things. As a result of all these discussions, pupils have developed awareness of their own value and the value of others. They have learnt of the importance of relationships and about people who have committed themselves to others, often through their religious beliefs and chosen life-styles.

128. In Years 3 and 4, pupils know the Old Testament stories, including the Creation. They know about Jesus' importance to the Christian faith and have followed his life journey through the temptations in the wilderness to the entry to Jerusalem. They are beginning to understand that the Bible is a book of books, that it has significance for believers and that, in other religions, other books and symbols are equally significant. Pupils at this stage are exploring feelings, views and opinions, for example, how it feels to be both bullied and the bully through sensitively planned "circle" time discussions. Although pupils understand securely the distinctive features of the religious traditions and festivals of Christianity, they are less secure when describing the key features of another major religion. They are less aware of the diversity of religions or of the symbolism drawn from another religion with its cultural traditions. They lack opportunities to talk with and listen to people who belong to a faith other than the traditional one for the locality. They lack knowledge of the special books containing the religious beliefs and history of other groups in society. Progress in these aspects is not sufficiently developed. However, the newly produced agreed syllabus has useful schemes of work further developed by the local authority to support this area of the curriculum.

129. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They are attentive and responsive and speak confidently about sharing their ideas and feelings readily. They show sensitivity towards the opinions and feelings of others. Pupils reflect well on their actions and analyse the actions of others maturely. They use their skills in literacy effectively in their discussions and writing in religious education.

130. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers promote good relationships in class and put pupils at their ease. Effective links are made with issues raised as part of the 'circle time' programme of personal and social education. Collective worship supports the religious education curriculum soundly.

131. Resources are generally satisfactory. The intention is to supplement them further and to include Christian churches and other places of worship within pupils' experiences. The school has identified the need to encourage representatives of religious groups to visit pupils and to share their beliefs. The co-ordinator has welcomed the new locally agreed syllabus as it supports non-specialist teachers to present all areas of religious education more confidently. Considerable planning work is already in place linking this with the existing school topics. This is good subject development.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

135. Music

132. Pupils make satisfactory progress, overall, throughout the school. Because pupils enter the school at the age of four with standards of listening that are below average, their progress in this area is good, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Instrument tuition is available at the school in guitar and violin.

133. Pupils in Year 1 respond appropriately to the mood of a piece of music, although their listening skills are well below those expected of pupils of this age. In Year 2, pupils accurately identify some members of families of instruments, for example naming violins and guitars as stringed instruments and tubas and French horns as brass instruments. However, their vocabulary is below the levels expected and they do not know how to explain what a tune is. In Year 3, most pupils listen satisfactorily to a piece of music and correctly name some of the instruments playing, for example, oboes and violins. In their singing practice, pupils in Years 3 and 4 sing with good attention to rhythm. They enunciate words clearly but do not always sing in tune. They improve their singing with practice.

134. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall, although a number of pupils in Year 1 have poor listening skills and behave inappropriately, which has a detrimental effect on the progress made by the class as a whole. Elsewhere in the school, however, pupils behave satisfactorily in their class-based lessons and listen adequately to their teachers. They answer politely when asked to do so.

135. The quality of the teaching varies from very good to unsatisfactory and is satisfactory, overall. Teachers generally manage pupils satisfactorily and have a clear purpose to their lessons. The less successful lessons share common features: the pace of these lessons is barely adequate; teachers' questioning sometimes does not focus clearly enough on the musical elements of the piece of music; pupils are not fully engaged in learning and do not develop an interest in the music. By contrast, when teaching is very good, as in the Key Stage 2 singing practice, pupils concentrate well because the pace of the lesson is brisk, with the focus varying regularly, so ensuring that their interest and enthusiasm are retained throughout the lesson.

136. The scheme of work puts good emphasis on the skills to be taught. However, although teachers' knowledge generally is adequate, they lack confidence with the subject and this detracts from the effectiveness of lessons. Resources for the subject are adequate.

140. Physical education

137. The progress that pupils make is satisfactory, given the very unsuitable nature of the accommodation, both inside and outside. The full curriculum cannot be taught to an adequate depth to extend all pupils, especially the higher attaining ones, satisfactorily. The teachers, however, make good efforts to overcome these inadequacies and are successful by providing seasonal team games, regular swimming at Key Stage 2 and a wide range of activities within the bounds of the grounds and limited hall accommodation. It is particularly noteworthy that the pupils with special educational needs, including physical ones, are fully integrated into their class lessons and that the school has made good provision for them by deploying non-teaching assistants specifically for these lessons. This makes a very good contribution to the self-esteem and personal development of these pupils.

138. In Year 1 pupils take their weight satisfactorily on their hands when 'bunny-jumping' across benches in the hall. About half the pupils in the class jump confidently in a variety of ways, for example, from two feet back to two feet. All pupils land safely. They return apparatus safely. Pupils in Year 2 stretch, bend and move in imaginative ways and a few higher attaining pupils extend their

limbs well. They work co-operatively with reasonable effect, for example when interpreting the story of a giant. Year 4 pupils run on their toes and dodge safely with appropriate regard to space and safety. They co-operate appropriately.

139. Pupils' attitudes are good and they behave soundly. They enjoy physical activity. In the hall, they pay good attention to safety, which is very necessary, but this inhibits the extent to which they can improve the range and quality of their movements. They work well and concentrate on the tasks given them well, particularly when the quality of the teaching is satisfactory or better.

140. The quality of teaching varies from unsatisfactory to good and is sound, overall. In all lessons, teachers give good attention to matters of safety, which is important both indoors, where there are significant health and safety issues posed by fixed and portable furniture, and outside, where the uneven surface of the playground and fallen leaves give problems. In the successful lessons, teachers set tasks clearly and ensure that pupils are active for an appropriate proportion of the time. The management of pupils is at least satisfactory in these lessons and sometimes good. Relationships are good, with the result that pupils respond promptly to teachers' instructions and ideas. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because pupils are inactive for too long and their learning is inhibited by the teachers' over-emphasis on control at the expense of activity, creativity and exploration.

141. The curriculum fulfils statutory obligations because there is now no necessity to make provision for competitive team games, although seasonal team games are regularly experienced by the pupils within the confines of the school. Key Stage 2 pupils regularly go swimming and about half of the pupils exceed expectations in this element of their physical education by the time they transfer to other schools at the end of Year 4. As indicated earlier, the physical resources for the full and effective delivery of this subject are inadequate. However, the apparatus and equipment is satisfactory in range and quality.

142. The provision for extra-curricular activities is adequate, but barely so. One teacher offers a range of seasonal team games for example, football or cricket. There is a good response to this, with about a third of eligible pupils, both boys and girls, taking part. There are problems associated with pupils reliant on the bus transport and also by the nature of the site which both inhibit further response to extra curricular sport.

146. **Art, Design and technology, Geography and History**

143. The time span of the inspection was short and largely due to the requirement to report on literacy and numeracy, it was not possible to see the complete range of subjects beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education being taught during the inspection. Where sufficient lessons were observed for example in physical education and music at both key stages these are reported on in more detail. In history, art, design technology and geography, judgements are made on the scrutiny of the available examples of pupils' work, of teachers' plans and records as well as talking to pupils about their work.

144. Pupils make satisfactory progress in design technology, art, history and geography at both key stages. In design technology and art there is a clear progression of skills and techniques; art and design technology work is soundly displayed to show all aspects of the subjects over time. In history, pupils at Key Stage 2 use secondary sources appropriately to research and are beginning to have an understanding of chronology. There is evidence of the development of the pupils' questioning skills and of using the information they learn in, for example, their studies about the Celts and Romans, by making connections with their environment and modern life. In geography, pupils develop satisfactory skills in map work and their experiences are enriched by the appropriate visits to study the environment around the school and further afield. Pupils share and co-operate successfully. They listen to their teachers and to each other. When given the opportunity, pupils collaborate successfully in

group work. Relationships are good and contribute positively to the good school ethos.

145. Teaching in art is satisfactory, overall. Where the teaching is good, teachers have consistent expectations of behaviour, are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subjects and have clear learning objectives included in their lesson plans. Good pace and challenge are also evident during these lessons. Activities are well chosen and match all pupils' needs. The quality of the teaching in these lessons enables the pupils to make satisfactory progress, overall. No teaching was seen in design technology, geography or history but scrutiny of the teachers' planning in the topic cycle and the scrutiny of work emanating from the topic themselves, show evidence of satisfactory presentation and expectation of pupils' work in these subjects. Schemes of work completed since the last inspection are an improvement and support teachers' planning effectively although the school has identified design technology as a subject for further development particularly in developing the process to include meaningful evaluation.

146. Resources are satisfactory in geography, art, design technology and history. In all subjects, the resources are accessible and the school has made good use of the storage and labelling to ensure accessibility.

147. The school complies fully with all current statutory requirements for these subjects.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

148. In addition to a preliminary visit, a team of three inspectors spent the equivalent of 9 inspector days in the school. The team observed 35 lessons in whole or part, heard the pupils read and observed other examples of their work. In addition to the time in lessons, time was given to reviewing pupils' books and their work around the school, amounting in total to over 39 hours. Assemblies and registration sessions were attended in order to observe the spiritual, moral and social aspects of the curriculum and the start of sessions. Pupils' behaviour was observed in the playground and around the school.

149. A sample of pupils from each year group was heard reading and their work in progress was discussed, giving a sample of over 15 pupils across the school. A wide range of work from a further sample of pupils was scrutinised.

150. The team also scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings, curriculum and other policy documents, teachers' plans, financial statements, pupils' records, reports and attendance registers.

151. Before the inspection, members of the team conducted a meeting attended by 11 parents. An analysis was also made of the parental questionnaire returns, the results of which were discussed with the school and are appended to the report.

1. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y4	138	1	34	15

These figures include the SEN and eligibility for free school meals at the time of the inspection.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y4)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	6.50
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.23

Education support staff (YR - Y4)

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked each week	126.3

Average class size:	27.6
---------------------	------

Financial data

Financial year:	1998/9
-----------------	--------

	£
Total Income	278,591
Total Expenditure	286,866
Expenditure per pupil	2,124.93
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,459
Balance carried forward to next year	21,184

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

121

Number of questionnaires returned:

61

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	13	69	13	2	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	39	51	2	5	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	13	39	21	20	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	18	59	8	10	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	30	54	5	8	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36	49	10	2	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	11	44	31	10	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	11	54	20	11	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25	57	11	3	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	16	61	11	8	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	44	41	8	3	0

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed concerns regarding the reading partnership and homework. The inspection team's findings for all the issues raised, including those in the right hand columns of this survey of responses to the questionnaire, are contained in the report and, where necessary, in the key issues for action.

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year