

INSPECTION REPORT

Thornborough Infant School

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique Reference Number: 110253

Headteacher: Mrs Pauline Rothero

Reporting inspector: Mr George Crowther
18814

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707001

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

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Information about the school

Type of school	Infant
Type of control	County
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	High Street Thornborough Buckingham MK18 2DF
Telephone number	01280 812219
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Name of chair of governors	Mr P Vaughan Fowler
Date of the previous inspection	October 1995

Information about the inspection team

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
George Crowther (Registered Inspector)	Mathematics Science Information technology Art Design and technology Physical education	Attainment and progress Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Teaching The curriculum and assessment The efficiency of the school Equality of opportunity
Vivienne Phillips (Lay Inspector)		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Accommodation
Elizabeth Slater (Team Inspector)	English Religious education Geography	Areas of learning for children under five Spiritual, moral, social and

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Main findings

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school gives children a good start in the pre-school unit.
- Science and art are well taught and pupils achieve well above average standards.
- The school provides an environment in which pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their standards of achievement.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent, and this provides positive support for pupils' learning and progress.
- The school provides effective support and guidance for pupils, so that they can approach their work in school confidently.
- The school has a good working relationship with parents who offer considerable support.
- Governors are very actively involved in the leadership of the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress.

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WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. Standards in writing are not high enough because pupils are not given enough opportunities or sufficient support to write independently.
- II. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently and do not make good enough progress.
- III. The school does not monitor the quality of teaching and learning closely enough so that weaknesses can be identified and tackled, and standards raised.

The school provides a very positive environment for pupils' learning, but is not enabling all pupils to capitalise on this strength. The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governor's 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

Since the last inspection, the school has:

- IV. raised standards in science;
- V. improved pupils' attitudes, their behaviour, and relationships between pupils and with staff;
- VI. improved the quality of teaching;
- VII. strengthened the partnership with parents;
- VIII. introduced the co-ordination of work in subjects;
- IX. reviewed its aims.

The school still needs to:

- X. ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good;
- XI. make it possible for the teachers to learn from each other's good practice;
- XII. ensure that schemes of work offer guidance about how pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding should be developed step by step;
- XIII. monitor the quality of pupils' work and the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously.

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The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection report. There is insufficient emphasis on raising standards of attainment. Nonetheless, the school's capacity for further improvement is sound.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

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

<p>Key <i>well above average A</i> <i>above average B</i> <i>average</i> <i>C below average</i> <i>D well below</i> <i>average E</i></p>

This snapshot of standards should be considered with caution. The small number of pupils in each age group creates fluctuations in the school's results, and hence the comparative grades, because one pupil can account for as much as a ten per cent change in the school's score. The grade for writing shows attainment well above the national average in 1999 because all the pupils reached the expected Level 2 of attainment. However, it conceals the fact that no pupils reached the higher Level 3, and inspection evidence shows that many of the current Year 2 pupils are not making sufficient progress in writing. In contrast, standards in mathematics in the current Year 2 class are much higher than 1999. By the age of five, most pupils meet and many exceed the standards expected nationally. Inspection evidence shows attainment in the current Year 2 class to be above average in English and mathematics, and well above average in science. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are good throughout the school, but they are not encouraged to make sufficient use of them in their work in other subjects. Standards in religious education meet those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards in information technology are close to national expectations, though there are weaknesses in some aspects of pupils' work, for example data handling. Standards in art are better than those expected for pupils' ages. In all other subjects, standards are close to those expected for pupils' ages.

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QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years
English	good	sound
Mathematics	good	sound
Science		good
Information technology		sound
Religious education		sound
Other subjects	good	sound

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QUALITY OF TEACHING (continued)

Teaching is at least sound in 95 per cent of lessons. In 25 per cent of lessons it is very good; in

30 per cent of lessons it is good; it is less than satisfactory in five per cent. Teaching is best towards the end of the key stage. There are strengths in the management of pupils, detailed planning, and the use of resources. In some lessons, there are weaknesses in the lack of challenge provided, particularly for higher-attaining pupils, and the lack of pace.

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

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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Behaviour	Very good, both in lessons and around the school.
Attendance	Excellent.
Ethos*	Very positive in terms of the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and with teachers; however, there needs to be a much clearer focus on ensuring that all pupils reach their potential.
Leadership and management	Sound: supportive leadership by a committed headteacher enables good teamwork; supportive, knowledgeable governors; there is too little monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning so that weaknesses can be identified; governors need to be more involved in the debate about raising standards.
Curriculum and assessment	Sound: the curriculum is generally broad and balanced, but there are weaknesses within some subjects; schemes of work do not always provide enough guidance about how pupils' skills should be developed; assessment information is not used systematically to track pupils' progress and set targets for improvement.
Pupils with special educational needs	The few pupils with special educational needs make good progress and receive effective support in lessons.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision for pupils' social development and good provision for moral development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staff are committed and caring; the school is generously staffed; the accommodation and resources are satisfactory.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

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

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THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>XIV. Their children enjoy going to school.</p> <p>XV. The school encourages high standards of behaviour.</p> <p>XVI. The positive values and attitudes promoted by the school.</p> <p>XVII. The school encourages activities beyond daily lessons.</p> <p>XVIII. The school helps children to achieve a good standard of work.</p> <p>XIX. The school provides good information about what is taught.</p> <p>XX. The school handles suggestions and complaints well, and is approachable if parents have problems.</p> <p>XXI. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.</p>	<p>No significant issues were raised by parents.</p>

§ The great majority of parents are very pleased with most aspects of the school's work. Inspectors' judgements support most of parents' positive views, whilst contending that standards are not high enough for some pupils.

At their meeting, parents expressed great support for the school and were very positive about the role it plays in the village community. A number of parents expressed the view that expectations of homework are not as clear as they should be. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are expected to read each evening and to learn spelling. Most parents seem to be clear about this expectation, though there is no homework policy, which would provide written guidance. A few parents felt that more information about what their children are taught would be helpful. Inspectors found that most parents are well informed about what is taught, through their close contacts with the school.

§ **Key issues for action**

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

- ◆. raise standards in pupils' writing, by:
 - . providing a more coherent curriculum that better supports the development of pupils' independent writing skills;
 - . having clearer guidance about the expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in writing during each stage of their education;
 - . assessing pupils' writing skills more systematically, and identifying targets for development;
 - . ensuring that opportunities for developing independent writing skills are planned within subjects other than English;
 - . ensuring that the skills pupils develop in handwriting and spelling are transferred and consolidated in their independent writing;
 - . ensuring that higher attaining pupils, in particular, are enabled to be independent writers as soon as possible.

(paragraphs 6-7, 9, 11, 35-36, 75, 80, 83, 86)

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Key issues for action (continued)

- ◆. raise standards for higher attaining pupils, by:
 - . having shared, higher expectations of what these pupils can achieve;
 - . assessing the existing knowledge, skills and understanding of higher attaining pupils more systematically, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and setting targets for future progress;
 - . planning challenging activities that extend higher-attaining pupils, in addition to the tasks planned for the rest of the class;
 - . including learning objectives in lesson plans that focus on the progress that higher attainers should make.

(paragraphs 7-9, 12, 16, 22, 24, 28-29, 42, 49, 80, 88-89, 92)

- ◆. improve the monitoring and evaluation of standards of attainment, and the quality of

teaching and learning, by:

- the headteacher taking a firmer lead in more rigorous monitoring;
 - using national and school assessment data more systematically to identify weaknesses in the curriculum and pupils' skills;
 - increasing the amount of time that teachers can spend observing each other and sharing their good practice;
 - involving governors in the monitoring process;
- so that strengths and weaknesses are identified, and action taken to improve standards.

(paragraphs 55-57, 60, 87, 94, 100)

In addition to the key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. Each weakness is followed by a reference to the paragraph(s) in which it is discussed.

- There is a lack of breadth in the information technology (IT) curriculum, and IT is not used enough to support work in other subjects. *(14, 37, 69, 101-103)*
- There is no statement of homework policy. *(34)*
- Schemes of work for subjects do not provide enough guidance on how pupils' skills should develop across the key stage. *(39, 93, 100, 103, 119)*
- Not enough use is made of assessment information to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs, or to identify weaknesses in the curriculum. *(42)*

§ Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1. Thornborough Infant School has 26 pupils on roll, aged four to seven, and serves a village in rural north Buckinghamshire. Until very recently, the school catered for pupils up to the age of eight, and numbers had risen to close to 50 pupils. In July 1999, however, the school ceased to cater for Year 3 pupils, owing to a change in the age of transfer. Most pupils live in Thornborough, though a few travel from nearby villages or Buckingham. Socio-economic data suggest that the circumstances of the families in the area are much more favourable than national averages. No pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

2. At the time of the inspection, there were seven children aged under five in school. Children

are admitted to the pre-school unit, part-time, at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fourth birthday. They become full-time at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday, spending mornings in the pre-school class and afternoons in a class with Year 1 pupils. Most of the pupils benefit from pre-school education at the school or at other local playgroups and nurseries. Assessments of pupils' attainment made soon after they start school indicate that overall attainment on entry is above the national average.

3. Two pupils (about eight per cent) have been identified as having special educational needs. One pupil is at the early, school-based stages of assessment and provision, and one pupil's needs involve support from outside agencies. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is well below average. In the school as a whole, there is a reasonable gender balance, though there is only one girl in a group of nine Year 1 pupils.

4. The school's current aims and priorities are to:

- maintain a happy and caring atmosphere and to ensure that the children benefit from attending school;
- achieve high academic standards and develop children's self confidence;
- fully equip children with the knowledge, enquiring minds and confidence they need to develop to their full potential;
- plan carefully to take opportunities created by the change in the age of transfer;
- improve standards in science;
- update hardware and software to support information technology;
- review schemes of work in religious education, physical education, art and music;
- improve the range of reading books and the library.

For national assessments in the Year 2000, the school has set the following targets:

- Reading – 90 per cent of pupils to reach Level 2 and 50 per cent Level 3;
- Writing – 90 per cent of pupils to reach Level 2 and 30 per cent Level 3;
- Mathematics – 90 per cent of pupils to reach Level 2 and 20 per cent Level 3.

§ 5. Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	11	4	15

National Curriculum	Test/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (67)	100 (67)	100 (58)
	National	85 (80)	86 (81)	90 (85)

Teacher Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science	
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	10	11	10
	Girls	4	4	3
	Total	14	15	13
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (67)	100 (58)	87 (67)
	National	81 (81)	85 (85)	86 (86)

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	3.0
	National comparative data	5.6
Unauthorised absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period or permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	25
Good or better	55
Satisfactory or better	95
Less than satisfactory	5

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year 7

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

6. When they join the pre-school unit, children's attainment is above average overall compared with what is expected nationally. During their time as under fives, they make good progress in most areas of learning, because the teaching is consistently good and the curriculum is well planned and stimulating. The children enjoy their work and play. They build effectively on their good personal and social skills, co-operating successfully when working and playing together. Many of the children have a wide vocabulary and speak confidently to each other and in front of the class. The children develop their good early skills in language and literacy, and many begin to read independently, though writing skills are not developed enough. In all other areas of the curriculum, most of the children have good knowledge, skills and understanding, which they bring to their learning. By the age of five, most children reach and many exceed the standards expected nationally. Assessments of pupils' attainment made soon after they join the reception year indicate that overall attainment is above the national average.

7. In the end of key stage assessments in 1999, results in reading were above average and results in writing were well above average compared with all schools. This was largely owing to the fact that all the pupils reached the expected Level 2 in writing, and all but one in reading. However, no pupils reached the higher Level 3 in writing, and only 20 per cent in reading, a relatively low proportion compared with the national picture. As a result, the school's performance in reading was below average compared with schools in similar social circumstances, and above average in writing. In mathematics, test results were below average when compared with all schools, and well below average when compared with similar schools. However, this overall picture of attainment conceals the fact that all the pupils reached the expected Level 2, which was well above the national average, whilst very few reached the higher Level 3. In science, based on teachers' assessments, attainment was below average.

8. Evidence from national assessments must be considered in the context of the small number of pupils taking the tests each year, which causes greater fluctuations in results than for larger schools. Where one pupil gains, or fails to gain, the expected level, there is a marked effect on the percentage result that is used to compare performance with other schools. For example, in 1998, results were very poor, with only around two-thirds of the pupils reaching the expected standard, but this was because the year group tested contained a small number, but very significant proportion, of pupils with special educational needs. In contrast, an aggregation of results between 1996 and 1999 shows attainment above the national average in all subjects. Clearly, conclusions drawn from these data need to be treated with caution. Bearing all these factors in mind, and the attainment of pupils in the current Year 2, standards are similar to those reported at last inspection in 1995. However, the lack of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 is a significant weakness, considering the good skills with which many pupils start school, and shortcomings in the use of assessment and the quality of teaching, identified during the current inspection, point to the cause.

9. The current Year 2 class contains a larger proportion of higher-attaining pupils than last year. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average in reading and mathematics, and well above average in science. However, standards in writing are only close to the national expectation, and lower than the results achieved by Year 2 pupils in the 1999 national tests, because there are too few opportunities for pupils to write independently. Progress across the key stage is sound, overall, in most subjects, and good in science and art. There are, however, weaknesses in the progress made by higher-attaining pupils because some tasks in lessons do not provide enough challenge.

10. The few pupils with special education needs make good progress in relation to their initial attainment because of the good support they receive. Tasks in lessons are generally well matched to their needs and help them to meet the targets on their individual educational plans. In the lessons where they receive help from the classroom assistant, these pupils make particularly good progress. Thoughtful pairing with higher-attaining pupils helps them to make progress in other lessons. There are no significant variations in attainment and progress by gender.

11. In Year 2, attainment in speaking and listening is well above national expectations. Pupils answer and ask questions confidently, and explain their work well. Attainment in reading is above national expectations. Pupils use an increasing range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words and they have favourite books and authors. Most read fiction texts, at their level, fluently, accurately, expressively and with understanding, and are able to discuss the plot and characters. Most children are able to read independently for enjoyment. Attainment in writing is close to national expectations but not as high as it should be. There are too few independent writing activities in which pupils can use their good language ability and consolidate work in spelling and handwriting. Pupils are not encouraged to be independent writers, or to write at length, soon enough. Over-dependence on worksheet activities limits writing, and there is little drafting and editing by the older, higher attainers. Progress in English is sound overall, but weak in developing pupils' writing skills. Pupils' literacy skills are above average and, in some lessons seen, discussion and reading were used well to support work in other subjects. However, evidence from pupils' past work shows that the dominance of worksheets in some subjects limits the development of literacy skills, because pupils do not compose their own recording of what they have learned.

12. Attainment in mathematics is above national expectations. This is a higher standard than the results of the national tests taken by Year 2 pupils in 1999 because the great majority of these pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard by the end of the key stage, and a significant minority should exceed it. Most Year 2 pupils can count in 2s and 10s, up to and beyond 100. They can carry out a range of simple calculations with numbers and money. Most pupils recognise a range of plane and solid shapes and can describe them using appropriate vocabulary. Higher attainers identify right angles, and special plane shapes such as an isosceles triangle. All pupils recognise halves and quarters, and higher attainers can find different ways of cutting a square in to quarters. Pupils' numeracy skills are above average, and most have good mental recall of number facts for their ages. This supports their work in mathematics and in other subjects. Across the key stage, pupils' work shows sound progress being made, though the quantity and challenge of work is better in Year 2. Throughout the key stage, higher attainers largely complete the same work as other pupils, and this restricts their progress.

13. Attainment in science is well above national expectations. In their current work about forces, testing the distance travelled by toy cars down a ramp, most Year 2 pupils are beginning to understand the principles of a fair test, and higher attainers can explain that factors such as the car, the angle of the slope and the surface need to be kept the same. Most pupils can make predictions, for example explaining what would happen if the ramp is made steeper. All the pupils can carry out their testing, some with support from the teacher or other pupils, measuring accurately, and recording their results in a simple table. Most can explain the pattern in their results. The quality of most pupils' discussion about their work is well above that expected for their ages. Pupils' work shows that they are making good progress across the key stage, particularly in Year 2. The clear emphasis on experimental and investigative work enables pupils to develop their curiosity, knowledge and recording skills.

14. In information technology, pupils make satisfactory progress and attainment is close to national expectations. Although pupils have sound skills in some aspects of the subject, for example in controlling a programmable toy, there are significant weaknesses in other areas, such as the use of simple databases, and making tables and pictures. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus, and pupils make sound progress across the key stage, building up their knowledge of Christianity, and developing some awareness of the principle features of other faiths.

15. In art, pupils make good progress across the key stage because they experience a wide range of work and teachers are particularly confident and skilled in this subject. Pupils make sound progress in design and technology, working with a range of materials. The wheeled vehicles made by Year 2 pupils show sound skills in evaluation, design and making. In geography and history, pupils make generally sound progress and, by Year 2, attainment is close that expected for pupils' ages. Pupils make good progress in singing, but a lack of evidence prevents an overall judgement about progress in all aspects of music. Similarly, pupils made good progress in the dance lesson observed, but there was no evidence about progress in other aspects of physical education.

16. Most pupils start school with above average attainment and, despite fluctuations from year to year, attainment is generally above average at the end of Key Stage 1. This represents sound progress overall, though a significant minority of higher-attaining pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. Pupils made sound progress, overall, in all but one of the lessons observed, though in a number of these lessons the higher-attaining pupils did not make enough progress. Pupils made good progress in about half of the lessons observed, because tasks were more challenging and the teaching moved at pace.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

17. The pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, their very good behaviour, and the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and with teachers have a marked impact on the progress made in lessons. The pupils expect to learn, and their enthusiasm makes a very positive contribution to most activities. The good features of pupils' responses to learning noted at the last inspection have been strengthened further.

18. In the pre-school unit, children aged under five show a very mature approach to tasks. For example, the snack time is organised so that it contributes well to counting, matching and language development, and the children take part willingly, offering their ideas and answers. They are relaxed and confident. The child chosen to distribute the fruit and drinks takes particular pleasure in this responsibility. At all times, the children listen carefully to the teacher and to each other's contributions. In music-making activities, all the children join in the singing enthusiastically, and those chosen to play the instruments concentrate well to add sounds for the characters in the story. The excellent relationships that underpin work in the pre-school unit make an important contribution to the quality of learning.

19. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils' enthusiastic approach to learning is a strong feature of most lessons. For example, Year 2 pupils learn about different types of poems, and join in eagerly with the humorous reading of 'Betsy Pud', spotting the rhyming words. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, are confident to offer their ideas, even when they might be wrong. Pupils generally listen well to their teachers and sustain concentration in whole-class sessions. Just occasionally, when the work is routine or the introduction lasts too long, a few pupils lose concentration and become a little restless. When working independently, in pairs or small groups, most pupils concentrate well and sustain their interest, even when the task is rather mundane. If the task is challenging, such as when Year 2 pupils tried to find different ways to split a square into quarters, they show a high degree of concentration and perseverance.

20. Parents are very happy with the standard of behaviour in the school and the inspection confirms this judgement. Pupils behave very well and this makes a significant contribution to their progress. Minor lapses are quickly corrected by a brief word from the teacher. Behaviour around the school is also very good, during lunchtime and on the playground, and contributes to the calm and very pleasant atmosphere that pervades the school. Pupils are very polite and friendly, and excellent relationships throughout the school are important in maintaining the positive atmosphere. The strong, supportive friendships between pupils ensure that very few incidents of bullying occur. There have been no exclusions.

21. Pupils' excellent relationships are particularly evident when they are working together in lessons. For example, Year 2 pupils worked in small groups to test how far a toy vehicle would travel down a ramp. They were carefully matched so that higher-attaining pupils would be able to help others, and they worked together well to finish their task. There was very little disagreement, and pupils shared ideas and equipment sensibly. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to work together productively, which supports their learning. Pupils who receive additional help for special educational needs usually work hard and are keen to make progress, particularly when receiving individual support.

22. The pupils are very confident. They bring knowledge and understanding to lessons, as was seen when Year 2 pupils discussed Florence Nightingale and the Crimean War. They often research topics at home, which supports their learning in school. In lessons, most pupils sensibly collect the resources they need, and tidy away again at the end of the session quickly and efficiently. Most pupils have the initiative and independence to tackle challenges within their work, rather than seeking immediate support from the teacher. Nonetheless, particularly for higher attainers, there are too many tasks that do not develop pupils' initiative and responsibility for their own learning.

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Attendance

23. Attendance is excellent, as it was at the last inspection. It is very high in comparison with other schools, with a rate of unauthorised absence well below the national average. Pupils are exceptionally keen to come to school as evident during the inspection when attendance was 100 per cent and individuals were most reluctant to be sent home even when feeling unwell. Punctuality to school is impressive.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

24. The quality of teaching is sound overall, and has a number of strong features. Teaching is consistently good for children aged under five in the pre-school unit, generally sound in the early part of Key Stage 1, and good, often very good, towards the end of the key stage. The teaching has many strengths, but the principle weakness is the lack of challenge provided for pupils, particularly higher attainers, in some lessons. Teaching was of very good quality in 25 per cent of the lessons observed, good in 30 per cent, and sound in 40 per cent. In only one lesson of the 20 observed was teaching judged to be less than satisfactory. Teaching of science is good, and literacy and numeracy are both taught soundly. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because a higher proportion of teaching is now very good. However, some lessons still lack pace and challenge and do not make full use of the pupils' interest and existing knowledge.

25. Teaching for the few pupils with special educational needs is good, and this enables them to make good progress towards achieving the targets on their individual education plans. All staff have good relationships with these pupils, know them well and have a good understanding of their requirements. The tasks provided are generally modified appropriately, or extra help is given, so that pupils do not struggle. Good use is made of individual education plans to provide suitable work. Very good use is made of the skilled classroom assistant to enable pupils to make good progress in lessons.

26. Teaching in the pre-school unit is consistently good. The teacher has established excellent relationships with the pupils, which enable them to be confident in their learning. Activities are well planned and organised to help pupils develop a range of skills. The teacher poses questions perceptively to involve all the pupils in useful discussion, for example when exploring the relative size of play dough buns. Whole class sessions are carefully structured to develop knowledge in all the areas of learning for under fives. For example, the theme of 'Bears' was usefully extended into language skills by the teacher's expressive reading of 'We're going on a Bear Hunt', building early reading skills, and drawing the children's attention to descriptive language. Bears also featured in creative activities, such as when children played musical instruments to represent the characters in 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', or when making a class collage of a scene from the story. On occasion, the children spend too much time in whole class work when independent activities would offer a greater range of opportunities for learning. Quiet reminders of the expected behaviour, and lots of praise for good behaviour, help the children to learn social skills that support their learning.

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27. Throughout the rest of the school, teachers' knowledge of most subjects is sound, and they often have particular expertise, which supports planning and teaching. For example, in an English lesson about poetry, it was the teacher's good knowledge of a range of poems, and her expressive reading of them, that enthused the pupils and supported their learning. Teachers use their knowledge to explain new ideas clearly and to extend pupils' understanding. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher explained the features of solid shapes carefully, and this aided pupils' understanding. There are occasional weaknesses in the teaching of literacy, where the sounds of letters are not taught precisely enough, and in the teaching of numeracy, where too little attention is paid to discussing the strategies that pupils use when solving problems mentally.

28. Teacher's planning of lessons is good and usually contains considerable detail. It relates well to medium-term plans, thus ensuring that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding develop steadily. In most cases it identifies clearly what pupils will learn and outlines a good structure for the lesson. For example, a science lesson for Year R/1 pupils was well planned, and the clear objectives helped the teacher to focus on early work about forces. In a number of lessons seen, teachers shared the learning objectives with the pupils, and this helped them to focus on what they were trying to achieve. An unsatisfactory feature of a few lessons that were otherwise sound was that the learning objective was the same for all pupils, and there was not enough consideration of what lower and higher attainers might achieve.

29. In most lessons, teachers have appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve, and work is fairly well matched to build on pupils' existing attainment. In some lessons expectations are high and pupils respond very well. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, the teacher questioned the pupils about how they would make a test fair. She modeled examples of fair and unfair ways of testing a car traveling down a ramp. The discussion was of high quality, the pupils contributed their ideas enthusiastically, and their understanding of the concept was strengthened. They then went on to apply their ideas in a practical activity. In this lesson, the challenging nature of the ideas, the task, and the teacher's astute handling of the debate, ensured that the pupils made very good progress. In some lessons, however, teaching does not challenge pupils enough. For example, higher-attaining pupils already knew the spellings to be learned in one class. A television programme about the letter 'n' was enjoyed by the pupils, but did not extend the phonic skills of most of them. Worksheets that require pupils to fill in the missing word, or to add a word, do not extend pupils' writing skills sufficiently. Teachers do not always use their sound knowledge of what pupils already know to ensure that they build on their skills and understanding.

30. Whole class sessions are usually of good quality, and teachers' questioning skills are particularly strong. In a number of lessons seen, particularly for the older pupils, the discussion at the beginning of the lesson was orchestrated very well, so that all the pupils were able to offer their ideas. Equally, this enabled the teacher to assess the pupils' existing understanding. Good practical demonstration was seen in a dance lesson, which improved pupils' performance. For part of most lessons, teachers group pupils or require them to work individually, and this is generally well organised. In most lessons, teachers support pupils well by asking questions, adding information or posing a new challenge. The best practice includes a good balance of whole class teaching, interesting group activities and recording.

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31. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is good, based on their very positive relationships with their classes. They use an effective range of strategies to ensure that pupils behave well, offering plenty of praise and encouragement. In a few lessons seen, where pupils were not challenged sufficiently, some became restless or too noisy when working individually.

32. Teachers generally use the time available effectively, led by their good planning. The best teaching is urgent, without being hurried, and teachers use time targets well to sustain the pace of pupils' work. In a few lessons, however, the pace of the teacher's explanation was too slow, and a few pupils lost interest. Teachers make good use of resources to support pupils' learning. For example, in a history lesson, the teacher had accumulated a range of photographs, paintings, books and artefacts about the Crimean War. A medal that had been awarded to a soldier who had fought in a number of the battles particularly fascinated pupils. Teachers use the skilled support of the classroom assistant very well, often to work with a pupil with special educational needs. The classroom assistant is always well briefed and works well in partnership with teachers. She makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

33. In the best lessons, teachers use good, informal strategies to assess pupils' understanding. They review and check previous learning at the beginning of the lesson. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to explain what they already knew about fractions and drew on their ideas to consolidate their understanding. Teachers' marking of pupils' work varies in quality. The best practice includes praise and constructive comments, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

34. Homework is used appropriately to support pupils work at school. All pupils are expected to read at home and the great majority do, as was seen by the frequent comments by parents in pupils' reading diaries. Pupils also have lists of spelling to learn at home. Pupils often find out things at home to support the work they are doing at school, as was seen when a Year 2 pupil had drawn a range of triangles, which were then discussed in the lesson. Most parents are satisfied with the work their children do at home, but some would like clearer guidance about the school's expectations. The inspection team agrees that a brief statement of homework policy would be helpful to parents.

The curriculum and assessment

35. The curriculum for the under-fives is broad and balanced and provides well for all the required areas of learning, except in writing. There are good opportunities for spoken language development, and good attention is paid to some aspects of early literacy, but the children do not have enough opportunities to apply their good language skills in early writing activities, such as writing messages, lists, labels, letters and stories. All other areas of learning for under-fives are well represented and the teacher plans the curriculum carefully. As a result, the children make good progress overall.

36. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 is generally broad and balanced, promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development satisfactorily, but nonetheless has some weaknesses. In English, provision for the development of pupils' writing continues to be inconsistent. Spelling and handwriting are taught, but pupils complete too few pieces of writing in which they can consolidate and develop these skills. Pupils are not encouraged to

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write as much as they can, as soon as they can, and systems to support early independent writing are weak. There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills across the curriculum, and there is a tendency to rely too heavily on photocopied worksheets, which restrict pupils' opportunities to write extended answers. In mathematics, whilst the curriculum is sound overall, the commercial materials used by the school provide a rather narrow diet, with a preponderance of number activities, and too little attention given to work on shape or data handling. The school provides a broad and balanced science curriculum, with a beneficial emphasis on experimental and investigative activities, which has resulted in the current Year 2 pupils having good skills in fair testing.

37. In most other subjects, the school offers a sound curriculum, though there are weaknesses in information technology (IT) where important aspects, such as the use of databases, have not yet been covered. The variety and quality of work in art is a strength. An appropriate amount of time is spent on each subject of the curriculum, though the limited time for subjects such as history and geography restricts the progress that pupils can make. The school has moved away from organising its curriculum around topics, so that most work is now subject based. However, there is still scope for integrating subjects, for example by using geography or history texts within the literacy hour, which the school is not exploiting. Equally, there is little evidence that IT is being used to support work in other subjects, as should be the case, which would enrich those subjects and develop pupils' IT skills. The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is sound, and activities in lessons reflect national guidance. In numeracy, however, too little emphasis is given to exploring pupils' strategies for mental calculation.

38. Provision for the few pupils with special educational needs complies well with the national Code of Practice, is carefully planned, and enables them to make good progress. Individual education plans are of good quality, focused clearly on pupils' individual needs, and are reviewed and updated regularly. They are carefully written so as to support pupils' learning. The skilled classroom assistant makes a particularly effective contribution to the progress of these pupils.

39. The school has a scheme of work for most subjects, and has made good progress in rectifying a key weakness identified at the last inspection. However, most of the schemes are nationally recommended models and, whilst these have merits, the staff have not been involved in their development. As a result, teachers do not have a secure understanding of the way in which the work builds across the key stage, or the attainment they should expect of pupils when they are completing the activities. For example, English work is largely based on the National Literacy Strategy guidance, which is very thorough in its treatment of literacy, but offers less guidance about the development of pupils' independent writing skills. The school has no scheme outlining how pupils' writing skills should be developed across the key stage, or how pupils' early writing will be supported, or how pupils' writing progresses from one standard to the next.

40. In science, the use of a nationally recommended scheme has injected more challenge into the curriculum, and the teachers are using the materials well. In IT, however, work has become compartmentalised, and teachers are not seeing the wider picture of pupils' development. Whilst the adoption of schemes of work has strengthened some aspects of the school's curriculum, the schemes have yet to be adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. For

example, such schemes generally suggest activities for the whole class, and leave teachers to match tasks to the needs of pupils of varying prior attainment. In some subjects, teachers are not yet confident enough to use the schemes this flexibly. Teachers' medium-term planning is thorough and detailed, and best where it focuses on developing pupils' skills, such as in art. Shorter term planning is based on the medium-term plans, and is sound overall.

41. Appropriate, informal provision is made for sex education and anti-drugs education. Good provision is made for all pupils to have equal access to the curriculum and to make similar progress in the different subjects. There are no extra-curricular clubs, in music or sport, but the school makes good use of visits, such as the recent one to Warwick Castle, to enrich the curriculum. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of education, and parents say that their children thrive at their next school.

42. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory. The school gathers a good deal of data, from baseline assessment, through periodic tests in English, mathematics and science, to statutory assessments at the end of Key Stage 1. Much of this information is recorded systematically. However, the school is only just beginning to use this assessment information to inform curriculum planning and to support pupils' progress and attainment. The recent policy for assessment, recording and reporting indicates that the school plans to develop a portfolio of assessed examples of pupils' work, and this will help teachers to compare performance against agreed standards. At present, though pupils' attainment is monitored, the information is not used systematically to track progress and to set targets for future improvement. Neither is assessment data used to identify aspects of the curriculum that need to be strengthened. The school has begun to consider the broader picture shown by assessment data, comparing baseline results with end of key stage assessments to judge the value added by the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

43. The school makes good provision, overall, for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The good quality of moral and social development found at the last inspection, within a context of clear values and a caring community, has been maintained.

44. Provision for spiritual development is sound, with appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect, as seen in an assembly when pupils were encouraged to remember someone or something important to them. However, the assembly did not use music or a point of focus such as a candle to give it a special quality, signalling that this was a different from the preceding lesson. Planned opportunities within the literacy hour, and in some other lessons, develop pupils' skills in reflecting on their own learning and on the experience of others. There are also opportunities for pupils to enjoy awe-inspiring moments, such as when teachers read poetry or stories expressively. When these occur, pupils are very receptive and show wide-eyed fascination.

45. There is consistently good provision for moral development through the good example set by staff in the way they encourage honesty, fairness and respect for other people. Staff take time to discuss and teach moral values. For example, in a science lesson, the class teacher

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underpinned the concepts of fairness and courtesy for others by explaining to a child that it was right for him to listen to others' contributions as they had listened to his. School and other pupils' property is respected and used with care. There are high expectations of behaviour, to which pupils respond very well.

46. Social development is very good, as there are many opportunities to develop social skills and the school is a very social community. This is a strength of the school. Parents value the close friendships made and the way that the pupils relate so well in a variety of situations. Adults also foster good social development in the way they relate to each other and to pupils, showing the benefits of helpfulness, co-operation and respect. Pupils are grouped socially for their packed lunches so that older and younger pupils are mixed. All pupils play together well on the playground, regardless of age or gender. School visits, such as a history visit to Warwick Castle for the whole school, also support the development of social skills. There are good opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons in paired and group work. For some pupils, however, aspects of independence and responsibility in work are not developed enough, because tasks leave too little room for an individual response.

47. Cultural development is sound with some subjects making more contribution than others. Pupils have some opportunities to extend their knowledge of their own and other cultural traditions. Art makes a good contribution, with a good range of artists' work used as a stimulus. Local culture has been supported through visits to places of historical interest, and a visit from a member of the Civil War Society, but there is little evidence of work from the immediate locality. Pupils are made aware of other cultures' celebrations and faiths through religious education, as seen in the extensive work about Divali, which was supported by dance and art work. There are too few planned opportunities in geography and music to extend pupils' cultural development, particularly in considering the lives, values and beliefs of people from a range of other cultures.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

48. The quality of welfare and guidance offered to pupils was good at the last inspection. It is very good now and a strength of the school, reflecting the high priority given to pupil well being.

49. Academic progress is monitored through the very good personal knowledge that teachers have of pupils' overall strengths and weaknesses. This results in a good general picture of individual capabilities, but less incisive evaluation of specific skills. The impact on individual guidance is a lack of focus on how to extend the knowledge and understanding of each pupil, particularly higher attainers. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring the progress of the small number of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are especially well known to staff, as are their families, so any individual personal issues are noticed and addressed promptly. The support provided by the extended family atmosphere of the school community is very good.

50. Discipline and good behaviour are promoted very well through formal procedures such as use of the clear, positive behaviour policy, and informal support, as in the example set by adults. Good behaviour is encouraged in positive approaches to what pupils do and warm

recognition of their efforts to follow codes of conduct in or out of lessons. Sanctions are rarely necessary, apart from the occasional discreet reminder.

51. The school benefits from good communication systems locally, which ensure that absences are mentioned swiftly and people such as the school medical officer can be reached quickly. Attendance procedures are used very effectively and promptly. Arrangements for child protection are based on the procedures set out by the local authority and meet local requirements. Very good local support networks complement the school's commitment to pupils' welfare, health and safety. First aid provision is good and enhanced by availability of parents and villagers to help out in emergencies. The headteacher and designated governor give very good attention to health and safety matters. The school's commitment to pupils' personal support and guidance contributes very positively to their self-confidence and readiness for learning.

Partnership with parents and the community

52. Partnership with parents and the community was a positive feature of the school's work at the last inspection. It is now a strength of the school. Informal communication systems are particularly effective within a close-knit school community. As a result, the quality of information provided for parents is very good overall. The prospectus and governors' annual reports are readable and informative. Progress reports provide a good overview of the individual pupil's work and personal development. This is supplemented well by more specific detail shared at parents' meetings. Parents have a very positive view of the school, which feels very well supported by them.

53. Parents are heavily involved in their children's learning. They give strong support at home by hearing children read, sharing books with them and expecting them to enjoy learning. Open assemblies and events in school are well attended. Parents help out in classrooms, particularly with reading, mathematics and music. They are readily available to help out in a variety of ways whenever the school asks for support.

54. The school has a very strong sense of community, which includes people in the village, some of whom were pupils many years ago. More recent former pupils now at nearby secondary schools undertake work experience in the school. Constructive links exist with a range of comparable village schools as well as the main receiving junior school. Local links are invaluable in providing support systems for what might otherwise be an isolated, small group of staff and pupils. Local people are involved with the school at times such as harvest and Christmas when they join with pupils in attending special services in the church. They have worked with pupils planting flowers in the school garden. Villagers support parents in fund-raising activities such as a recent beetle drive. Pupils have regular trips linked to the curriculum, to places further afield such as Warwick, which was particularly successful in supporting progress in a range of work. All such links extend and enrich pupils' experiences and opportunities for learning in a very positive way.

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

55. The leadership and management of the school are successful in creating a positive, caring environment within which pupils develop self-confidence and enjoy their learning. During the past few years, above average standards have been sustained overall, despite fluctuations in national test results. Leadership and management have guided the school well through a change in the age of transfer and, though pupil numbers have fallen, there are positive views about the future. However, the focus on raising standards is not sharp enough. There is too little monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' attainment, so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified systematically, and action taken to seek improvements. Therefore, the school does not capitalise fully on the good skills with which most pupils start school and the confidence that it has successfully nurtured. Weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation were noted at the time of the last inspection.

56. The headteacher is a committed and supportive leader, and an effective teacher, providing a good model for colleagues. She provides caring and positive leadership for the school. She is well respected by colleagues, knows the children well, and has good relationships with families. She uses her thorough understanding of the school and the families it serves to lead a school that is very much at the centre of its village community. Day to day management of the school is good, and the headteacher encourages a strong sense of shared values and teamwork.

57. The management of subjects is sound overall. The two teachers work well together as a team planning and sharing ideas. Each takes responsibility for the co-ordination of a number of subjects, but the role seldom extends beyond informal advice, attending training, writing documents, or checking resources. The teachers are not involved in monitoring each other's teaching of subjects, beyond being aware of planning, so they are not able to help each other identify areas that can be strengthened. As subject managers, they do not have an overview that would help them to spot areas for development.

58. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. Provision is well organised, and procedures such as reviews of progress are carried out thoroughly. The headteacher co-ordinates this aspect well and the governor with responsibility for this area is interested and supportive.

59. The governing body is very involved in the work of the school and offers considerable support. Most governors are from the local community and have, or have had, pupils at the school. They value the school very highly for the confidence it gives its pupils, the high quality of social development encouraged by the staff, and the part the school plays in the local community. Governors bring valuable skills to their work. For example, in consultation with the headteacher, they have contributed substantially to financial planning and to the production of a clearly structured school development plan. Governors visit the school regularly, for

example those with responsibility for numeracy and special educational needs. The chair of governors, who is also responsible for literacy, has regular discussions with the headteacher. Governors have a strategic view of school development, as seen in their nurturing of the pre-school unit in response to losing the oldest pupils in school. Careful financial forward planning offers the school a good deal of security. Governors are fully aware of issues likely to affect the school in the future, and have been proactive in questioning the local authority about its plans for small schools.

60. Despite these many strengths, the closeness with which governors are involved in school life has prevented them from being critical enough about standards of attainment. Discussion about performance in national tests takes place largely retrospectively, and the most recent results have yet to be analysed. Although the school's overall target is set in consultation with the local education authority, there is a lack of debate about current standards and the likely performance of Year 2 pupils in 2000. The significance of pupils attaining at least Level 2b at the end of Key Stage 1, as an indicator of a future Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2, has not been recognised, nor that the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 has been well below the national average. Therefore, there has been too little exploration of strengths and weaknesses in order to understand and support the action needed. Because they lack this information, governors are unable to take a strategic view about areas in which standards should be improved and hence target resources and training.

61. The school development plan is clearly written, well structured and costed, with clear targets and success criteria. The plan covers aspects of building and grounds, management, and the curriculum. Apart from in science, however, and the link between provision of books and improvement in reading, the main focus of developments is on resources and not on raising standards of attainment. Plans do not include reference to staff development needs. There is no reference to developments in literacy and numeracy.

62. A great strength of the school is its very positive, caring ethos, which encourages pupils to do well. The school's aims are largely focused on personal and social priorities, and it fulfils these aims admirably. The school lacks a complementary emphasis on high academic achievement. Therefore, whilst the school aims to offer equal learning opportunities for all pupils, higher attainers do not always make the progress of which they are capable. The school has made a sound response to the issues raised at the last inspection and has a sound capacity to improve further. All statutory requirements are met.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

63. The school has a hard-working, committed and caring staff team. At present, the school is very generously staffed, largely owing to a recent change in the age of transfer that has resulted in a fall in pupil numbers. The two teachers have a good balance of experience, and their expertise generally matches the requirements of the curriculum. A trained nursery nurse teaches the under-fives each morning and brings her considerable talents to the role. A well-qualified and skilled classroom assistant works part-time alongside teachers in lessons, and also fulfils the role of school secretary. Staff work well together, and offer each other valuable support and advice, which contributes to the efficient general running of the school. The pupil-teacher ratio is well below average, as class size ranges from 7 to 10 pupils. Even when

all the pupils come together for music and some story-times, there are only 26 pupils. The classroom assistant has a good partnership with the teachers, working well with small groups and individual pupils. She makes a very effective contribution to learning and progress, particularly for the small number of pupils who have special educational needs.

64. In this small school, there has been only one recent appointment when a newly qualified teacher joined the team last year. The school uses the local authority package for induction of newly qualified teachers, and the current Year 1 teacher attended some of these sessions. The headteacher is the mentor appointed to monitor progress through class visits, though this has been difficult because the headteacher has an almost full time teaching commitment. There is no written policy to make induction arrangements clear. The school has suspended the appraisal process, awaiting new national guidance. Staff professional development priorities are identified in response to national initiatives such as the numeracy hour, and school priorities, such as considering children's progress between under fives and Key Stage 1. Staff have attended a good range of training during the past year, taking into account the size of the school.

65. As at the last inspection, the well-kept building and grounds, together with space available in the village hall provide a suitable setting for learning. Accommodation is adequate to support the curriculum and the range of pupils currently attending the school. The school benefits from easy access to the village hall, which allows indoor physical education to be provided, though apparatus for gymnastics cannot be stored there and this restricts activities. The site and its setting adjacent to the church supports pupils' early interest in their heritage and the natural world. Displays in all three classrooms enhance what might otherwise be a colourless teaching environment.

66. The school has adequate resources in all subjects, which provide the opportunities for a broad curriculum to be taught. The school has a sound range of books to support pupils' reading and work in the literacy hour. Provision for religious education, geography, and history is largely through books in the library, or resources brought in by teachers, because the school has few artefacts. In music, an adequate range of unpitched instruments supports pupils' work, and a parent who is a pianist assists with singing, offering advice and support alongside the class teacher. The use of playground equipment in dry weather and the use of the village hall support physical education. There is very little large apparatus but small apparatus is used. A visiting teacher provides valuable expertise in dance. Classes are well equipped with computers, with a high ratio per pupil providing a very good resource for teaching and learning. Equipment for art is good, with access to examples of the work of famous painters. Resources are stored well and are accessible.

The efficiency of the school

67. The school has sustained the sound standards of efficiency found at the last inspection. Financial planning is very good. The school receives around average funding per pupil, though current income is generous because it was based on 55 pupils, rather than the 26 pupils now in the school following a change in the age of transfer. The school knows that this is a temporary situation and has made very careful plans, including five-year projections, to ensure that the school remains financially stable. Measures to trim staffing have already been taken so

that the future financial health of the school is assured. Governors are also considering the local authority's proposals for 'fair funding' and the implications for small, rural schools. Early, tentative plans are made for spending in the future, and the school is clear about priorities. For example, the relatively large proportion of funding spent on classroom support has been debated thoroughly by the governing body, which regards this support as an important part of provision to raise standards. Current tasks in the school development plan are carefully costed, but there is generally a weak linkage between financial planning and school improvement. Very few proposals in the school development have the stated purpose of raising attainment. Most areas of the school's spending are close to expected levels.

68. There is an efficient system for budget setting. The headteacher formulates an initial budget proposal, with advice from the local authority, based on likely funding and identified needs of the school. Through their finance committee, governors spend a good deal of time refining this draft and consider a range of alternatives before it is approved. Sparse funding is allocated carefully. The school's procedures for monitoring the effects of spending on educational standards are less well developed. For example, the impact of classroom support is not much monitored or evaluated. However, the governors do monitor the school's performance in national tests, they visit the school regularly, and they gather views from parents, which helps them to evaluate some of their financial decisions. The governors are fully involved in, and well informed about, financial matters, and they monitor spending carefully. There are good channels of communication with the management of the school.

69. The school makes satisfactory use of most of the resources available, including staff, accommodation and resources for learning. For example, very effective use is made of the skills of the nursery nurse who teaches the under fives. The classroom assistant's time is used very well, particularly to support the few pupils with special educational needs. Staff make sound use of the building, but there was little evidence that the locality is used as well as it might be to support work in subjects such as history. In most subjects, sound use is made of teaching resources, and staff often bring in their own books and artefacts to supplement those available in school. However, during the inspection, not enough use was made of computers.

70. Financial control is good. The school secretary is very experienced, and there are good systems to ensure that financial matters are managed efficiently. As this is a small school, the secretary sometimes lacks a second person to check financial matters, such as when cash is counted. A recent audit of the school's financial practices made a few minor recommendations, which have been addressed.

71. Most pupils enter the school with above average attainment. They make good progress in the pre-school unit, and sound progress overall during Key Stage 1, though some of the work is not challenging enough, particularly for the higher attainers. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is normally above average in English, mathematics and science, though results of national tests vary considerably owing to the small number of pupils tested. Pupils display very good attitudes to learning, behave very well and there are excellent relationships between pupils and with staff. The school provides a sound curriculum, but there are weaknesses in some of subjects. The quality of teaching is sound with a number of strengths. The school receives average funding per pupil. Overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

72. Children are admitted to the pre-school unit, part-time, at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fourth birthday. They become full-time at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday, spending mornings in the pre-school unit and afternoons in a class with Year 1 pupils. At the time of inspection, there were nine children in the pre-school unit. These children make good progress as under-fives. By the age of five, attainment is above national expectations in the desirable learning outcomes of personal and social development, physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematics, and in creative development. In language and literacy, overall progress is also good, with very good spoken language development and good awareness of story and book language, but progress in writing is only sound. Baseline assessment data for 1999 show that, overall, children's attainment is above average on entry to the reception year.

73. There is good provision and teaching for children to achieve the desirable learning outcomes. The curriculum for the under-fives is broad and balanced, and provides well for all the required areas of learning, except in writing. The teacher, a trained nursery nurse, has very good skills and an excellent relationship with the children. She has a good understanding of the children's needs and how to provide for their development through a well-planned curriculum. She has high expectations of children's attainment and behaviour. She manages the resources well, which are also used by the afternoon mother and toddler group and the pre-school playgroup. Good links with these groups, and pre-school visits to meet the class and the teacher, mean that induction procedures are good and help children to settle quickly. Day-to-day assessment is good, with the teacher constantly making adjustments in discussion. There are satisfactory systems for recording some aspects of attainment and these records are passed on to the Year 1 teacher.

§ Personal and social development

74. Children respond positively to clear routines and the good role model provided by the teacher. They behave well because expectations are high and guidance is consistent. They learn to share equipment and adult attention, for example sharing food and taking turns at snack-time very well. They play well together, negotiating reasonably over collaborative activities, are supportive of each other, and have good relationships with the teacher. They develop an appropriate understanding of what is right and what is wrong and treat property well, such as when all the children help to clear up and put away equipment in preparation for play time. By the age of five, children attain standards that are good when measured against the desirable learning outcomes, because they are confident and able to initiate ideas or solve practical problems. All sustain concentration in teacher-directed activities, and also in their own self-initiated play.

§ **Language and literacy**

75. Most children have good spoken language skills and make good progress overall. They can explain their feelings or describe clearly what they are doing, for example when discussing their role-play. The teacher encourages spoken language development and engages children in

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conversation to good effect. Listening skills also develop well. Good attention is paid to some aspects of early literacy. The teacher shares books with children, and there is a daily story-time, which varies in type, sometimes incorporating instruments, or rhyme, rhythm and movement. For example, children re-enacted the story 'We're all going on a Bear Hunt', which helped them to consolidate their understanding of position words such as 'under', 'through', 'over' and 'around'. Children learn how to handle books, gain pleasure from looking at them, and recognise familiar pictures or words. They can all read their names. Letter sounds are practised, for example when children suggest items for a 'n' table, and children practise letter shapes. However, early writing is not so well supported. Although there is a drawing area, there is no writing area, and little evidence of early writing on display.

The children do not have enough opportunities to apply their understanding of the different purposes for writing, such as messages, lists, labels, letters and stories. They do not make enough use of their developing phonic knowledge, or their knowledge about story language, in early writing activities. Without this, there is little opportunity to assess children's development as writers.

§ **Mathematics**

76. Children make good progress in developing their early mathematical skills. Imaginative activities help children to learn, for example when using play dough to make different sizes of buns for the 'three bears'. There was also good provision for higher attainers, when two children extended the activity by working with 'more than five' or 'fewer than five'. Children use a variety of objects for counting, sorting, classifying and putting in order. Frequent opportunities are made for them to match one to one in snack time the correct number of mugs and pieces of fruit, and to explore capacity with water and sand. They become familiar with number rhymes, songs and stories, counting games and activities. All the children can count to 10, and one child knew that the digit 2 in 24 was two tens. Computer programs support mathematical understanding. By the age of five, children can use a good range of mathematical language.

§ **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

77. Children make good progress in building up their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They play with materials and toys in different role-play situations, for example exploring a 'bear cave' during the week of the inspection. Children develop their ideas of roles in society and extend their knowledge through play and good teaching. They talk readily to adults about events that are important to them. For example, one child brought his younger sister in at registration to show the group her cut knee and talk about how it happened. A sense of time is introduced when children discuss what their bears will be like when they were grown up, and compared them with their parents' bears. They change the date and record the weather daily on a chart. There is a weekly focus on a science activity, such as magnets. Children use construction toys, are introduced to computers, and they make things, exploring and selecting materials and using an appropriate range of skills.

§ **Physical development**

78. Children develop sound skills in running and jumping, and the village hall provides a satisfactory base for these activities once a week. There are opportunities for developing other skills such as climbing and balancing using the equipment in the playground. They use wheeled toys in the drier weather on the hard play surface. They move freely and confidently,

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and in a well co-ordinated way, in the playground at playtime. There are opportunities for movement within the class, acting out stories and using body-movements with a beat. Children have developed good skills with their hands, for example when colouring pictures, and they are able to draw using pencils, fit puzzles together, use construction toys, and handle a range of equipment in the sand and water.

Creative development

79. Children make good progress in the development of their creative skills. They are able to draw recognisable teddy bears from close observation, and reflect upon the drawings. For example, one child was able to explain that her drawing showed her teddy 'exactly as he is, but without the bow done up' and demonstrate this. They enjoy singing and making music, and are able to use unpitched instruments with the songs. The rising fives also enjoy additional singing with Year 1 and 2 pupils once a week in the afternoon. The children play imaginatively in role-play areas, and also in contexts created by themselves, as was seen when a group playing with sand created an imaginary environment in which each of the group had a role. The children's ability to communicate easily, and to express creative ideas, supports the attainment of all the desirable outcomes. The teacher's participation in creative play adds status to it and encourages the development of language skills. Good quality dressing up clothes add to children's enjoyment.

English, mathematics and science

§ **English**

80. The results of national assessments in 1999, at the end of Key Stage 1, were above average in reading and well above average in writing compared with all schools. This was largely owing to the fact that all the pupils reached the expected Level 2 in writing, and all but one in reading. However, no pupils reached the higher Level 3 in writing, and only 20 per cent in reading a relatively low proportion compared with the national picture. As a result, the school's performance in reading was below average compared with schools in similar social circumstances, and above average in writing. Taking results from 1996-1999 together, the school's performance has been above the national average in both reading and writing, but there have been considerable fluctuations, owing to the small number of pupils tested, because one pupil gaining, or failing to gain, the expected level represents a large variation in the percentage figure that is used for national comparisons. Nonetheless, the relatively few pupils reaching the higher Level 3, particularly in writing, is a weakness, considering the good skills with which many pupils begin the key stage. Inspection evidence confirms that, at the end of the key stage, current attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing is above national expectations. There is a significant minority of high attainers in reading, but in writing the higher attainment of Level 3 is not secure. Progress across the key stage is satisfactory overall, but higher attainers do not always reach the standard of which they are

capable. Progress in the lessons observed was sound, with good progress in Year 2. Overall, the school has maintained standards since the last inspection.

81. At the age of five, pupils enter school with very good speaking and listening skills. In Key Stage 1, they listen attentively to stories, and most respond well to teachers' questions.

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Pupils answer and ask questions confidently in the whole class part of the literacy hour, and explain their work well in feedback sessions. They support their own learning effectively through discussion when they are given opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs or in groups, for example substituting words in a poem, or brainstorming ideas for a celebration in religious education, or conducting a fair test on forces in science. However, opportunities for paired discussion are not given in the whole class shared writing and reading sessions, which would ensure response from all pupils and support learning when discussing texts. The small number of pupils in classes supports the development of informal speaking and listening skills, and pupils are able to talk with confidence in a wide range of contexts.

82. Most pupils enter school with a good knowledge of familiar stories and picture books. They enjoy books, handling them well. Progress is sound and, by the end of the key stage, attainment is above the national average. They learn phonic skills, though there is little evidence of work being provided to challenge pupils of varying prior attainment, except for those with special educational needs. As they progress through the key stage, pupils use an increasing range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. Pupils have favourite books and authors. Current Year 2 pupils, and many younger ones, can identify the author and illustrator of a book, the blurb on the back, and contents and index in non-fiction books. Most pupils read fiction texts, at their level, fluently, accurately, expressively and with literal understanding, and are able to discuss the plot and characters. Most children are able to read independently at their level for enjoyment, and higher attaining Year 2 pupils are developing inferential understanding. Almost all pupils take reading home daily and positive comments are made in a home-school record book by parents and teachers. During the inspection week, there was no language work focused on information books, but this is clearly planned for.

83. Pupils start Key Stage 1 familiar with many letter shapes and the sound that they make, but with little experience of independent writing. The standard of writing of current Year 2 pupils is in line with national expectations, overall, but there is little evidence of work at a higher level. Pupils are taught spelling and handwriting but these are not linked, so that spelling tends to reinforce the printed handwriting style. Progress in spelling is sound when pupils are engaged in spelling activities, but there are not enough opportunities to write independently so that pupils are able to demonstrate confident application of their spelling skills. Progress in handwriting is sound, but what is learned is not transferred. Over-dependence on worksheet activities limits independent and individual response. For example, story planning on worksheet formats is not then developed, and pupils do too little independent narrative story telling. There is little drafting and editing by the older, higher attainers. Pupils have better opportunities to produce different types of writing across the curriculum, and there are examples of sound early report writing about their trip to Warwick Castle, recounting of the Easter story and explanation with labelled diagrams about making a circuit. Pupils can communicate meaning through their writing, but they are not encouraged to write longer pieces soon enough. Near the end of the key stage, poetry, and writing on Florence Nightingale, demonstrate more independence and development. Pupils make little

use of computers for drafting and redrafting their written compositions, and there is little evidence of pupils' writing on display or of pupils writing for each other.

84. Pupils' response in lessons is very good overall. They listen carefully to their teachers and only lose interest when work is unchallenging. The best responses came in lessons where links

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were made between the text studied and work on words or grammar, so that group activities remained focused and feedback at the end of the session was cohesive. Behaviour in lessons is almost always very good and reflects the good relationships teachers have with their pupils. Work in groups and pairs shows good co-operation and collaboration.

85. The quality of teaching is sound overall, with a number of good features. Teaching is good where work is challenging and well matched to pupils' needs, allowing them to develop their own ideas. When work is poorly focused and not closely matched to the needs of the pupils, they lose concentration and their progress suffers. In general, teachers and the classroom assistant give good support to pupils, especially those with special educational needs. Teachers produce detailed plans, which are linked to the structure of the National Literacy Strategy, though there is no explicit planning for speaking and listening. Weaknesses occur when learning objectives are not shared with pupils, so that they are clear about what they are learning and why. Classroom management skills are good and teachers maintain good relationships. Marking of work overall is positive, but teachers do not often focus on improvement or the learning objectives. Teachers have not yet begun to set targets for individual attainment in English.

86. The school has introduced the literacy hour effectively. The sessions involving whole class teaching are sound overall, with some good examples in the teaching of the older children. There are good opportunities for the development of oral skills. Weaknesses occur when worksheets are used which do not extend pupils' thinking and where there is inappropriate match of activity and expectations to pupils' needs. Most pupils' literacy skills are above average, but there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills across the curriculum, and there is a tendency to rely too heavily on photocopied worksheets, which restrict pupils' opportunities to write extended answers. There is no evidence of planning reading and writing for information within the literacy hour, by making links with other subjects being studied concurrently.

87. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. There is an appropriate policy but the school has not identified the raising of standards in literacy as a main priority in the school development plan. Co-ordination of the subject is sound. The scheme of work for literacy is the National Literacy Strategy Framework, but there is no scheme of work for speaking and listening and drama. Assessment and recording procedures are sound but as yet not effectively linked to learning objectives identified in lesson planning or to individual targets. The co-ordinator has not been given enough time to monitor teaching and the implementation of the literacy hour, and there is no coherent system for monitoring attainment and progress in English over the whole school. This situation remains the same as at the last inspection. Resources for English are good and book provision in classrooms and the school library is satisfactory.

Mathematics

88. The results of national assessments in 1999, at the end of Key Stage 1, were below average when compared with all schools, and well below average when compared with schools in similar social circumstances. However, this overall picture of attainment conceals the fact that all the pupils reached the expected Level 2, which was well above the national

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average, whilst very few reached the higher Level 3. It was the lack of pupils reaching the higher level, combined with a significant proportion just reaching the expected level that depressed comparisons with other schools. Evidence from national assessments must also be considered in the context of the small number of pupils taking the tests each year, which causes greater fluctuations in results than for larger schools. For example, in 1998, only 58 per cent of pupils reached the expected level of attainment, which was very low in comparison with other schools, but this was because the year group tested contained a small number, but very significant proportion, of pupils with special educational needs. In contrast, an aggregation of results between 1996 and 1999 shows attainment above the national average. Clearly, conclusions drawn from these data need to be treated with caution. However, the lack of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 is a significant weakness, and shortcomings in the use of assessment and the quality of teaching, identified during the inspection, point to the cause.

89. Attainment in the current Year 2 class is above national expectations. The great majority of these pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard by the end of the key stage, and a significant minority should exceed it. For example, most pupils can count in 2s and 10s, up to and beyond 100. They can carry out a range of simple calculations with numbers and money. They know odd and even number patterns, and higher attainers understand that the last digit of a number determines whether it is odd or even. Most pupils recognise a range of plane and solid shapes and can describe them using appropriate vocabulary. Higher attainers identify right angles, and special plane shapes such as an isosceles triangle. All pupils recognise halves and quarters, and higher attainers can find different ways of cutting a square in to quarters. Across the key stage, pupils' work shows sound progress being made, though the quantity and challenge of work is better in Year 2. Throughout the key stage, higher attainers largely complete the same work as other pupils, and this restricts their progress. Without more challenging tasks, they are unlikely to reach the standard of which they are capable. The very few pupils with special educational needs are making good progress, and this was confirmed in the lessons observed, owing to good support from the learning assistant or from older, more able pupils. Considering all the evidence available, standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.

90. Pupils' numeracy skills are above average, and most have good mental recall of number facts for their ages. This supports their work in mathematics and in other subjects. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils used their good skills to work out how to measure the distance travelled by a toy vehicle, using metre rulers and desk rulers and then adding multiples of 100cm and 30cm. However, the use and development of numeracy skills in other subjects is incidental rather than planned, for example when opportunities were lost to discuss dates in history.

91. Most pupils approach mathematics with the same enthusiasm that is a feature of all their learning. They listen attentively, they are keen to contribute their ideas, and they sustain concentration well. They are eager to share what they already know and to learn new skills and concepts. All pupils are confident learners, including those with special educational needs, who are encouraged to have a go. The way in which pupils work together, in pairs or small groups, is outstanding, because teamwork is focused on the task in hand and supports learning

very well. The opportunities teachers provide for collaborative working make a good contribution to pupils' social development. Generally, pupils are very well behaved. Just occasionally, when the task is not clear or lacks challenge, a few pupils can become restless or silly, and this restricts their progress.

92. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Teaching was sound or better in all the lessons observed, and good, occasionally very good in a half. Teachers have very good relationships with their children and this enables them to create a positive environment for learning. They plan lessons in detail, but these plans are too concerned with content and method. Work is not based sufficiently on a perceptive assessment of pupils' existing knowledge, skills and understanding, what they need to learn next and challenging targets for future achievement. Pupils of varying prior attainment generally do the same work. As a result, some pupils, particularly higher attainers, are not given tasks that sufficiently extend them. Where work is challenging, for example when Year 2 was introduced to negative numbers, many pupils show their capacity for rapid understanding. During lessons, teachers do gather informal assessment information, through questioning, and they use it to modify work or clarify explanations. In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to work quickly, and there is a sense of urgency. In others, however, the pace is rather slow, both in whole class sessions and when pupils are working independently, so they make less progress.

93. The school has made a sound beginning to the implementation of a numeracy strategy. In the lessons seen, however, not enough time was spent on mental calculation or exploring effective strategies. The commercial materials on which the school has recently chosen to base its mathematics work have many good features, but have resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum. Pupils' work shows a preponderance of number activities and relatively little work on shape or data handling. During the inspection, work about fractions in Year 2 encouraged pupils to use and apply their knowledge, but previous work in both years shows little emphasis on the important investigation aspect of mathematics. Information technology is used well to explore work on directions through the use of a programmable toy, but there is little software to enable pupils to consolidate and extend their work in other aspects of mathematics. The use of worksheets is too prevalent, so pupils do not have enough opportunities to organise their own work. Teachers gather a good deal of assessment information by using tests at the end of each unit of work, but this is not yet used effectively to identify exactly what pupils know and what they need to learn next. The commercial materials provide a structure for mathematics work, but this is not being used flexibly so that teachers decide what pupils need to cover and when they need to move on more rapidly.

94. Co-ordination of the subject across the school is sound. The teachers plan together, and this enables the sharing of ideas. However, there has been too little monitoring of the standard of pupils' work to identify weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum, and too few opportunities for teachers to evaluate the quality of each others' teaching, so that areas for improvement can be identified. As a result, mutual support is a strength, but critical analysis of standards is a weakness.

Science

95. The 1999 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments showed pupils' attainment to be below average when compared with all schools, and below average when compared with schools in similar social circumstances. These results were better than the previous year, when only two thirds of the pupils reached the expected Level 2. However, results in past years had been higher, with almost all the pupils reaching the expected standard and a significant minority reaching the higher Level 3. This marked variation in standards from year to year is typical where a small number of pupils is tested because, where one pupil gains, or fails to gain, the expected level, there is a dramatic effect on the percentage result that is used to compare performance with other schools. Nonetheless, the school recognised that attainment in science was not high enough, and improvement is targeted in the school development plan.

96. Attainment in the current Year 2 is well above national expectations. To a large extent this is because there is a greater proportion of higher attaining pupils in this year group, but changes in the curriculum have also led to improvement. In their current work about forces, testing the distance travelled by toy cars down a ramp, most Year 2 pupils are beginning to understand the principles of a fair test, and higher attainers can explain that factors such as the car, the angle of the slope and the surface need to be kept the same. Most pupils can make predictions, for example explaining what would happen if the ramp is made steeper. All the pupils can carry out their testing, some with support from the teacher or other pupils, measuring accurately, and recording their results in a simple table. Most can explain the pattern in their results, and one higher attainer spots an anomaly and suggests re-testing. These pupils' past work shows that they can, for example, make simple electrical circuits and correct faults, and their diagrams are very clear. They have also investigated the forces involved to make various materials change shape. The quality of most pupils' discussion about their work is well above that expected for their ages. Many of these pupils are well on track to exceed the expected standard by the end of the key stage. Attainment is currently higher than that found at the last inspection.

97. Most pupils start Key Stage 1 with good knowledge and understanding of the world, which supports their progress in science. Pupils' work shows that they are making good progress across the key stage, particularly in Year 2. The clear emphasis on experimental and investigative work enables pupils to develop their curiosity, knowledge and recording skills. The few pupils with special educational needs make good progress, because they find the work interesting and they are well supported by teachers, the classroom assistant and other pupils.

98. Pupils' response in lessons is very good. They are enthusiastic about science, and particularly keen to be involved in practical work. They offer ideas readily, and most have the ability to explain their thinking clearly. They listen carefully to the teachers' explanations, and to the views of other pupils. Their ability to work in small groups, sharing ideas and equipment, and taking turns was a particular strength in the Year 2 lesson seen. These collaborative activities make a very good contribution to pupils' social development. The pupils' good behaviour, and their ability to sustain concentration on tasks, both support good progress.

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99. The quality of teaching is good overall, though best towards the end of the key stage. Lesson planning is carefully related to the scheme of work and identifies specific learning objectives. These are shared with the pupils so that they know what they are trying to achieve. In the Year 2 lesson observed, the high quality of the teacher's questioning enabled pupils to consider the scientific ideas, and the teacher encouraged all the pupils to explain their thinking. Discussion, explanation and activity all moved at a good pace, so that the pupils were fully engaged in their learning. In Year 1, there were too few challenging questions to stretch the higher attainers, in particular, whilst they were working. In all lessons, the emphasis on practical work as the vehicle for scientific enquiry enables pupils to extend their thinking. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject.

100. The school has adopted a nationally recommended scheme of work for science and this is a distinct improvement since the last inspection. Work during the current term already shows a good balance between the factual and experimental aspects of the subject. The school has yet to consider how the scheme might be adapted to ensure that all pupils can progress at a rate matched to their prior attainment. Information technology is rarely used to support and enrich scientific work, for example in handling data from experiments. Assessment procedures are sound, with information from end of unit tests used to record pupils' progress, as well as informal observations by teachers. The school has yet to accumulate the quantity of information that will enable the tracking of individual pupils' progress, so that weaknesses in their skills and the curriculum can be identified. Co-ordination of the subject across the school is satisfactory. At present, though teachers' share their planning, there has been little monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to identify strengths and weaknesses and form plans to raise standards. Given more careful evaluation, the school is well placed to sustain high standards.

Other subjects

Information technology (IT)

101. Pupils make satisfactory progress and standards in the current Year 2 class are close to national expectations. This is similar to the situation at the last inspection. No IT lessons were observed during this inspection, but discussions with pupils using IT, and scrutiny of teachers' planning, enable secure judgements to be made. Although pupils have sound skills in some aspects of the subject, for example in controlling a programmable toy, there are weaknesses in other areas, which will need to be rectified if the expected standards are to be

reached by the end of the key stage.

102. Most Year 2 pupils are confident using a computer. They can switch on, but they are unable to load a particular program from the menu because they have not been taught to do so. Most pupils can use a 'mouse' effectively. Their keyboard skills are weak and, though they know the function of keys such as 'back space', 'shift' and 'return', typing letters is very slow and holds back their progress in word processing. Pupils were unable to save or print their work independently and said that they had not been taught these skills. Nonetheless, using word processing, most pupils can compose and organise a short text, though they have few skills in correcting errors within text, except deleting everything back to the error. Pupils

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do not know what a 'cursor' is. The focus for most IT teaching this term has been the control of a programmable toy, and all pupils can feed in a series of commands to make the toy travel a pathway. There is no evidence, however, that pupils yet know how to use a simple database, or have made tables or pictures. Most have used a simple simulation program.

103. Pupils are very keen to use IT, and they talk about the skills they have learnt working on computers at home. In pairs or threes, they work well collaboratively, sharing ideas and taking turns using the 'mouse' and keyboard. There is little evidence from pupils' work that IT is used to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum. During the inspection, opportunities were lost for word processing during literacy lessons, and data handling in science. Pupils' IT skills are not developed systematically within other subjects. The school has more than sufficient hardware to teach the curriculum, a bonus gained from falling pupil numbers, but lacks software to enable teachers to use IT to complement learning in subjects such as mathematics. In many lessons, computers were available but not used. The school has recently adopted a nationally recommended scheme of work, which will ensure that pupils are taught the full range of skills. Although the scheme is an improvement since the last inspection, it will not ensure that skills are used and developed throughout the curriculum. Staff lack the confidence and expertise to plan appropriate activities so that IT is a more integral part of pupils' learning. The school is aware of weaknesses in the IT curriculum, and this will enable further improvement to be made in the future.

Religious Education

104. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus. Only one lesson was observed, with reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils taught together. Scrutiny of work and discussion with staff indicate that, for their ages, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of stories from the Bible, for example about Noah, and about Christian beliefs, such as the story of Easter. The story of Divali and its importance in the Sikh and Hindu faiths is also taught, with artwork supporting this. Pupils have opportunities to reflect, through close observation, on the awe and wonder of natural things, and on feelings about special days and celebrations. All pupils understand the concept of sharing things and most appreciate that sharing can mean giving as well as taking. For example, pupils are currently filling shoeboxes for children in Kosovo for Christmas. Monthly visits from the local Church of England vicar for assembly are linked in religious education by an opportunity to study the vestments used by that Christian denomination.

105. Throughout the school, pupils make sound progress in building up their knowledge of Christianity, and also develop some awareness of the principle features of other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism. Most pupils make sound progress during discussion and oral work, and there are some opportunities to write, but these seldom enable older, higher attainers to write reflectively or at length.

106. Pupils' response to religious education is satisfactory and sometimes good. They participate willingly in class discussions, offering personal anecdotes. A good feature is the quality of the relationships, as seen when pupils listen carefully to each other and show respect for other people's point of view. In the mixed-age class observed, older pupils were supportive and helpful to the younger ones.

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107. The quality of teaching is generally sound. In the lesson observed, the teacher used effective questions to check pupils' grasp of previous learning, to relate the subject to their personal experience, and to develop their understanding. In general, inspection evidence from the scrutiny of work indicates that teaching does not go much beyond the factual aspects to examine deeper questions, such as why religious customs mean so much to people.

108. Religious education is soundly co-ordinated, though few links are made so that pupils can study religious stories, or factual text, as part of the literacy hour. Resources, such as information books, are adequate, and the school has a small collection of religious artefacts, and access to others from the local education authority Multi-Cultural Centre. The school's religious education policy and scheme of work are based on the locally Agreed Syllabus and meet statutory requirements. The importance of equality of opportunity and the need for respect for other customs is appropriately emphasised. Religious education makes a generally sound contribution to the school's good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development through extending their knowledge of faiths and through discussion about the moral messages of stories various traditions.

Art

109. Pupils experience a wide range of artwork across the school, with an emphasis on drawing and painting, and make good progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. The standard of work produced by the current Year 2 pupils is higher than at the last inspection. During this inspection, no art lessons could be observed so the main source of evidence was a scrutiny of finished work and teachers' planning.

110. Children receive a good grounding in art during their time in the pre-school unit and use a wide range of media. Printing using fruit and vegetables, string paintings, and a large collage of 'Goldilocks' show the pupils' developing skills, but there are few expressive paintings. In Year 1, self-portraits using collage and drawing show that pupils can observe well, as do their drawings of apples using paint, pastel and crayon. The use of a variety of media to represent one subject is a good feature of work across the school and develops the pupils' range of techniques. Seaside paintings, using the work of a range of artists as stimulus, encourage the pupils to mix many shades of blue to produce very pleasing effects. Wax resist paintings of leaf skeletons are carefully executed and of good quality. In Year 2, pupils' work continues to be of a high quality for their ages. The pupils have looked closely at sea paintings by a range of artists, such as Turner and Duffy, and their subsequent work echoes the form, colours and

textures extremely well. A whole-class painting inspired by 'Three nuns on a beach' by Noel Coward shows that the pupils can contribute to a larger piece of work by painting sections of the background and drawing figures. An impressive, large fabric collage of 'The Fire of London', made by previous Year 2 pupils, underlines the range of work undertaken by pupils. Past work also includes drawing and painting of high quality inspired by the work of artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh.

111. Although no art lessons were observed, it is clear from the pupils' work that the teachers are particularly confident and skilled in this subject. They have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Planning also shows the way in which teachers ensure that a range of media and art concepts, such as form, texture and colour are woven into the activities

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provided for the pupils. Art is used well to complement other subjects, as was judged to be a strength at the last inspection. The pupils' talk lucidly about their work and clearly enjoy art. They draw on the work of a range of artists and this makes a valuable contribution to their cultural development. Their artwork helps to create a visually attractive environment in classrooms. The subject benefits from good co-ordination across the school.

Design and technology

112. No design and technology lessons could be observed during the inspection, but scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning enables secure judgements to be made. At the last inspection, no clear judgement was made about progress during Key Stage 1 or standards at the end of the key stage.

113. During Key Stage 1 pupils make sound progress. They work with a range of materials, including construction toys, malleable materials, 'junk' models, food and textiles. Pupils in Year 2 have made wheeled vehicles, including a cardboard chassis, wood axles, polystyrene wheels, and a body from card boxes. Planning indicates that the pupils started by evaluating a range of wheeled vehicles and examining their design closely. They then focused on the skills of making axles and attaching wheels so that they would turn freely. Subsequent designs for vehicles are carefully drawn, with the main parts labelled, and are of good quality for pupils' ages. The vehicles are clearly based on these designs. They are carefully constructed, with imaginative solutions found for joining parts, for example attaching the axles to the chassis using elastic bands. Although these vehicles are yet to be finished, or the process evaluated, they represent a sound standard of work for Year 2. Year 1 pupils are currently learning how to make hinged mechanisms, which they will use to make moving pictures and Christmas cards. This project was in its early stages at the time of the inspection.

114. No direct evidence of teaching is available, but other evidence suggests that teaching is sound. Teachers' planning is thorough and detailed, and clearly shows a good appreciation of the process of design and technology, including evaluation, focused practical tasks and design and make assignments. Over time, pupils experience a good range of projects, using a range of materials, from making a fruit salad to designing and making a home. Year 2 pupils talk enthusiastically about their models and have clearly enjoyed the work. The use of a nationally recommended scheme of work provides a firm foundation for planning and teaching, and provides a good basis for future improvement.

Geography and History

115. Geography and history are taught in alternate half terms. No geography lessons could be observed during the inspection, so judgements are based on an examination of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff. Two history lessons were observed. Pupils make generally sound progress in both subjects and, by Year 2, attainment is appropriate for pupils' ages.

116. In geography, Year 2 pupils are developing sound mapping skills, for example representing ideas about a place in a map with a key, as in an imaginary map of the seaside. They can follow a route on a map, as was seen in work about Florence Nightingale. They are

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developing an awareness that the world reaches beyond their locality, for example by talking about where pupils have taken their holidays, and using maps of the United Kingdom, Europe and the world. Pupils also study the weather's effect on people and the different seasons. There is little recorded evidence of geography work from visits or local fieldwork.

117. In history, pupils study changes over time, such as looking at old and new toys, or noting changes in hospitals. They develop a sense of chronology by comparing swimsuits of this century and houses across the centuries. They study the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, and great events of the past, such as the Fire of London. Aspects of everyday life in Britain before living memory are studied, as when a visit to Warwick Castle led to work on castles, moats and toilets. Year 2 pupils are beginning to use a wide range of sources of information and artefacts to develop their understanding of the past.

118. Pupils' response in history lessons is good overall, and older pupils are particularly fascinated by details of the Crimean war, because of the very good subject knowledge of the teacher. The quality of teaching was good in one lesson seen and sound in the other. Both lessons were well planned and prepared, but astute questioning and a good range of resources provided more challenge in the best teaching, with learning well paced. For example, pupils were asked to imagine what the soldiers thought about Florence Nightingale, and were required to put themselves in another's place, recording their ideas in the first person.

119. Pupils' work shows progress in recording, from drawing to writing across the key stage but, in both subjects, the amount of written work is limited, and there are few planned opportunities for extended writing. Both subjects use nationally recommended schemes of work, but these have not yet adapted them for the school's needs. There is a policy for each subject. There are no records of pupils' progress or attainment in each subject, except through planning and the pupils' work. Co-ordination of the subjects is sound. Neither subject features in the planning for information reading and writing in the literacy hour, and at the moment, the breadth and balance of each subject is not secure.

Music

120. During the inspection, only one music lesson was observed, and this was singing. As a

result, there is too little evidence to make a secure, overall judgement about progress in all aspects of the subject. In singing, however, pupils make good progress during the key stage and reach standards that exceed what is expected for their ages.

121. Pupils from reception, Year1 and Year 2 join together for singing. Year 2 pupils support the singing development of the younger pupils. They sing tunefully with satisfactory pitch control to skilled piano accompaniment by a parent. They are able to sing different tempos and different rhythmic styles, and have developed a wide repertoire of songs. Most pupils can keep a steady beat by using unpitched instruments to accompany the singing. Some pupils can also play unpitched instruments following a rhythm. They play instruments carefully, making expressive use of some of the musical elements such as dynamics and duration. All Year 2 pupils learn the descant recorder as part of the timetabled curriculum. The school has raised its standards of singing since the last inspection.

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122. Pupils respond very well to their singing lessons. All pupils are attentive, whatever their age, because of the pace of the teaching and opportunities to practise singing, but also because the Year 2 pupils give a confident lead. All took part in the production of the 'Pied Piper' in the summer term.

123. The quality of the teaching seen was satisfactory, with good, knowledgeable support from the parent helper. Lessons are planned satisfactorily but, though learning objectives are made clear, they are not shared with the pupils. Planning for singing does not include the use of instruments and what the learning objectives are, so that when instruments are used, the focus for learning is not defined, and opportunities for teaching missed. The planned music curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced, but information technology is not used. There is a music policy, and the schemes of work are adequate, but the staff plan to consider nationally recommended materials when they are published. In teachers' planning, there is no evidence of written composition or of opportunities for pupils to do their own invented composition writing. There is little evidence of multicultural opportunities or resources in terms of songs, music or instruments. The co-ordinator has no planned opportunities to monitor practice across the school. Resources for music are satisfactory, with a wide range of unpitched instruments, some pitched instruments and recorded music.

Physical Education

124. Only one lesson could be observed, so judgements are made on limited evidence. In dance, pupils' attainment matches that which would be expected for their ages. In response to Indian music, all Year 2 pupils can perform a range of gestures, with good control, representing birds, the rising sun, or flowers opening. They match these gestures carefully to the music, performing a short sequence of movements. As they practise their sequence, pupils show increasing control and respond to the music more precisely. Pupils also work in small groups to plan and perform a short sequence. They fit their movements imaginatively to the music, co-ordinating their efforts well, and performing with poise and enthusiasm. Evidence from the lesson seen suggests that pupils make sound progress during the key stage, and that standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.

125. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed their dance lesson. They listened well and tried hard to

improve their performances. Their work in small groups was particularly good, showing their ability to work collaboratively. The visiting teacher showed her good expertise in dance and physical education in the way that she gradually introduced more challenging tasks and enabled the pupils to plan, practice and perform a range of sequences. Very clear planning, the good choice of music, constant praise for good performance, and very good demonstrations were all strong features of the teaching.

126. The school offers a broad curriculum for the pupils, taught in blocks through the year, and planning shows that this provides a good balance of activities. The village hall is suitable for some activities, but is no substitute for a hall with equipment for gymnastics. The co-ordinator provides sound management for the subject. There is a clear policy, but schemes of work are in the form of medium-term plans that do not outline the progressive development of pupils' skills in dance, games and gymnastics. Staff expertise is appropriately strengthened by visiting specialists.

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PART C: INSPECTION DATA

127. Summary of inspection evidence

The inspection was undertaken over a four-day period, by three inspectors, for a total of six inspector days. For the majority of their time in school, the inspectors visited classes and talked with individuals and groups of pupils. All the class teachers were seen teaching on several occasions. There were 20 observations of lessons or parts of lessons, which took about 19 hours. Also, pupils from each class read to an inspector and discussed their reading. Planned discussions were held with members of staff, particularly concerning their subject responsibility. Additional discussions were held with a number of governors. Policy documents, teachers' planning and assessment records, and other documents were examined. A parents' meetings was held before the inspection, and 15 parents attended and gave their views about the work of the school. Responses to the parents' questionnaire were received from 16 parents.

128. 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 – Y2	26	0	2	0

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR – Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14

Education support staff (YR – Y2)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	34

Average class size:

13

FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total income	90634.00
Total expenditure	87968.00
Expenditure per pupil	1599.42
Balance brought forward from previous year	0.0
Balance carried forward to next year	2666.00

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

28

Number of questionnaires returned:

16

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	50	50	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	94	6	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	46	46	8	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	31	63	0	6	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	50	38	6	6	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	38	56	0	6	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	38	56	6	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	44	44	13	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	75	19	6	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	31	69	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	88	13	0	0	0