

INSPECTION REPORT

TANNERS WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117178

Headteacher: Mr J Taylor

Reporting inspector: Wendy Simmons
23674

Dates of inspection: 31st January – 4th February 2000

Inspection number: 186968

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery, Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hazelwood Lane Abbots Langley Hertfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Tanners Wood School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Brown
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Wendy Simmons	Registered inspector	Music, Equality of opportunity	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupil's taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
Susan Thomas	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Dorothy Latham	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, Geography, History.	
Arthur Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, Design and technology, Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Bob Lever	Team inspector	Science, Art, Special educational needs.	
Judith Howell	Team inspector	Children under five, Information technology, Religious education.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tanners Wood Primary School educates boys and girls aged between 3 and 11. The school has 41 pupils who attend on a part-time basis in its Nursery and a further 40 pupils aged under six in the two Reception classes. In total, there are 343 full-time pupils which is bigger than most other schools of the same type. The number has increased since the last inspection. About seven per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language which is higher than in most schools. Around nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is well below the national average. The school has 99 pupils on the register of special educational needs and this is above the national average. Of these, two pupils have a statement of special educational need. This is well below the national average. Pupils enter the school at standards which are broadly average for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

As a result of good leadership, the school's effectiveness is good. There is a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to continued development. The school's partnership with parents is good and assists the progress which pupils make. Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and relationships are very good. There is a caring ethos and the school is managed for the benefit of the pupils. Standards are average overall, teaching is good and the school is giving good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is strong leadership from the headteacher and governors.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with very good teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- The quality of teaching of mathematics is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching in English is good overall.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning.
- The provision for pupils' personal and social development is very good, especially at Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching, pupils' attainment and provision for information technology is very good overall, with very good leadership from the co-ordinator.
- Financial planning is good overall with effective use of finances to raise standards of attainment. The headteacher and the chair of finance have very good skills of financial analysis.

What could be improved

- The planning of the curriculum and the management of children under five. For example, initial assessment information is not used consistently to guide teachers in their planning.
- Opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 1 to develop their handwriting.
- The organisation and grouping of pupils in the mixed Years 3 and 4 in aspects of the teaching of literacy due to the very wide range of abilities in each class and some demanding work related to the organisation of the school's literacy programme.
- The identification of pupils with special educational needs on Stage 1 of the special educational needs register so that there is greater consistency between classes.
- The teaching of science lessons at Key Stage 1, particularly the effectiveness of the way that these lessons are organised.
- The consistency with which homework is organised in year groups and the development of the higher attaining pupils in this aspect of their work.
- The understanding which co-ordinators have of their subjects from Nursery through to Year 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1996. Since then, the staff and governors have worked hard and have made a good improvement overall and in all of the former key issues. There has been good evaluation of pupils' test results to identify weaker areas for development. There has been good progress in aspects of reading and writing, especially recently at Key Stage 1. Mathematics has benefited from good development since the last inspection and information technology has improved further to become a real strength of the school. Standards remain broadly similar to the last inspection. The school has a very good capacity to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	A	C	C	Well above average A above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	
Science	C	A	C	C	

This information shows that pupils do best in mathematics. Standards are average in English and science. When this school is compared with other similar schools, standards are similar in science and English but well above average in mathematics. The grouping of pupils and the very good teaching in mathematics are significant factors in the well above average attainment. The findings of this inspection match the findings for science but standards in English are below the expected level for pupils' ages. However, the present Year 6 has a high number of pupils with special educational needs and overall, they are achieving good standards for their ability. Currently, the organisation of the pupils in the Year 3 and 4 mixed classes makes it difficult for the teacher to work with the very wide range of abilities in the second part of the literacy hour. In mathematics, standards this year are broadly average. The reason for the decline is noted above and the school is working very effectively to ensure that pupils are reaching their full potential. In science, standards are similar to last year but this is due to very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and some careful setting to help pupils to achieve the expected Level 4. Pupils are achieving average standards in all other subjects except art where attainment is above average and, in information technology, attainment is well above average.

The school is working hard to raise standards in writing and reading at Key Stage 1, which have shown a decline since 1997. However, these younger pupils in Year 2 are achieving broadly in line with the expected level this year, although opportunities to practise handwriting are too infrequent. In all other subjects, except information technology, pupils are attaining average standards. In information technology, pupils are reaching above average standards. Children under five achieve the expected standard by the age of five, although the curriculum in the Reception class is unbalanced and does not give sufficient opportunities for children to develop their imagination, social, physical and creative skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show very good attitudes to learning and this is a significant strength of the school. They are keen to learn and are well motivated. Pupils are attentive in lessons; they show initiative, independence and an ability to work well unsupervised. Across the school, pupils show very positive attitudes to those less fortunate than themselves.
Behaviour in and out of classrooms	Good overall, including children under five. There have been three fixed term exclusions this year and no bullying was observed during the inspection. The procedures for promoting good behaviour are successful.

Personal development and relationships	At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils benefit from very good personal and social development and this is a strength of the school. The school's council enhances pupils' personal development. At Key Stage 2, extracurricular activities are good although this feature is underdeveloped for younger pupils. Across the school, relationships amongst staff and pupils are very good. The personal and social development of children under five is satisfactory. They develop happy and constructive relationships. Reception children build soundly on their previous development. The teaching of relationships and interactions is of a good quality but opportunities to develop skills through play are too limited in scope and frequency.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is a little better than the national average and unauthorised attendance is lower than the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection, 104 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Teaching is good overall, with 97 per cent of teaching being satisfactory or better. Teaching is of a very good standard in Years 5 and 6. Three unsatisfactory sessions were observed and weaknesses here were largely concerned with the management and grouping of pupils. The quality of teaching in English is good overall. However, at Key Stage 2, the grouping of pupils in the Year 3 and 4 mixed classes is not working consistently well for the middle part of the literacy hour lessons as there are too many activities for the very wide range of pupils' abilities. Across the school, the first part of the literacy hour is working very well. The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. Overall, all teachers have high expectations and this results in good quality learning. There are particular strengths in the teaching of information technology. Teachers' planning at Key Stages 1 and 2 is of a very high quality. However, there are some inconsistencies in the planning of work and resources for children under five. Nevertheless, teaching for these younger children is satisfactory overall with several strengths, including the good teaching of English and mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, the curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. Provision for information technology is a great strength. The quality and range of learning opportunities are generally good. The curriculum for children in the Reception classes is not planned using the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age and this is a weakness. The Nursery curriculum is appropriate.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for these pupils is good and effective systems are in place for their identification. However, the initial identification procedures are not consistently understood by all staff. Support assistants give good help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. The Local Education Authority provides good additional support. Pupils make good progress and achieve similar standards to their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for moral development and satisfactory provision for cultural and spiritual development. The provision for pupils' social development is a strength of the school. It is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. There is a supportive, caring ethos in the school in which pupils are seen as individuals. The monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development is generally good, although the initial assessment of pupils starting in the Reception classes is underused as a planning tool. Assessment procedures in English and science are strong. The individual targets which pupils have for improvement are good. Staff are clear about health and safety and child protection procedures. Security has improved well since the last inspection.
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The school's partnership with parents is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall, leadership and management are good. The headteacher shows strong leadership and he and the senior management team show very good commitment to improvement. There are clear and appropriate plans for raising standards, reaching targets and making good use of resources. Teamwork is well established. A significant weakness is the lack of a co-ordinator for children under five. Co-ordinators are working well to improve their subjects although their understanding of their subjects from Nursery through to Year 6 is not consistently well established.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Overall, governors fulfil their responsibilities to a good standard. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are strongly committed to improvement. There are a few minor omissions in their Annual Report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are good and results in good strategic planning to raise standards further.
The strategic use of resources	There is a good understanding of financial planning and the budget is used effectively to develop standards. The school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Nevertheless, resources for children under five are limited in the Reception classes. The use of information technology is very good for pupils. However, the finances are not yet computerised. Administrative staff support the workings of the school to a good standard.

The school is well staffed and its accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like the school. • The staff really care about the pupils and provide help for them as individuals. • Information technology is a strength. • There is a good working ethos. • The good behaviour overall and systems to deal with problems if they arise. • The way in which the staff work as a team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consistency of homework between classes. • The current arrangement of mixed year groups classes if not totally necessary. • More extracurricular opportunities for younger pupils in the school.

The findings of the inspection support the positive views of parents. In addition, they find that there is some inconsistency in homework between classes. Furthermore, the current arrangement for mixing pupils in the present Year 3 and 4 does not support maximum progress in the second part of literacy lessons. The findings of the inspection agree with the parents and show that there are few opportunities for younger pupils to enjoy extracurricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for Tanners Wood School in 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, and other similar schools, standards are average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 attainment in English and science was below the average for other similar schools and well above average in mathematics.

2. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and the higher Level 5 in the 1999 tests in English was close to the national average. In mathematics, it was well above the national average, and the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was also well above the national average. In science, it was close to the national average, including the percentage of pupils who achieved the higher Level 5 standard. Assessments made by teachers did not match the test results well enough because they were over cautious in assessing the Level 5 attainment in English, mathematics and science.

3. When the average of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by the school in 1997, 1998 and 1999, they show an improving trend in standards which is broadly in line with the national trend. The decline in higher standards in mathematics for 1999 was due to the difference in pupils' abilities. The combined data for 1997, 1998 and 1999 show that, in English, attainment for boys is close to the national average and for girls, it is above average. In mathematics, the attainment of boys and girls is above the national average. In science, the standards attained by boys are above the national average, whilst girls attained standards well above the average. Taking English, mathematics and science together over this period, the attainment of boys is above average and that of girls is well above average.

4. The school has set targets for improvement in attainment over time. These are realistic in view of the very different groups of pupils taking the tests each year. For example, the current Year 6 has a very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and they are not on course to achieve such high standards in English and mathematics as in 1999.

5. The findings of the inspection are that the oldest pupils at Key Stage 2 attain standards that are broadly average overall. In English, attainment is below the expected level and shows a decline since last year and since the last inspection. This decline is due to an unusually high proportion of pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs. Some very good teaching is helping to raise the attainment of these pupils towards the expected standard. Since the last inspection, attainment in mathematics has improved considerably, but, as in the case of English, standards are not on course to be as high as last year. The good use of science workshops and setting of pupils by ability in science and mathematics are helping to ensure that pupils generally achieve their full potential. Attainment in information technology is well above average and this is a considerable strength of the school. This is because the school has focused on this area of the curriculum and has very good resources. Whole-class teaching enhances pupils' attainment as pupils can work in twos. Teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm are good overall and very good in Year 2 and across Key Stage 2 as a whole. Consequently, they have a high degree of skill to help make lessons challenging for all pupils. There are good links with other subjects and this has a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding. High quality leadership in this subject is helping to raise standards very effectively. In art, attainment is above average and the school has sought to make improvements in this subject. Most significantly, it is the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 which is enhancing pupils' attainment. In all other subjects, attainment matches that expected for pupils' ages and abilities.

6. In English, by the age of 11, the pupils speak with confidence and listen attentively. Lessons include time for pupils to evaluate their work together and this helps them to express their views and ideas. Pupils read a wide range of books which shows an improvement since the last inspection. They read, write and spell in line with their abilities for a wide range of purposes and audiences. English work in Year 3 is sometimes too difficult for pupils and they do not make sufficient progress in the 20-minute group work activities. In mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils confidently solve problems, quickly respond

to mental challenges and have a good understanding of graphs. However, a significant number of pupils find great difficulty with number work. Nevertheless, the frequent very good teaching ensures good learning overall. The pupils are making good progress in both numeracy and literacy due to the implementation of the national strategies. In science, pupils understand about fair testing and have a satisfactory grasp of life processes and materials. The high quality questioning and use of scientific vocabulary by teachers are helping to ensure that standards of attainment are in line with pupils' capabilities. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to talk about their investigations and hypothesise with growing precision. All subjects make good use of information technology to support learning. In religious education, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and world faiths. They show particularly good knowledge of Buddhism.

7. In geography, pupils have a good knowledge of maps. In history, they have an ability to talk about and understand different periods of history and change over the course of time. Good teaching, the use of artefacts and other interesting resources, including information technology, enhance attainment in history. Moreover, the links with other subjects help pupils to consolidate their learning to a good standard. In art, pupils show good skills in drawing and work is developing progressively to an above average standard. They have a good knowledge of different artists. High quality teaching plays a major part in pupils' high attainment and enthusiasm for the subject. In design and technology, pupils plan, make and alter designs effectively and make a variety of useful and interesting objects. Work is enhanced by good teaching from a knowledgeable support assistant. In music, pupils sing tunefully and take part in lively musical productions. Pupils' attainment is developed especially well when they have specialist music teaching. Their knowledge of different contemporary and classical music and composers is less well developed. They respond well to music and confidently talk about mood and character when the opportunity arises.

8. When the averages of the school's 1999 end of Key Stage 1 test data are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards are well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When the average of this data is compared with similar schools, standards are well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. This low attainment was due to the unusually high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. However, the school commented that the introduction of the literacy hour had an effect on standards, as pupils were not writing as much as they had in past years. Furthermore, the year group was taught by two teachers who were less experienced in working towards national testing. As part of the school's development plan, reading and writing were prioritised for significant attention and, as a result, standards have improved. In addition, the introduction of the numeracy hour and careful monitoring of the subject have resulted in improved standards overall.

9. Analysis of the school's national end of Key Stage 1 tests for 1999 shows that, in reading, writing and mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was well below the national average. The percentage attaining Level 3 and above was below average in mathematics and well below average in writing and reading. The assessments made by teachers were similar in reading but not well matched in writing as they estimated that some pupils would achieve the higher Level 3 in the tests and, in fact, there were no pupils who achieved this higher standard. In mathematics, the assessment of pupils reaching Level 2 was similar to the test results and there was only a slight variation in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. Overall, variation was due to teachers being new to the annual national assessment process.

10. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results for the school in reading, writing and mathematics for 1999 are compared with 1997, 1998 and 1999, they show a decline in standards in reading and writing for the school, but standards which are close to the national average. These data also show standards in mathematics which are broadly similar to the national average and a slight improvement for the school on the 1998 results. Taking the three years together, the performance of boys fell below the national average in reading whilst girls' performance was above the average. In writing, boys achieved standards that are similar to the national average and the girls' performance exceeded the average. In mathematics, boys achieved close to the national average and the girls' performance was above the national average. In the 1999 teachers' assessments in science, standards were well below average at Level 2 and 3.

11. The findings of the inspection are that, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards in all subjects except information technology are average for pupils' ages and ability. In information technology, standards are

above average, as pupils confidently use a wide range of resources to support their work across most curriculum subjects. Their attainment is enhanced by whole-class teaching in the information technology suite and good subject knowledge of teachers, which results in challenging and well paced lessons. Compared with the last inspection, standards are similar in English and broadly similar in mathematics. In science, standards are lower. This is due to changes in subject leadership and teaching at Key Stage 1. Moreover, there are some missed opportunities to make the most of group teaching at the lower end of the school as there are several demanding activities going on at once. In all other subjects, standards match those of the last inspection. The findings of this inspection show improvement in reading and writing and this relates to the school's focus on these areas as part of their development plan. Standards in mathematics and science also show an improvement, but this is largely due to the difference in the abilities of this group of pupils compared with 1999. However, the good quality of teaching in mathematics is enhancing the attainment of all pupils so that it broadly matches their ability. There have been developments in teachers' assessments of pupils and this is good in reading and satisfactory in writing, although they are not so clear in identifying the progressive development of writing skills.

12. In English, by the age of seven, the pupils listen attentively and speak with confidence and enthusiasm. They read accurately from a range of books at an appropriate level. In writing, they show an understanding of punctuation and write for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. However, practice in handwriting is not frequent enough. In mathematics, they use a variety of mental strategies confidently to 20 and understand some units of measurement. In science, pupils can complete simple experiments and record their findings. They know how to sort and classify animals and materials and are beginning to understand about a making a fair test. In information technology, they show good word processing skills, locate files quickly and confidently and use resources well in different subjects. Pupils attain standards in religious education that are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. They know how Christianity and other world religions celebrate special festivals and enjoy a wide range of stories from a variety of cultures.

13. In geography, it was not possible to see any teaching as work is 'blocked' at different times of the year. However, pupils are encouraged to compare the weather on a daily basis and displays show that they are developing a clear understanding about houses and their locality. In history, pupils know about past and present and can talk about their own family history. In physical education, they are beginning to play team games and are developing gymnastic skills effectively. Pupils are energetic and work skilfully using balls and beanbags. In art, pupils use a range of materials imaginatively and are becoming familiar with the work of different artists. In design and technology, work is closely linked to geography and pupils have designed and made a street scene with models of houses. In music, they sing songs from memory, and compose music for themselves using the computer. They enjoy the taped music lessons and are becoming aware of different musicians.

14. Children under five enter the school with average standards. They make steady progress and most are on course to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children in their personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. In their physical development, they have the potential to exceed the expected standard by the age of five. However, progress in their personal and creative development is limited by the lack of appropriate resources and an unbalanced timetable in the Reception classes.

15. Pupils with special educational needs are progressing well against specific targets and goals and are making good progress, particularly when receiving extra support. The school uses assessment data from teachers, national tests and in school testing to inform target-setting procedures in individual education plans and in statements. However, teachers are not always consistent about the initial identification of those pupils who need moderate additional support at Level 1 of the special educational needs register. The good quality teaching enhances pupils' learning. The work by the assistants supports pupils well. However, very occasionally, teachers do not get the social mix of groups right and this can result in lack of focus for pupils and unsatisfactory teaching and learning in mathematics.

16. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve standards in line with pupils of a similar age and they receive good support, which results in good progress. In social situations, pupils are confident in

their use of English. Those pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieved standards in line with expectation with some above average attainment for a few pupils at both key stages.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Overall, pupils' attitudes and personal development are a strength of the school. Pupils generally have a very good approach to learning and positive attitudes to school. Across Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are keen to share their ideas, listen carefully to the views of other pupils and adults, and show very good respect towards the feelings, attitudes and beliefs of others, especially in 'circle' time. In lessons, they pay close attention to their teachers and usually work well together in groups or pairs. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils are not always given as much attention as they need. Consequently, they lose concentration and do not show sufficient interest in their work. In some subjects such as mathematics, pupils' presentation of their work is untidy, often because they do not use sharp pencils or rulers. They are polite and offer to help each other when they see a need. Older pupils confidently research topics on their own using reference books and information technology resources, although there are missed opportunities to link this with homework. They work well unsupervised. Overall, pupils show very positive attitudes to their school and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

18. Overall, behaviour is good. Ninety-two per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire felt that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. There have been three fixed term exclusions this year. Children know the school rules and usually keep to them. They play purposefully together in the playground. No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection. Minor incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour are dealt with speedily by lunchtime supervisors. Overall, pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Children under five generally behave well. However, there is a significant minority of children in the Reception class who find it difficult to contain their behaviour, and do as they are told, and occasionally, the teacher does not have sufficient help in the class to deal with this problem. Nevertheless, children settle into school routines quickly and grow in confidence and personal independence.

19. At Key Stages 1 and 2, personal development is very good overall. Pupils are developing a very good sense of their responsibilities as citizens. They raise money for numerous charities and, recently, hosted children from the Russian town of Chernobyl at the school. There are many opportunities that enable older pupils to develop maturity and responsibility. The school councillors appreciate their chance to contribute to the running of the school. Decisions on how to spend certain sums of money for the benefit of pupils are made with much thought and care. The heads of table at lunch enjoy their responsibilities of supervising and assisting the infant children. There are fewer occasions for younger children to take responsibility and chances are missed to develop social skills in play situations in the Reception classes. At Key Stage 2, there are good opportunities for pupils to take part in extracurricular activities, which enhance their personal development. However, there are very few opportunities for pupils to do this at Key Stage 1. There is an imbalance, which is also a concern to parents, and several parents commented on this specifically at the parents' meeting and as a separate note on the questionnaires.

20. Overall, the personal and social development of children under five is satisfactory. The children settle quickly into the routines of the Nursery where opportunities to promote their personal and social development are given a high priority. Children quickly become independent and start to make sensible choices about which activity to engage in, when not being specifically directed. They take turns and, in general, learn to adhere to the class rules, although some children need reminding. They develop happy and constructive relationships with each other and the adults they work with and most have a positive attitude to school. Reception children build soundly on their previous development and, by five, they join in whole assemblies, playtimes and physical education lessons with confidence. However, although teaching of relationships and interactions is of a good quality, opportunities and resources in Reception for free play are far too limited in terms of both scope and frequency. This reduces the children's abilities to make choices, play co-operatively and develop their independence quickly.

21. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Pupils respond well to teachers' positive support and encouragement. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have developed good relationships with their teachers and support staff. Pupils trust each other.

22. Attendance is a little better than the national average and the incidence of unauthorised absence is lower than the national average. The results of the parents' questionnaire show that 96 per cent of their children like coming to school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good throughout the school. However, there is some variation: teaching and learning are satisfactory for children under five in the Nursery and Reception classes and good at Key Stages 1 and 2. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good overall and very good in Years 5 and 6, which is a real strength of the school. There were lessons throughout both key stages where teaching was found to be of a very good standard. During the inspection, 104 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Teaching was satisfactory in 35, good in 45, and very good in 20. There were three unsatisfactory sessions observed, two lessons and one special educational needs group activity. The 1996 inspection found most of the teaching to be of a good standard, with the remainder generally sound. This strength has been maintained in line with the former key issue. Moreover, the amount of very good and excellent teaching has increased and, consequently, progress is judged to be good since the last inspection.

24. Teachers' planning is good overall. However, despite the many strengths, which are noted below, there is one element, which is considerably underdeveloped. This concerns the lack of consistent planning for children under five years of age. Currently, the Reception classes are not planning their work with sufficient regard to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children aged five or the introduction of the Early Learning Goals for children in the foundation stage of learning. As a result, children under five in the Reception classes are not receiving a totally balanced curriculum. However, this is not the case for the children in the Nursery as their curriculum is planned effectively to show a clear recognition of the requirements for younger children. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in the lessons seen. The weaknesses are due to several factors. Firstly, the lack of sufficient play resources and secondly, the lack of opportunity for the younger children in the Reception classes to engage in outside play activities as part of their daily planned learning opportunities. Lastly, there is no co-ordinator for the Nursery and Reception classes to plan and monitor the overall provision for these younger children. Strengths of teaching are the good relationships and the good questioning of children to challenge and extend their understanding. Furthermore, the quality of English and mathematics teaching is good.

25. One of the strongest features of teaching is the very good planning system throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. All the teachers work very hard to develop consistent and clear learning objectives. This shows good progress since the last OFSTED inspection, which identified the need to make these more explicit to pupils as one of the key issues. Currently, the learning objectives for the lessons are made very clear to pupils and they usually contribute effectively to the good developments in pupils' learning. The only weaker feature of planning in Key Stage 2 concerns the pupils in Years 3 and 4 mixed classes. The very wide range of abilities and the organisation of the literacy curriculum make it difficult for teachers to plan work which is consistently well suited to the broad span of abilities in the group work part of the lessons. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. However, in one Year 5 mathematics lesson, the planning for these pupils was inappropriate as the composition of the group led to unsatisfactory behaviour and insufficient learning in the time provided. Overall, throughout the school, the learning support assistants provide good support, with some especially high standards from the nursery nurse in the Nursery. A significant strength of the work of all of the assistants is the very good use of the feedback sheets, which are used to guide teachers when they plan their future lessons. Overall, teachers' use of time, support staff and resources is very good. These have a significant effect in the teaching of information technology and have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and attainment.

26. The headteacher shows a strong awareness of the need for teachers to develop their expertise in subjects across the curriculum. As part of the school's development plan and appraisal, the headteacher has

managed the finances very well to allow teachers to develop their own skills, for example, by visiting other schools in pairs to observe lessons. As a result of this initiative, and the commitment by staff to their own wider professional development, teachers' knowledge and understanding of subjects are generally good, with particular strengths in English, mathematics, science, information technology, history, art and physical education. Overall, teachers' knowledge is very good at Key Stage 2 and a strength of teaching, especially for the pupils in Years 5 and 6. Across the school, some co-ordinators and shadow co-ordinators have especially strong subject knowledge. This is most evident in English, and information technology. However, co-ordinators' understanding of their subjects from Nursery through to Year 6 is not consistently well established.

27. Teachers know their pupils very well, and they have high expectations of them, especially from Year 2 upwards, where they are working very hard to raise the pupils' attainment. This is most effective where the pupils are grouped according to their ability in science and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Furthermore, the inclusion of time to develop extended writing, especially in Key Stage 1, is having a good impact on pupils' attainment, to bring it in line with national expectations. The quality of teachers' shared writing demonstrations at Key Stage 1 is of a high standard and is making a very positive contribution to pupils' improved attainment. In addition, the emphasis on the understanding and use of accurate technical vocabulary in mathematics, science and English is also helping to raise standards. In most subjects, teachers use very good questioning, which challenges and extends pupils' understanding. The decision by the headteacher and governors to give extra "booster help" to Year 6 is paying dividends. Even though the overall profile of these pupils is below the average, due to the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, standards in mathematics and science are well on the way to being in line with what would be expected for pupils of this age. In Year 1, expectations are appropriate, but are hampered occasionally in some subjects by the organisation of the groups, which does not allow the teacher to focus well on one specific subject, for example, in science work. This works best where subjects are taught alone and pupils are grouped together according to their understanding as in the Year 1, 2 mixed class. The teaching of basic skills and the management of pupils are good across the school.

28. The quality and use of ongoing assessment are good. This is best where the teachers track pupils' knowledge and understanding against small achievable steps, as in the assessment of reading. This is not so clearly defined in writing. Nevertheless, pupils' levels of attainment are carefully tracked, with good targets for improvements in writing, mathematics and science. This is carefully monitored by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Pupils keep their records of achievement in information technology and this is helpful. Teachers carefully assess children's attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes. However, this information is not used to its full potential in identifying those pupils who are likely to need additional help, or in identifying those who have the potential to achieve the higher standards of attainment.

29. Although the school has made recent developments in producing a clear homework programme, there is still some inconsistency between classes and from one year group to another. This is a minor overall weakness. Spelling homework is broadly appropriate, but mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is not consistently challenging, as work is not always set in the same way. Across the school, pupils have some opportunities to investigate subjects individually. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities to extend the higher attaining pupils through project work. The use of the reading diary is helpful and parents work appropriately in partnership with the school to support their children's learning.

30. Teaching and learning are good for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers use appropriate methods, which enable these pupils to learn effectively and the groupings by ability promote higher standards for all groups. The setting arrangements for mathematics are particularly effective. However, the composition of some groups withdrawn from the classroom leads to management difficulties and, in one lesson, unsatisfactory progress. Good use is made of computer technology to support pupils with special educational needs. This includes the use of laptops and appropriate software for learning and practising basic skills. Teachers take full account of the targets set out in individual education plans. These plans contain clear targets that are sufficiently practical for class teachers to implement when support staff are not present. Support assistants offer skilled support and keep accurate records of pupils' progress. In Year 3, there are well above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and the grouping arrangements in the

second part of the literacy hour do not work consistently well. Teachers have too many group activities that require considerable support from adults. In one lesson on “Planet of the Robots”, the teacher gave good attention to the shared writing group, while the other group worked on story illustrations. Lower attaining pupils were not clustered together for the teacher’s writing activity which impeded their progress.

31. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the core subjects is good at both key stages and very good in Years 5 and 6. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good in English. In mathematics, the teaching of numeracy is good and supports other subjects well at both key stages. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2, where older pupils are taught in ability groups and teachers use very good “quick fire” questions. The National Literacy Strategy is well established and it is taught confidently. The minor weaknesses are noted above. The school has worked well to improve the quality of teaching of writing and reading at Key Stage 1. The quality of the teaching and learning of science is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The difference is because work is better organised to give more challenge to older pupils in Key Stage 2 and, currently, the subject co-ordinator has not worked so closely with Key Stage 1 teachers and pupils to raise standards to the higher level. No lessons were seen in religious education for Key Stage 1 pupils, but at Key Stage 2, teaching and learning are good. Information technology is a considerable strength of the school. At Key Stage 1, teaching and learning are good and at Key Stage 2, they are very good. This is because teachers’ expertise is stronger overall. The use of the information technology suite is very good and contributes substantially to pupils’ achievements in most subjects across the curriculum

32. The quality of teaching and learning in the other subjects is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, teaching and learning are satisfactory in art, geography, music and physical education. No lessons were seen in design and technology. At Key Stage 2, teaching and learning are good in art, history, physical education and design and technology. Teaching in music is satisfactory with some very good teaching when music specialists take lessons. No geography lessons were seen. At both key stages, personal and social education is taught to a good standard.

33. The teaching of pupils with English an additional language is satisfactory and is effectively supported by the Local Education Authority. There are good links to ensure that teachers are involved in training and this helps them to appreciate the needs of these pupils well. These pupils make good progress and achieve standards at least in line with their peers and sometimes above. When they have individual or group support, work is planned to complement other class activities.

34. The teaching and learning for higher attaining, gifted and talented pupils are good in mathematics, information technology, physical education and music. However, there are missed opportunities for these pupils to complete research and investigative work as part of their homework. Also, library books are not taken home and which affects their overall development and enthusiasm for a subject.

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

35. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good overall, although there is a weakness for children under five. In general, the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, with a suitable range of relevant and worthwhile learning opportunities. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The school’s curriculum statement clearly sets out its aims and the way in which the curriculum is designed so that it provides each pupil with the full range of learning opportunities. Total weekly teaching time is in line with the national average in both key stages. There is an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. The school is implementing the national strategies for improving literacy and numeracy to a good standard overall. The school’s priority is to develop pupils’ literacy skills across all subjects.

36. National Curriculum requirements are met for all subjects and religious education complies with the locally Agreed Syllabus. Provision for information technology is a considerable strength of the curriculum.

However, curricular provision for children aged under five is a weakness and is noted below in more detail. There are opportunities for instrumental music tuition in Key Stage 2 and there is swimming for pupils in Year 5. The curriculum successfully meets the needs of all the pupils from age 5 to 11 years. In general, there is equality of access and opportunity to the full curriculum for all the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 although in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes, some work is too challenging due to the organisation of the school's literacy curriculum. Nevertheless, the curriculum is well organised for those who have special educational needs and, as a result, they make good progress. Arrangements for using the individual education plans of these pupils are effective in ensuring that their needs are met, whilst, at the same time, still enabling them to have access to the whole curriculum. Provision for those pupils with statements of special educational need is good. Support and provision for those pupils for whom English is an additional language are good and they are making good progress. There is good provision for talented pupils. This is particularly true in the case of mathematics in Key Stage 2, which is taught in ability groups and where these pupils are being stretched sufficiently to attain higher standards.

37. Overall, the breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum for children aged under five are unsatisfactory. Curricular provision in the Nursery is sound and planning takes full account of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. A strong emphasis is placed on providing a range of first-hand experiences across all the areas of learning. Nevertheless, there is insufficient consistency between the Nursery and Reception classes. There is no clearly defined progressive scheme of work in line with the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Moreover, learning resources in the Reception classes are too few to support the curriculum, especially for outside play provision. There is no co-ordinator for this early years stage and this is one of the reasons why the curriculum is not planned progressively. Reception classes are regarded as part of Key Stage 1, even though many of them are not totally ready for the full National Curriculum at the beginning of their time in Reception. As a result of this, and the lack of sufficient resources, children are not having a balanced curriculum in line with their specific needs. Additional reference to this can be found in the section on "Areas for Learning in the Foundation Stage".

38. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The curriculum is organised to a good standard and arrangements for using individual education plans are effective in ensuring that needs are met whilst still enabling pupils to have access to the whole curriculum. Provision in statements of special educational need is being met. The school provides well for pupils who are known to need particular attention. There are effective assessment procedures in place to identify pupils with special educational needs but these procedures are not fully understood by staff. This leads to a lack of consistency in the identification of these pupils and to some classes having high numbers of pupils on the special educational needs register at Stage 1. This information is not always consistent with other assessment data and can cause confusion between the below average pupils and those with special educational needs.

39. Extracurricular activities are satisfactory overall. However, there are missed opportunities to develop extracurricular activities for pupils in Key Stage 1, which was commented on in both the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting. Teachers and other adults enhance learning in Key Stage 2 by providing a wide range of such activities. Indeed, this is a strength of curricular provision at this key stage. Currently, there are clubs for netball, football, computers and recorders. There is a book club and a school choir. Sports matches are played against local schools, often with considerable success. Last year, the school football team won the local league and the six a side tournament and was runner up in a knock out competition. At the same time, the school netball team reached the final of a local tournament. Most parents appreciate the way in which their children's learning is enhanced by worthwhile visits to places such as farms, museums and theatres and by the use of visitors to the school, including police, other emergency services, musicians and theatre groups. The learning opportunities in science, geography, art and physical education, which are provided during residential visits for Years 6, 4 and 3 and during a 'sleep in' for the latter year group, are strengths of the school's overall curriculum. Overall, there is appropriate equality of opportunity for all pupils.

40. The school makes good overall provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. There is a teacher with responsibility for co-ordinating this aspect of learning. Within this, the provision for very good social education is a strength for Key Stage 2 in particular. Relevant issues are discussed in assemblies

and 'circle' times. More formal sex education is taught in Years 5 and 6. The local police are also involved in a programme of health education and drug awareness.

41. Overall, the school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The previous inspection found that this was satisfactory, although a key issue was to extend the provision of assemblies to ensure full compliance with statutory requirements. This has been done. Most parents are happy with the attitudes and values, which the school promotes, and with its general ethos. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The teachers strive to create in the pupils a sense of awe and wonder in the world around them. In a science lesson, pupils in the same year group showed real excitement during an investigation into the floating properties of plasticine. Some assemblies have a sense of spirituality and time for reflection, for example, when the pupils sang the hymn 'Thank you, Lord, for this new day'. However, other acts of collective worship miss opportunities to develop spiritual awareness. For example, in an assembly on the theme of celebrations, an opportunity to change pupils' feelings as they moved into a time of reflection, by making better use of the music, was missed.

42. There is good provision for the pupils' moral development. A good section on moral development is included in the school's curriculum statement. A 'good behaviour booklet' is in place and an annual 'good behaviour week' reinforces the school's aims for good discipline. Most parents appreciate the system of rewards, which encourages effort and good behaviour. Pupils' target sheets can include targets for personal, as well as academic, development. The school places great importance on developing the pupils' self esteem. They know the difference between right and wrong. This is reinforced by golden rules, devised by the pupils.

43. Provision for the pupils' social development at Key Stage 2 is very good and at Key Stage 1, it is good. Overall, it is a strength of the curriculum. It is fostered through the school's house system, participation in extracurricular activities and links with the local community. Pupils think of people less fortunate than themselves by generously supporting a very good range of charities. For example, the school has hosted Chernobyl Child Lifeline children in the past two years and the pupils have supported charity work in Albania. Key Stage 2 pupils have very good opportunities to develop social skills during residential visits and 'sleep-ins'. The work of the school council is a strength of social provision and gives pupils the chance to show initiative and responsibility. The production of the Tanners Wood Times is a very effective development of social skills. All pupils in both key stages are encouraged to help with tasks in classrooms and cloakrooms. Some have done social work outside the school. In many lessons, the teachers encourage the pupils to work collaboratively and to share resources well.

44. There is satisfactory provision for the pupils' cultural development. They are made aware of their own culture through visits and are given opportunities to visit the local public library and to participate in school productions and musical entertainment. The teachers also encourage a love of literature through the organisation of a book club and, occasionally, a book week. In history, the pupils learn of the contribution which the Vikings and the Tudors have made to British culture. They have participated in a History in Action visit to Ashfield. Religious education lessons affirm the Christian tradition of Britain. Nevertheless, the teachers make the pupils aware of the diversity of faiths and cultures, not only world wide, but also in modern British society. They learn about the major world religions and festivals to a satisfactory standard. There is a small selection of multicultural books in the school library. The travels of the Tanners Wood bears are an effective way of making the younger pupils aware of places around the world. There are missed opportunities to develop multicultural awareness in the children aged under five through the provision of play resources.

45. The pupils' learning is enhanced by satisfactory use of resources within the local community. There are some links with the local church and the teachers take advantage, whenever possible, of the knowledge and expertise of visitors. The pupils have some contact with the local bank. Through access to electronic mail and the Internet, they have the opportunity to make satisfactory links with the wider community.

46. Year 6 pupils transfer to at least nine secondary schools. Nevertheless, there are sound curricular links with the most local of these schools. Year 5 pupils spend a day there and take advantage of some of the facilities on offer. Some secondary school staff lead lessons for Year 6. Since the last inspection, links with secondary schools have improved to a good standard.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The supportive, caring ethos is a strength of the school. The head and staff recognise that children must feel confident and secure at school to be able to learn. All staff work hard to achieve this and they stress the value of children as individuals with rights and responsibilities. Pupils' personal development is well monitored, and class teachers have the main responsibility for this aspect. Teachers know their pupils and their families well and staff are caring and show concern for pupils as individuals. 'Circle' time is a useful opportunity for pupils to talk about their feelings and concerns in an objective setting.

48. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and academic progress are good. In English, particularly, both the assessment used to help pupils in day-to-day learning and the summary assessment to show where pupils stand in relation to what is expected of them are imaginatively designed and enable teachers keep good records. Assessment procedures in the Nursery and in science are used well to obtain a clear picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Classroom assistants use their feedback sheets in each lesson to report in detail the progress made by the children in their group and this is a strength of assessment. Where appropriate, teachers remind children of their personal targets and make positive comment on gains made by pupils to achieve these targets. The staff have gathered considerable data from their assessment and tracking procedures. This information is being used effectively to monitor pupils as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2 and as a tool for guiding teachers in their overall planning. Although pupils are assessed carefully when they start school, this information is underused as a tool for guiding teachers in pupils' potential strengths and weaknesses early on in their Reception year. There are effective assessment procedures in place to identify pupils with special educational needs. However, these procedures are not fully understood by all staff. This leads to a lack of consistency in the identification of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, some classes have high numbers of pupils on the special educational needs register at Stage 1. This information is not always consistent with other assessment information and can cause confusion in identifying the below average pupils and those with special educational needs.

49. Attendance is monitored satisfactorily. Where there are concerns about a pupil's attendance, appropriate referrals are made to the educational welfare officer. Procedures to promote good behaviour are effective. Staff apply these procedures consistently across the school. Class golden rules are discussed and decided by the children. Assembly is used regularly and well to reinforce appropriate standards of behaviour. The rewards and sanctions system is appropriate and is understood by almost all the children.

50. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to ensure the safety and well being of the pupils. Security which was a key issue at the last inspection has been improved. The site is inspected regularly by the members of the governors' site committee who alert the headteacher and full governing body to matters requiring attention. Staff pay proper attention to health and safety in lessons. The school's child protection procedures are appropriate; they follow local authority guidelines and show effective support for all pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school's links with parents are good. Parents have positive views about most aspects of school life and 96 per cent agree that their children like coming to school. Teaching is considered to be good by 95 per cent of parents. Sixteen per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire do not feel that the school works closely with parents. However, the findings of this inspection show that the school works well with parents. The headteacher operates an open door policy and is readily available to see parents if they wish. Teachers are prepared to see parents after school if they have any concerns. There is considerable informal contact between parents and teachers when parents come in to the playground to meet their children. Ninety two per cent of parents feel comfortable at approaching the school with any concerns or problems

52. The links between parents and staff of the Nursery children are good. They have plenty of opportunity to speak informally with staff at the beginning of the day. Induction procedures for children aged under five are good. Parents are well informed through pre-school visits, school brochures and the provision of 'activity bags' that enable them to share in their child's learning at home. Regular meetings are held to inform parents of their child's progress.

53. Parents' involvement with the work of the school is satisfactory overall and has a positive impact. A small number of parents help in class, although the involvement of parents from minority ethnic groups or from families where English is spoken as an additional language is insufficiently developed. However, the school has effective links and support for these parents so that communication is effective. Staff appreciate the help given by parents, especially the work of the parents' association, as they support the developments of the school well. Most significantly, their fundraising events have made a very positive contribution to the very good developments in information technology and the expansion of resources for the literacy hour. After discussion with all parties, the school has prepared a home/school agreement setting out the responsibilities of parents and staff. However, this has been signed by fewer than 50 per cent of parents. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are effectively involved in identifying their children's needs and targets. They support the school well and are regularly involved in reviewing the progress that their child has made.

54. The quality of the information that the parents receive is now good. This year, the school has introduced appropriate termly letters about the subjects and topics to be studied in the forthcoming term. Pupils' annual reports are detailed and generally give a clear picture of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes, there is too much description in some subjects when teachers just say what has been studied rather than identifying clearly what pupils need to work on to make progress. The Nursery brochure and advisory leaflets on reading are helpful. The school prospectus is a useful introduction to the school. There were minor omissions in the governors' Annual Report, and these have been raised with the headteacher. The headteacher and governors consult parents about aspects of the curriculum and major spending decisions are identified for discussion as part of the annual governors' meeting for parents.

55. Staff encourage parents to be involved in their child's education. Parents of Nursery children come into school before class begins. This helps to settle the children and encourages them to play and to work with the others. The majority of parents at the pre-inspection meeting supported the school's homework policy although there was some disquiet over apparent inconsistencies in the amount and frequency of homework given. All parents have received a copy of the homework policy. Parents are invited to become involved in project work with their children and many do so. Sixteen per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire do not feel that the amount of homework is satisfactory. This inspection finds homework to be broadly helpful in raising standards in English and mathematics, but there is some inconsistency between classes in the amount and frequency of homework. The findings of this inspection broadly match those of the 1996 report although there have been some further improvements in the range of information available to parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The school is led and managed for the benefit of all pupils. The headteacher is very committed to the overall development of his pupils and his staff. He shows strong leadership as noted in the last OFSTED inspection report and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school as a whole. Moreover, he is very evaluative and is constantly looking for ways to secure improvement in the school's national test results. The quality of teaching is good, due to thoughtful strategic planning, particularly this year. Teamwork is well established and staff share a common purpose. Staff inspire, motivate and support each other. The headteacher has a rigorous appraisal system, which is helping to develop the quality of teaching well. Moreover, he is proactive in seeking the advice of advisory consultants and the Local Education Authority. Long-term planning is good and is documented effectively. In the school as a whole the paper work is insufficiently streamlined. The school development plan accurately addresses the main needs, with the exception of a co-ordinator for children under five.

57. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the senior management team carry out good strategic planning and monitoring to raise attainment and meet their targets in English at Key Stage 1 and for pupils in the current Year 6. The subject co-ordinators are working hard to improve their subjects effectively. The improvements in information technology and art are especially successful since the last inspection. Subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning appropriately and there has been some evaluation of work in English and mathematics across the school. Co-ordinators are keeping folders of pupils' work. However, these are not

always helpful in showing the progression of subjects across the school. Overall, co-ordinators do not have a consistently good grasp of the development of their subjects from the Nursery through to Year 6 and this is especially evident in science. Monitoring by co-ordinators is satisfactory and good by co-ordinators who are particularly involved in the priorities as identified in the school's development plan. The newly appointed deputy headteacher has many strengths and shows very good standards of teaching, thus acting as a good role model for other teachers.

58. The lack of an overall co-ordinator for children under five is a weaker element in the otherwise good management structure. This is the main reason why there is some inconsistency between the curriculum in the Nursery and the Reception classes. The current Key Stage 1 co-ordinator is the Reception teacher and English co-ordinator and is on the senior management team. However, the management of children under five is less well represented on the senior management team. Finances are not directed to children under five as a group for additional resources and equipment. Currently, a number of the resources and equipment look shabby or are insufficient in quantity and range. The accommodation for Nursery pupils is appropriate, but for Reception, there are weaknesses. This is because one class is isolated in a temporary classroom where there is no access to outside play as part of the daily curriculum and space is very limited to meet the full curricular requirements of these younger pupils. On one occasion, the teacher did not have any additional support which is needed for the safety of these children. This was rectified immediately by short-term cover by the headteacher. Otherwise, resources and the accommodation are appropriate in the school.

59. The experienced special educational needs co-ordinator was away at the time of the inspection. She has only a half day per week to fulfil the role. This is a low amount of time for a school of this size with its above average number of pupils with special educational needs. However, she has given very freely of her own time. Although the post is highly valued by the school, the special educational needs co-ordinator is not a member of the senior management team. There are ten support staff for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. They are generally well experienced and some have taken additional qualifications. Monitoring of these staff is not formally established. Accommodation is satisfactory. However, at present, it does not have access for the disabled and there are no disabled toilet facilities. Resources for special educational needs, in terms of books, materials and software, are good and the finances are managed well.

60. The governors are giving good support to the school. They have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and, with the staff, show a strong commitment to improvement. They fulfil their statutory requirements well, although there are a few minor omissions in their Annual Report to parents. There is a very good understanding of financial planning from the Chair of Finance and overall, financial resources are well managed, including those for special educational needs. However, these are not yet on a computer system as the headteacher has a manual system that is very efficient. He has a very good grasp of the school's financial position and makes very good use of comparative information to identify where spending is high or low. The office is organised efficiently and the administrative staff are giving good support to pupils, staff and the headteacher. New technology is used to a very good standard overall, with the exception noted above.

61. The school was last inspected in March 1996. Since then, the staff and governors have worked hard to make good progress on all of the key issues. There has been good evaluation of pupils' test results to identify weaker areas for development. Strategic placing of staff and successful development planning are having positive results in English, mathematics and science. There has been good progress in aspects of reading and writing, especially recently at Key Stage 1. Mathematics has benefited from good development since the last inspection and information technology has improved further to become a real strength of the school. There has been considerable and successful work on improving pupils' understanding of the learning objectives in every lesson. Assessment has become more consistent across the school. Assemblies have improved satisfactorily and now comply with statutory requirements. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities to develop a spiritual atmosphere by the use of music and lighting. There has been good progress in the improvements in school's security. In the last inspection, teaching was judged to be good or satisfactory. There is evidence of a considerable amount of very good teaching in this inspection and this shows good further improvement. The minor points in the last report have been acted on well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(1) Develop the provision for children under five by:

- establishing greater continuity between the Nursery and the Reception classes by appointing a co-ordinator for this group of children;
- including this co-ordinator on the senior management team;
- producing a carefully structured and balanced curriculum for Reception and Nursery children which is based on the Department for Education and Employment's guidelines;
- improving the resources for play provision, especially in the Reception classes;
- planning a better environment for the Reception pupils who are currently in the temporary classroom;
- ensuring that finances are allocated to meet the needs of these younger children as a group;
- effecting a way to ensure that all children have access to outside play activities as part of their daily curricular opportunities;
- making better use of initial assessment data to guide teachers in their planning.

Paragraphs: 14, 20, 24, 28, 37, 58, 62 – 71.

(2) Improving further aspects of pupils' attainment in English by:

- giving pupils more frequent opportunities to practise their handwriting and develop a more flowing style;
- considering carefully how to organise the grouping of the pupils in the present Year 3 and 4 mixed classes, so that the wide range of abilities can be taught to greater effect in literacy lessons;
- ensuring that the literacy programme meets the needs of each year group.

Paragraphs: 6,12, 25, 30, 81, 84.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Making the system of identification of pupils with special educational needs clear and consistent to all teachers.

Paragraph: 38

- Ensuring greater consistency in the organisation of the teaching of science at Key Stage 1 by not teaching too many other subjects at the same time.

Paragraphs: 27, 98.

- Making homework more consistent within year groups, with opportunities for higher attaining pupils to engage in personal study projects.

Paragraphs: 29, 34.

- Helping subject co-ordinators to gain an overview of the development of their subject from the Nursery to Year 6.

Paragraphs: 26, 57.

- Ensuring that the minor omissions of the Annual Report for parents are included in the Year 2000 copy.

Paragraphs: 54, 60.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	104
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1%	19%	43%	34%	3%	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	21	322
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	99

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	13	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	11	14
	Girls	11	9	11
	Total	24	20	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (83)	65 (79)	81 (83)
	National	82 [80]	83 [81]	87 [84]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	13
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	24	25	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (81)	81 (85)	77 (86)
	National	82 [81]	86 [85]	87 [86]

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	25	21	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	19
	Girls	20	18	19
	Total	34	35	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (87)	76 (71)	83 (91)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	18	17	16
	Total	36	36	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (71)	78 (71)	76 (71)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	
Indian	7
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	3
White	305
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	3	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	104

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	577,758
Total expenditure	568,922
Expenditure per pupil	1,767
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,047
Balance carried forward to next year	27,883

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	343
Number of questionnaires returned	124
	36%

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	51	7	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	54	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	48	14	2	0
The teaching is good.	52	43	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	48	15	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	33	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	43	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	32	47	14	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	47	40	7	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	47	2	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	35	25	6	13

Other issues raised by parents

Parents noted some inconsistencies in homework between classes.

Parents noted a lack of provision for extracurricular activities at Key Stage 1.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN AGED UNDER FIVE

62. Attainment on entry to both the Nursery and Reception classes is broadly average. The children start school part-time in the Nursery when they are three and move to full-time schooling, at the beginning of the autumn and spring term following their fourth birthday. The 41 children in the Nursery attend a combination of morning and afternoon sessions. At the time of the inspection, most of the children in the two Reception classes were under five. The majority of children are on course to achieve most of the standards in the recommended areas of learning by the time they are five. In their physical development, they have the potential to exceed the expected standard. However, in Reception, provision for all the designated areas of learning and development for children under five is incomplete. In particular, there is insufficient independent choice in play to develop fully the children's creativity across the areas of learning. In the school's previous inspection report, the children were said to have average social and learning skills by the time they were five. Very little reference was made to the provision for children under five in the 1996 OFSTED inspection report and hence it is difficult to make a judgement about changes since then.

63. Overall, the quality of provision is satisfactory. Two part-time nursery teachers and a full-time nursery nurse staff the nursery and together make a good team. However, during the time of the inspection, the teacher responsible for the Nursery was seriously ill. A part-time teacher from the main school took on the teaching post to provide cover for her. The caring nature of the provision ensures that children settle happily into the Nursery and enables them to learn and explore confidently. Although levels of assistance in the two Reception classes is generally satisfactory, with classroom assistants helping for part of each day, for the youngest five-year-old children in an outside classroom, it is insufficient. Parents are well informed through pre-school visits, school brochures and the provision of 'activity bags' that enable parents to share in their child's learning at home. The provision for children with English as an additional language is good.

64. The management of the provision for children who are under five is unsatisfactory because it does not recognise Reception and the Nursery as one key stage. Consequently, the Nursery and Reception years operate as two separate entities, rather than forming a coherent department. There is no clear educational direction for the age group as a whole. However, both the Nursery co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for Key Stage 1 offer good leadership for their own area. Whilst the overall curriculum is suitably broad and balanced in the Nursery and is already documented in terms of the 'Early Learning Goals', this is not continued in the Reception classes, where all planning is based on the National Curriculum requirements for Key Stage 1. A clearly defined progressive scheme of work for all the children under five in the school is not in place. Therefore, children's progress cannot be assessed in comparison with the suggested goals for achievement, before their National Curriculum studies at statutory school age. Classroom organisation, timetabling and methods for teaching four-year-olds in Reception are very different from the Nursery. In the Reception classes, there are insufficient planned, structured and purposeful play opportunities and resources for children to experiment freely but constructively. In the Nursery, this is a strength.

65. The quality of teaching and learning for children aged under five is satisfactory overall, with some that is good. Reception teachers plan well together and fully brief their assistants about their roles in lessons. They, in turn, provide informative written feedback to the teachers. In the Nursery, the structure is such that all adults contribute to the planning, teaching and day-to-day assessment of the children. Consequently, each one has an over view of the children's learning, which enables them as a team, to plan further activities to meet the children's needs. Assessment in Reception is generally sound. Both the Nursery and Reception make use of the Local Education Authority's procedures for assessing children as they start school. However, these assessments are not used consistently well to guide teachers in their planning by identifying children's strengths and weaknesses at the start in the Reception classes. The accommodation in the Nursery is satisfactory overall, with a very good outdoor play area for extended free play. However, this provision does not extend to the Reception children. The outside classroom in use this term for the new entrants into the school is unsuitable, inadequately resourced and not conducive to learning.

Personal and social development.

66. Overall, the personal and social development of children under five is satisfactory and most are on course to meet the nationally expected outcome by the time they are five. The children settle quickly into the routines of the Nursery where opportunities to promote their personal and social development are accorded a high priority. The quality of teaching is good which has a positive impact on children's learning. Children quickly become independent and, within a few weeks, put on their own coats for outside play and use the 'tags' to show that they are outside. They start to make sensible independent choices of which activity to engage in, when not being specifically directed. They take turns and, in general, learn to adhere to the class rules, although some need reminding. Children develop happy and constructive relationships with each other and with adults and most have a positive attitude to school. Reception children build soundly on their previous development and, by five, they join in whole school assemblies, playtimes and physical education lessons with confidence. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory in Reception. However, although teaching of relationships and interactions is of a good quality, opportunities in Reception for children to initiate play are too limited in terms of both scope and frequency. This reduces the children's abilities to make choices, play co-operatively and develop their independence.

Language and literacy.

67. Children make good progress in language and literacy and, by the time they are five, reach levels appropriate for their age, which is confirmed by the assessment of children as they start school. The quality of teaching and learning in formal aspects of literacy is good. Reception teachers have devised an appropriate range of activities for the daily literacy lesson to increase children's interest, knowledge and understanding. Children respond well to stories and enjoy books and handle them well. They know that words and pictures carry meaning and many are beginning to associate sounds with written letters. The teaching of reading is well structured, from sharing and looking at books in the Nursery to the more formal learning of words and regular phonic practice in Reception. By five, many children are beginning to read familiar words in simple text. However, they have little opportunity to take part in imaginative role-play. In the Nursery, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are provided with many well planned stimulating opportunities for purposeful role-play in order to develop a wider vocabulary and self-expression. All staff, both in the Nursery and Reception, offer frequent opportunities for children to talk with an adult while they undertake their activities and purposely seek to extend their vocabulary. By the age of five, the children's speech is good and many use a wide range of vocabulary when responding to questions and in conversation with adults. However, many of the younger children in school find listening in large groups difficult and need constant reminders to listen attentively. Progress in writing is generally satisfactory. In the Nursery, the writing area is open to any child to choose during the session and those who do so gain valuable skills in the early stages of writing. By the age of five, most children can write their names and are aware of the purpose of writing. However, overall, there is a narrow range of writing activities and too few opportunities to develop their potential as writers.

Mathematics.

68. Attainment is broadly in line with that expected for children by the age of five and this is reflected in the baseline assessment. Children in the Nursery are provided with suitable practical activities for the development of their mathematical skills. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Mathematical language is widely used by staff while the children are engaged in play activities and during the group and snack times. Children are familiar with numbers to ten through number rhymes and some recognise the shape of written numbers to five. In Reception, the quality of teaching and learning is good as teachers use a combination of practical activities and direct teaching effectively, to ensure children's progress. By the time they are five, most children show an understanding of mathematical language such as 'more or less than' to describe how many children have packed lunches and how many have school dinners. They are competent in counting beyond ten and many are able record numbers to ten. However, many still reverse the numerals. The higher attainers show an understanding of number operations and are able to add numbers within ten. They are introduced to appropriate mathematical language and most can identify the shortest and longest string of beads, use three colours to make a repeating pattern and make pictures with shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

69. In this area of learning, children's attainment overall is broadly average at five years of age. Science has a high profile both in the Nursery and Reception and many children make good progress in early scientific ideas. Reception children use their senses to explore the features of exotic fruit and describe the look, smell and taste of the fruit in terms, such as 'it looks like an egg' when describing an avocado, and when tasting pineapple, say it is juicy. They make observational drawings of bulbs growing and label the roots and shoots. Nursery children use vocabulary such as 'cold', 'chilly' and 'smooth' to describe the 'ice balloons' they prepare at home and bring in to explore. They talk about the weather and notice the changes. Many opportunities are provided for the children to visit places of interest in their own locality, such as the Post Office and the baby clinic. It is enhanced by the children's involvement in the village carnival. Nursery children experiment with a wide range of construction equipment, craft and woodwork materials. They enjoy using the computer and show developing control of the mouse when using programs. The quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery is good. In Reception, it is generally satisfactory as teaching focuses on concepts within the content of Key Stage 1 and, consequently, the children are not always offered an appropriate range of practical experiences of the world around them.

Physical development.

70. Overall, the children achieve well in their physical development. In the Nursery, there is good provision for them to develop their physical skills. They have regular access to the outside play area where they use the range of equipment and wheeled toys with increasing control and skill. Reception children make good progress within physical education lessons and perform many actions using hands and feet to travel, both on the floor and apparatus. In these lessons, the quality of teaching and learning is good as both teachers and children work well together to promote effective learning. However, whilst the four-year-old Reception children have access to the playground at break times and take their turn with other classes on the climbing apparatus, they do not have comparable outside facilities or resources with four-year-olds in the Nursery. This gives them limited opportunities and freedom to experiment with their bodies, develop all round fitness and play co-operatively. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery is good. Within the Nursery, children show a growing control and ability to handle smaller items through their play with modelling materials, pencils, brushes and woodwork tools. Manual dexterity is well promoted and in Reception, children use pencils for drawing and writing with increasing hand control, build differently sized towers with blocks, thread beads with skill and manipulate the computer mouse with confidence.

Creative development.

71. Children make satisfactory, but narrow, progress in this area of learning and by the age of five, they generally attain standards that are appropriate for their age. In Reception, there is little evidence of an element of sustained, independent choice or self-expression because lessons are timetabled as for Key Stage 1. Consequently, there is insufficient emphasis on giving time for children to develop their imagination through art and play activities. Resources, such as dressing-up clothes and small world play equipment, for these children are very limited and do not encourage inspirational play. Those that are available are old and look worn. The quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery is good. Purposeful play is a strong feature in the Nursery and the many imaginative activities stimulate the children's learning. For example, during their play as fire fighters and veterinary assistants giving 'medicine' to sick animals, nursery staff constantly talk with and question the children in order to widen their vocabulary. As well as the weekly dance and movement sessions, children in the Nursery have free access to percussion instruments, which they use with enthusiasm. The opportunity to participate in 'music games' enhances these experiences and they begin to appreciate the different sounds that the instruments make. Children experiment with modelling materials, learn to use scissors and glue and show a steadily developing ability to express their own ideas through drawing and painting. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in Reception is satisfactory, although somewhat limited by the lack of appropriate resources and the restriction of the timetable.

ENGLISH

72. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for 1999 shows that standards in English at Level 4 and above, were in line with the national average, and they were close to the national average at Level 5 and above. When the average of the school's test data is compared with all schools and also with similar schools, it shows that standards are average in English. When the end of Key Stage 2 results at Level 4 and above for 1999 are compared with those reached in 1996, they are the same. However, although the same standards were reached in 1997, in 1998, results were above average. Varying numbers of different ability groups within year groups means that such variations need to be interpreted with caution. Realistic targets for improvement have been set, and in 1997 and 1998, the end of Key Stage 2 results exceeded the targets set. Since the current Year 6 has an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs within it, the targets for the year 2000 have been slightly reduced. The school has analysed the results by gender, and whilst boys' results are slightly lower than those of girls at both key stages, this is not likely to be significant at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, although it is likely to be significant, boys are achieving generally average levels against expectations for age and those of girls are higher.

73. The findings of this inspection are that standards at the end of Key Stage 2, including those for literacy, are below the level of national expectations for age. This is not in line with the results for the last end of key stage assessment in 1999, nor in line with the findings of the last inspection, where standards in both cases were average. This is due to a Year 6 group with an unusually large proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

74. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their English and soon achieve good skills in speaking English, particularly in social situations. Those in Years 2 and 6 at the time of the last national end of key stage assessments all achieved the expected level and several pupils achieved higher standards at both key stages. The findings of this inspection show that these pupils are well supported in their development of English and this has a positive impact on their attainment in all subjects. Their attainment matches that expected for their age. The good links between the school and the Local Education Authority's support services support teaching and pupils' learning effectively.

75. Standards in speaking and listening are average and in line with that which would be expected for the ages of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of the key stage, pupils speak confidently and clearly in conversations. They express themselves satisfactorily to an audience, are able to present their own opinions, and listen with good attention. There are opportunities for speaking and listening in drama activities, in role-play opportunities within literacy lessons, and in the presentation of findings or notes. Paired discussions are well promoted, and the plenary sessions in the literacy hours are well used for reporting back to the class from group work.

76. By the end of Key Stage 2, although standards across the year group are below the average range for age, pupils are individually reaching good standards for their capabilities and their previous learning in all ability groups. Most pupils read accurately and fluently and tackle a range of texts with understanding. Many can give a brief resume of, and a simple prediction about, events in their books, while most can indicate reading preferences by a title or author, or several. More advanced reading skills are included in the programme for older pupils and these are practised during the literacy hours, thus developing well the progress that pupils make in their reading. Higher attaining pupils reach good standards against national expectations, and are able to discuss their comprehension of texts with allusions to style and genre. Pupils' reading choices include a wide range of texts of different types and styles, and plenty of non-fiction is tackled as well as fiction. This shows a good improvement since the last inspection.

77. In writing, by the end of Key Stage 2, although standards across the year group are below the average range for age, pupils individually reach good standards for their capabilities and previous learning in all ability groups. Higher attaining pupils reach good standards against national levels. All pupils adapt their writing for the intended purpose, but higher attaining pupils sharpen these skills and apply them to good effect. All pupils use vocabulary well for their capabilities, and higher attaining pupils do so with precision. By the end of the key stage, the work of most pupils shows the appropriate layout and punctuation for direct

speech, and correct paragraphing. Spelling, although below average across the range, is satisfactory in view of the capabilities of pupils in this group. Handwriting and presentational skills are generally neat, and older pupils are used to planning and drafting their work.

78. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 1 tests for 1999 shows that standards in reading at Level 2 and above and for Level 3 were below the national average, and in writing, they were well below. When the average of the school's data are compared with all schools, in reading, results are below average, and in writing, they are well below. In comparison with similar schools, the same picture emerges. This is a decline from the standards found in 1998, when standards met national expectations for age in both reading and writing, and from the results in 1996 and 1997, when the school's performance at Key Stage 1 was above the average. The change in attainment is due to differences in the ability of the year groups, the year group taking the tests in 1999 being one with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In the previous inspection, standards were found to be satisfactory and reflected national expectations for age. Findings in the present inspection are that standards are average.

79. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to narrate, describe and converse at levels appropriate for their age. They generally speak confidently and usually listen attentively. They enjoy developing their skills in speaking and listening games, and in reporting their work to the class.

80. Average standards are attained in reading by the end of Key Stage 1. Most pupils read accurately and use reading to enjoy some simple stories or to understand simple information. All of them like reading, and they take their reading books home regularly to practise their skills.

81. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in writing are broadly average. Most pupils are able to write simple sentences and put them together to form a simple story, description, letter or report. The length of pieces of writing is satisfactory for their age. Many have made a good start with punctuation, and use sentence markers well. They are able to spell simple three and four letter words for themselves, as well as some other familiar words. Handwriting is not always fluent or even, and practice is not frequent enough particularly in Year 1. Teachers have worked hard to develop pupils' writing skills, especially in the last year.

82. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with three-quarters being good or better, and a fifth reaching very good standards of teaching. The amount of very good teaching in Year 5 and Year 6 is a considerable strength and is having a positive effect on pupils' attainment and good learning. Very good teaching was observed at both key stages, particularly in the first parts of the literacy hour. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge, generally plan their lessons well, and provide clear learning objectives, which are often shared with pupils so they clearly understand what they have to do, which is an improvement since the last inspection. They use questioning techniques well to monitor learning and develop thinking. Teachers generally make good use of ongoing assessment in lessons, and note responses and outcomes for future-term planning. Assessment overall in the subject is satisfactory. In reading, it is good: formal tests are regularly used, and there is a good record of individual skills. Assessment in writing is satisfactory, with good procedures for matching work against the national levels, but it lacks an overview of the development of skills provided by the reading assessments. Speaking and listening are well assessed. Teachers pay good attention to consistency across year groups, but their perspective of the sequence of development from Year R to Year 6 is not well developed. Communication between class teachers and classroom assistants is good. The experience and expertise of the classroom assistants and the way they are deployed by teachers contribute considerably to the achievements made by pupils. Pupils show positive attitudes and behaviour in lessons throughout both key stages. Careful listening skills are developed, and pupils are encouraged to express their own opinions and views; their questions are welcomed. Pupils learn to listen with increasing attention as they get older, and to listen to and respect the views of others, as well as to express themselves at greater length with confidence and a growing sense of audience. There is good integration of speaking and listening within the literacy hour format, and, in addition, separate focuses on speaking and listening in role-play and drama. Behaviour is good in lessons overall.

83. In the previous inspection report, standards in English were reported to be satisfactory. Pupils' responses to the subject were positive. Teaching was reported as sound or better in most lessons. Although there were no key issues in the subject, some indications for improvement were given. It was stated that more needed to be done in teaching reading to enable pupils to use a range of strategies with confidence, and correct letter formation needed to be carefully monitored, particularly at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, some pupils needed to be encouraged to widen their reading choices to include non-fiction. Additionally, a general issue applied, dealing with the provision of learning objectives with greater clarity in lesson plans. Overall, progress since the last inspection is satisfactory and, within this, there are several good features which are reflected in the very good understanding of the priorities for the development of this subject.

84. The documentation of the subject is satisfactory, with appropriate aims and objectives outlined in the policies. Schemes of work give a good lead to teachers. These are backed up by the framework for the National Literacy Strategy, which the school has established satisfactorily. Yearly plans, and termly plans are careful and thorough, and well applied in all year groups except for the mixed age groups, notably for current Year 3 pupils.

85. Both the lead and shadow co-ordinator have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Although monitoring of lessons in all classes took place in the last academic year, co-ordinators are currently not systematically monitoring lessons or work in all subjects. This is largely due to the implementation of the numeracy hour and a change of emphasis in monitoring mathematics systematically to a good standard. Although teachers' plans are available for English, the co-ordinators do not currently sample these plans. The headteacher monitors planning. Co-ordinators provide a number of worthwhile experiences for pupils, linked to the subject, such as book weeks, theatre visits, theatre performances in school, visits to the local library, and story telling and book promotion by librarians in school. Resources in the subject are generally satisfactory, with a range of good up-to-date material for use in literacy hours. The stock of the non-fiction library is adequate, and of satisfactory quality, although some categories are only represented in a limited way. The stock in class or year group fiction libraries is adequate; that in the Year 6 library is good, and the range encompasses both traditional and modern children's classics. The libraries are under-used, since pupils cannot borrow books to take home.

86. Literacy is appropriately developed throughout the curriculum, for example, the writing of older pupils about the feelings of children undergoing evacuation in World War II, clear descriptions of animals in science, and captions for data handling. There is good use of subject specific vocabulary across a range of subjects, notably in science and technology. Literacy is taught daily in all classes, and the school's provision for literacy is good. Time is used well. The teaching of the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in English well and curricular provision is broad and balanced. Pupils use word processing skills satisfactorily and a good feature is the quick and accurate keyboard skills, which pupils show as they move through the school.

MATHEMATICS

87. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests was well above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools. Standards have been well above the national average over the past three years. Current inspection findings indicate that attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is as would be expected for pupils of this age. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. It does not reflect the latest national test results, as the current Year 6 has a much higher proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register. Nevertheless, higher attaining pupils are achieving well. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language achieve standards in line with their abilities and make good progress.

88. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils understand the equivalence of fractions and they are able to convert fractions to decimal fractions. They order decimals on a number line. These pupils solve problems involving long multiplication and long division and use the probability scale of 0-1 accurately. They understand the concept of mean, mode and median and they construct a variety of accurate bar graphs and line graphs about favourite sports, bicycles and parts of the school's adventure trail. These pupils use information

technology well to display some of this work. Many Year 6 pupils, however, find much greater difficulty in understanding concepts of number, measures and data handling.

89. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests was below the national average and below average compared with similar schools. Standards over the past three years, however, have been close to the national average. Current inspection findings indicate that attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection and is an improvement on the latest national test results. Much of this is due to good teaching. The pupils are able to use a variety of mental strategies for adding and subtracting numbers to 20. They understand the concept of doubles and near doubles. They use standard and non-standard units to measure hand spans, feet and classroom objects. Pupils identify common two and three-dimensional shapes accurately and tell the time, using o'clock and half past.

90. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is very good. This, together with the organisation of mathematics teaching in three ability sets, is having a positive effect on pupils' learning of mathematical concepts and skills. The teachers plan their lessons well and make the pupils well aware of what they are expected to learn by the end of the lessons. Initial mental mathematics sessions move along very briskly, with the teachers asking quick-fire questions pitched at appropriate levels to match the differing needs of the pupils, even within ability sets. In one lesson, the teacher used a story challenge very effectively and this had a very positive impact on the pupils' learning of doubling and halving. In another lesson, the teacher reinforced the rule for adding two digit numbers mentally and this led to very good progress. The teachers encourage the pupils to have confidence and to explain their calculations; "It's through making mistakes that we learn," said one teacher. Another strength of teaching in this key stage is the way in which the pupils are encouraged to use their numeracy skills in other subjects. In a mixed Year 3 and 4 science lesson, pupils were observed measuring carefully with metre rulers, Newton meters and stop watches. In a Year 3/4 lesson, the teacher linked learning about co-ordinates well with geography mapwork and, in an information technology lesson in the same year, the pupils were able to enlarge scales. Year 5 and 6 pupils construct accurate line graphs of their performances in physical education. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress.

91. Teaching and learning are good at Key Stage 1. Good quality teaching is having a good impact well on pupils' progress in Key Stage 1. The teachers have high expectations. They encourage the pupils to use correct mathematical terms and to explain how they work out their answers. The differing needs of the pupils are met, both through oral questioning and through worksheets pitched at different levels. Questions such as "Why do we use our knowledge of doubles to help in adding?" make the pupils think and develop their understanding of mathematical concepts. The teachers use classroom assistants well to support below average pupils and those with special educational needs and, as a result, these pupils are making good progress. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to predict the weights of classroom objects before using balance scales and this had a good impact on learning. The teachers use plenary sessions well to recap and reinforce learning. "Did we meet our objectives?" asked a Year 2 teacher.

92. The pupils' attitudes to work in mathematics lessons are good and often very good. Most pupils behave well, listen attentively, settle down to work quickly and concentrate appropriately. They work well individually or with a partner, although some younger pupils squabble now and then over equipment. There is a tendency for some of these younger pupils to shout out, rather than take turns with their hands up. Most of the pupils are eager to answer and they contribute well in oral sessions. Some were observed giving out pencils and other equipment without being told. They are eager to gain stickers for good work. There is a marked difference in presentation of work in books. Whilst much of the work in Key Stage 2 is very neatly and methodically presented, that in Key Stage 1 is often untidy.

93. The two co-ordinators, one for each key stage, have assumed responsibility for the subject only since the beginning of this school year. Nevertheless, they have made a sound start in offering effective leadership. They have led some training for colleagues and have developed a very useful booklet on the daily mathematics lesson for all staff. They have not yet monitored teaching of the subject, but all the teachers have observed good practice in other schools. The Key Stage 2 coordinator is aware of the need to monitor carefully provision for a small group of older pupils who present challenging behaviour. There are sound procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment. Each classroom has an adequate supply of resources to

support learning. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social development, through encouraging collaborative work, particularly in practical, problem solving situations. Information technology work supports the curriculum well. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

SCIENCE

94. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for 1999 shows that the percentage of pupils attaining the national expectation was in line with the national average and the number exceeding it was close to it. When compared with similar schools, the data show standards to be average. The findings of the inspection and analysis of school assessment data indicate that the trend of average standards over the past three years and since the last inspection is being maintained to a satisfactory standard. Work remains stronger at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1.

95. By the age of eleven, pupils recognise the need for fair tests and make predictions about the outcomes of their investigations. They demonstrate appropriate understanding of life processes in their study of plants and animals. They identify and group living things and show sound knowledge of food chains. Pupils show understanding of materials and their properties, and their classification into solids, liquids and gases. They use information technology to record their findings in investigations on thermal properties. They explain shadows and other phenomena by the fact that light travels and understand the transmission of sound through various materials.

96. Analysis of the 1999 national end of Key Stage 1 assessments by teachers shows that attainment was well below the national average, and that of pupils in similar schools, at Level 2 and at Level 3. This was a cohort of pupils with a well above average number of pupils with special educational needs and teachers with limited previous experience of relevant assessment. Inspection evidence and the school's assessment data show that present standards are broadly in line with the national expectation.

97. By the age of seven, most pupils describe and record their observations, using simple tables, when appropriate and are beginning to understand the need for a fair test, when investigating materials to make a raincoat for teddy. They recognise that different living things are found in various habitats and use simple classifications to sort living things into groups. They know how plants and animals differ. They identify properties of materials and describe how some materials are changed by heating and cooling. Pupils know about the forces of pushing and pulling, and compare the manner in which bulbs work in simple electrical circuits.

98. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning, including that for pupils with special educational needs, for pupils with English as an additional language and the gifted pupils, are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 2, teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent. It is good or better in two-thirds of lessons and very good or excellent in a sixth of them. In one lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory resulting from problems in keeping pupils on task and a slow pace, which hindered their progress. In the very good lessons, in Year 6, there are challenging and high expectations in terms of both response and behaviour. In the one excellent lesson, the teacher demonstrated very skilled questioning, which extended pupils' knowledge and understanding about thermal insulators as they explained their predictions and hypotheses. At Key Stage 1, some lessons are integrated within a range of different group activities. This works effectively when teachers can focus directly on the theme. However, constant interruptions by pupils, as they need help with other subjects significantly detracts from the quality of the science teaching and this has an impact on pupils' pace of learning. Overall, teachers show good scientific knowledge and understanding. They plan their work well and make good use of time and resources. As a result, pupils show good attitudes to the subject and behave sensibly and safely. In a Year 6 class "you could hear a pin drop", such was their level of concentration. They work well in groups, when carrying out investigations, and show wonder and excitement at some of the outcomes. This is particularly evident in the Year 3/4 class's investigations into collecting gas in a balloon and in making plasticine float. All lessons have clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils. The quality of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory and soundly informs future planning for matching the work to the needs of pupils. Teachers' management of pupils is generally good. There are good mature relationships.

99. The subject is capably managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. He has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses at Key Stage 2 but his knowledge of standards at Key Stage 1 is less secure. Overall, there is limited whole-school monitoring and evaluation of the subject from the youngest pupils through to Year 6. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator provides clear educational direction for the subject, especially at Key Stage 2, and offers sound support for colleagues. Clear planning ensures good breadth and balance of the curriculum and there are clear guidelines to ensure continuity of learning. Ongoing assessment and end-of-unit tests are used well to inform planning.

100. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and spiritual development, for example, when they cooperate in group work. Resources are good and are well used. Good use is made of information technology to record and carry out investigations. This is particularly evident in the very successful science workshop, where pupils monitor and graph temperature using a sensor linked to the computer. The subject makes a good contribution to literacy as there is a good emphasis in developing scientific language. It also makes a good contribution to extending pupils' mathematical skills. For example, in Year 6 pupils sense changes and record data and in Year 3/4, they measure using a metre stick, work in millilitres and use a Newton meter. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

ART

101. There were limited opportunities to observe lessons during the inspection, particularly at Key Stage 1. Judgements are based on these lessons, a scrutiny of previous work, planning and discussion with teachers and the co-ordinator.

102. By the age of eleven, the standard of attainment is above that expected for pupils' ages. Pupils use increasing accuracy and attention to detail when representing objects. They experiment with a variety of materials, tools and techniques for a wide range of purposes and show good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of artists. This has included recently the work of Andy Goldsworthy and their present study is the work of Lowry. They analyse images and understand how feelings are conveyed through different artists' styles. They experiment with a range of pencils from 4H to 6B and show very good development of skills. As a result of very good teaching, pupils are engrossed in lessons and make great strides in developing their use of shade and shadows and extending their understanding of line, shape and tone. They place Lowry's work in the context of the period they are studying in history. In a Year 3/4 class, pupils show above average attainment in their work on Van Gogh. As a result of an impressively planned series of lessons and the very good skills of the teacher, pupils use viewfinders to take up part of the picture on acetate. They enlarge this onto a grid and then, showing good information technology skills, reproduce it using a paint package on the computer. The resulting work is of a high standard.

103. At the end of Key Stage 1, the standard of attainment is broadly average for pupils' ages. Pupils work with a range of materials, tools and techniques both practically and with imagination, and produce both two and three-dimensional work. They recognise differences in approaches and methods of various artists, and make links with their own art.

104. As only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching or learning. In this lesson, teaching was satisfactory. In the three Key Stage 2 lessons seen, teaching was consistently very good. Teachers plan their work well and show very good knowledge of the subject and management of the class. They demonstrate very good skills across the art curriculum. As a result of this high quality teaching, the quality of learning was very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work. They enjoy art and their work shows great care and concentration. All boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and the talented, make very good progress in developing their skills and extending their knowledge. Artwork plays an important part in pupils' personal development.

105. There is an effective policy and scheme of work in place and the subject is soundly managed. The co-ordinator is skilled in the subject and is very enthusiastic. She supports colleagues well but has a limited

knowledge of the work across the whole school. Resources are adequate and there is good use of information technology to support the subject. Good use is made of visits to galleries. Standards since the previous report have improved well at Key Stage 2.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. By the ages of eleven and seven, standards in design and technology are average for the ages of pupils. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Year 6 pupils have designed and made effective wind chimes, using wood, fabric and other materials. They annotate their designs with clearly labelled diagrams, using their mathematical skills to measure accurately. They list the tools and materials, which they will need, and use their literacy skills soundly to write clear, step-by-step instructions. The pupils evaluate their finished products, and suggest ways in which they might have made things better. They sometimes describe changes, which they have made to their original designs. Other Year 6 pupils have designed and made sound autograph books. Year 2 pupils think about the purpose of the hinged photographic frames which they make. Pupils have experienced aspects of food technology, for example, Key Stage 1 pupils made Christmas cookies last term.

107. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The quality of teaching and learning in the two Year 3/4 lessons observed was good. The teachers plan their lessons well and make the learning objectives clear to the pupils. They stress the need for careful design and evaluation, in addition to making. One teacher reminded the pupils to think about how they might improve their work, what worked and what did not. This had a good impact on learning and in the making of sound pop-up cards of crazy caterpillar and hippo ballerina. The teachers have high expectations of the quality of finished products. They have the right amount of resources available for lessons and encourage the pupils to choose tools and materials themselves. Pupils are beginning to think about the purpose of the products they are designing. For example, Year 3/4 pupils think about the features of toys which would catch the attention of babies, with special emphasis on texture and noise.

108. The teachers use design and technology well to support learning in other subjects. In work linked to history, the pupils make effective Viking longboats and Second World War fashions. In work on town plans in Key Stage 1 geography, the pupils make sound models of houses. Much work is linked to science. Year 3/4 pupils design and make vehicles which can move on land and in water and effective jack in the boxes, in work linked to forces and friction. Younger pupils make effective models of musical instruments, in work related to sound. Due attention is paid to safety with tools and the teachers make very good use of the expertise of a classroom assistant. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are making good progress in refining their designing and making skills. For example, they are learning how to measure, fold, mark out, cut and shape paper accurately and to assemble and join materials and components in different ways. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and behaviour is good. They clearly enjoy designing and making. They listen carefully to instructions and settle down to their tasks quickly. Pupils take a pride in presenting their design sheets neatly and in the quality of their finished products. They share resources sensibly and treat them carefully.

109. A clear policy and scheme of work are in place. The co-ordinator has not monitored teaching of the subject, but she gains an overview of standards throughout the school by maintaining a useful photographic record of pupils' work and by monitoring planning. There are sufficient resources to support learning and the subject benefits from the availability of a specialist technology room. The subject makes a sound contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils have made effective divas, in work linked to Hinduism, and the wind chimes made by Year 6 pupils incorporated effective 'dream catchers', based on native American culture. The teachers frequently provide opportunities for the pupils to work collaboratively. For example, Year 3/4 pupils worked well as a class to produce a very good, large-scale model of the school and its grounds. Information technology supports the curriculum well, for example, when pupils designed and printed flowers, using a graphics program as part of an art lesson.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Since no full lessons in this subject were seen, due to timetabling factors and the arrangement the school has of alternating blocks of history and geography teaching through the year, it is not possible to make firm judgements about the attainment of pupils. Some pupils' work was seen from both key stages, teachers' planning was surveyed, and some elements of geography integrated into other lessons were observed. In addition, a short activity of recording weather was seen. Inspectors also talked to pupils. This evidence indicates that standards are average for age by the time pupils reach eleven years of age. This includes the attainment of pupils with English as an additional language. Map work is a strong element in the school's geography. The start is made early in Years 1 and 2, when pupils draw their simple representational maps of walks they have taken in the school grounds or the locality, or draw imaginary maps connected to stories, such as those done by Key Stage 2 pupils of the "bear hunt". Pupils become familiar with geographical features, learn where various places are in the world, and, by the time they reach the top of the school, are able to use two or four figure map references. Older pupils study river environments, and pollution and environmental changes. Year 6 pupils have studied the changes to a seaside environment of dunes, and the changes that come about from gradually encroaching plant growth. Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards in line with their abilities.

111. In the previous report, standards were found to be average at both key stages. Teaching was satisfactory, and the documentation for the subject was in place. The findings of this inspection are broadly in line with those found in the 1996 inspection.

112. Teaching and learning cannot be judged as no full geography lessons have been seen, but planning, and examples of geographical work integrated within other lessons indicate that they are at least satisfactory. Curricular documentation is sound, with both a policy and a scheme of work, and planning at termly level is clear and appropriate. These documents and plans indicate a satisfactory and balanced geography programme.

113. In discussion, pupils show good attitudes to their learning. Visits are made to the immediate locality, to alternative localities, and in Year 4, there is a field study trip with an overnight stay, every year. Year 6 has a residential field study trip for a week every year, usually at Swanage. These trips enhance pupils' personal and social development very well. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, but has only been in this post for a short time. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching or sample work on a systematic basis. Resources in the subject are adequate, and good use is made of the Internet. An especially attractive touch is the school bear who goes with pupils when they travel abroad. His travels are logged and his gifts from all over the world are displayed, and labelled. There is also a collection of the postcards he has sent back to school.

HISTORY

114. In this inspection, the standards at Key Stage 2 are average for this age group. While several lessons were observed in the upper part of the school, no lessons could be seen at Key Stage 1, due to timetabling and 'blocking' history and geography subject units. However, some work from Key Stage 1 was seen in the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers were interviewed and planning was evaluated for the key stage. Indications are that standards in Key Stage 1 are average for age. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards in line with their abilities. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve similar levels to their peers.

115. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to describe many characteristics of past periods they have studied and are able to identify the main changes and events in those periods satisfactorily. Work on Britain in the 1930s and 1940s shows the ability of many pupils to empathise well with those who suffered during the depression, being out of work, and with those evacuated from London during World War II. They distinguish between some aspects of the past and their own lives, and compare and contrast some features of the two, weighing their information and forming their own opinions. They are able to distinguish between the primary

and secondary sources they are using, and to enjoy texts of both fact and fiction, which are relevant to their studies. In Key Stage 1, pupils gradually become aware of differences between past and present, particularly within the context of their own families and their own growth and development.

116. In the previous inspection report, standards were found to be average across both key stages. Teaching was at least satisfactory, and the subject was well integrated with geography. The school had a good range of artefacts, and good use was made of the locality. Documentation for the subject was present. Although there were no key issues, it was noted that co-ordinators had no time for monitoring lessons in the subject.

117. The quality of the teaching and learning of history is good. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory, and three-quarters were good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good. Information is clearly presented, with careful explanations and good use of questioning to monitor learning, promote thinking and help form opinions. Teachers' competence in basic skills is good, and these are employed to good purpose within history lessons. Planning is thorough, clear and imaginative, using videos, artefacts, interesting sources and a variety of books and illustrations. These raise pupils' interest and help them engage well with the lessons. Activities help them to consolidate their learning. With older pupils, primary sources are used when possible. Work for pupils is usually well matched to their capabilities and previous learning, and challenges are generally good for all levels of ability. However, very occasionally, some lower attaining pupils are given difficult assignments, and expectations are too high. The school makes good use of visits to places of historical interest in the locality, such as a recent visit to a Tudor house, and of visitors to the school, such as the imminent visit of a Viking theatre group for "Viking Day". Good use is also made of information technology, where older pupils are able to search the Internet and find their own information.

118. Documentation for the subject is satisfactory, although in the year planning for Key Stage 1, there is a heavy integration with religious education; however, in the termly planning this is not so evident and the balance is better. Planning at all levels is generally of good quality and well detailed. For assessment in the subject, teachers note outcomes and responses in lessons, and use these to inform further lesson plans. They also make their own notes for the annual reports to parents. There is currently no co-ordinator for this subject and the headteacher is temporarily holding the brief. He has access to teachers' plans, and samples them, but in the absence of a full co-ordinator, in practice, there is currently no systematic monitoring of the subject. Historical studies are well integrated into other areas of the curriculum, such as geography, art, music, religious education, and English, and curricular provision is well referenced to the National Curriculum. It is generally both broad and balanced. Resources are good overall, including artefacts, videos and the Internet.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

119. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in information technology are well above expectations for pupils' ages. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are generally above average. This judgement is an improvement on the school's previous inspection where attainment was judged to be good across the school.

120. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils use information technology to organise, reorganise and edit text to ensure their writing is clear, well presented and free of errors. They write articles for the 'Tanners Wood Times', and produce posters for the Blue Peter Bring and Buy sale. They acquire and refine the techniques they need to use in information technology, such as re-sizing text, changing colour, saving, and checking the accuracy of input and output. Pupils use the Internet and CD-ROMs confidently as research tools to extract information to support their work in science and history. They read the information to check its relevance and modify their search strategies. They save data, such as their favourite bicycles, seek information from it and produce bar charts, pie charts and line graphs to represent the data. In science, pupils use monitoring equipment to sense the insulation properties of materials. The 'newspaper team' use a digital camera to take pictures of pupils receiving rewards in a celebration assembly, to include in the next edition of the 'Tanners Wood Times'. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, independently access the Internet for information about the painter Van Gogh. They use a paint package program to create pictures in his style, which they enlarge and reproduce on screen. Their skills in controlling the computer mouse are well developed and they use tools confidently to work in fine detail. They combine text and graphics to produce a letter for their parents,

informing them of a forthcoming visit to the Science Museum, which includes all relevant details, as well as pictures with the appropriate theme.

121. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' word processing skills are good. They type in text, use the spacebar to create spaces, the "caps lock" to create capitals, the backspace key to make corrections and the return key to insert line breaks in their poems. They compose music and use a music program to put their composition on screen, play it, listen to it and adapt the musical elements and instruments to generate and communicate different effects. They know how to open a file, save changes, exit and close down.

122. The quality of teaching and learning is very good at Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stage 1. The previous inspection findings match those of this inspection in that information technology contributes substantially to the standards of achievement and quality of learning in the school. Pupils are introduced to the concepts and skills in a systematic way and are given regular practice to reinforce what they have learned. At all stages, information technology is used well to extend learning in other curriculum areas. Particular strengths are evident in science, history, literacy, art and music. Good use is made of information technology to support pupils with special educational needs. This includes the use of laptops and appropriate software for learning and practising basic skills. Teachers show secure knowledge of the subject in their explanations and instructions given to pupils as they use the computers. Strengths of the teaching and learning of information technology in Key Stage 2 were very well illustrated in a Year 6 science lesson on testing the thermal properties of different materials. Here, the computer recorded the temperature of each hot water container and then produced graphs of the variation in results. The teacher's very good exposition, the use of sophisticated technical language and the style of questioning challenged the pupils and moved them on in their learning and this resulted in an excellent science lesson. All teachers plan effectively and work hard to promote high standards. Specific information technology skills are taught carefully which enables pupils to develop their ability to apply their learning in other areas of the curriculum. The management of the pupils is good and classroom assistants are well prepared to provide groups of pupils with the necessary support for them to make progress and achieve success. All teachers make very good use of the information technology suite, which provides pupils with the chance to benefit from direct teaching. Pupils make good use of the 'I can do' booklets to record their own achievements and teachers use these well to plan for their future learning. Most teachers make good use of information technology to provide captions to enhance the pupils' work on display in classrooms.

123. Information technology has a high profile in the school and supports many areas of work in different subjects. The school has adopted the Local Education Authority policy and scheme of work and this is used well to support the teaching of the subject. Assessment is, at present, linked to the self-assessment booklet provided for pupils to record their own acquisition of skills. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has been closely involved in the development of information technology in the school. She is ably supported by two members of staff who are just as enthusiastic about the subject as she is. Together, they provide ongoing technical support and expertise to ensure a clear educational direction for the future. The resources are very good, with a very well equipped information technology suite that is of adequate size to enable whole-class lessons to be taught and computers in all classrooms. Resources include a digital camera and a good range of software to support learning in most subject areas. Pupils already send e-mails to a previous member of staff who now lives in New Zealand and there are plans to expand the e-mail addresses in the future. Overall, the provision and use of information technology are strengths of the school.

MUSIC

124. By the end of both key stages, pupils achieve standards which are average for their ages. A small number of pupils who receive additional instrumental music lessons achieve standards which are above that expected for their age. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress as they often benefit from some specialist teaching and these pupils have appropriate opportunities to take lead roles in performances. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve standards that are similar to other pupils of the same ages and ability. The findings of this inspection broadly match those of the 1996 inspection.

125. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing tunefully, including songs in two parts and they talk about the work of a few different composers. They respond sensitively to music when it is played and can describe the features of mood and character using good descriptive vocabulary, which supports their English work appropriately. Overall, the use of specific musical terminology is used inconsistently. In Years 3 and 4, pupils know about songs from different cultures, such as Finland and in their Viking songs about Thor and “Sea Thunder”. In this work, pupils demonstrate appropriate understanding of high and low notes. This is reinforced as pupils all stand up and do the “Mexican Wave” activity. In this, pupils make ebb and flow movements by rising and falling. Across the key stage, pupils are developing an appropriate understanding of rhythm and how to record their compositions using simple notation. The school choir performs regularly throughout the year. However, it was not possible to observe them during the inspection as they were having a rest period between productions. Nevertheless, indications are that their work is of an above average standard.

126. By the end of Key stage 1, pupils sing confidently from memory and have an above average understanding of how to compose simple melodies. This is due to high expectations from the teachers and the very good links with information technology. In Year 2, pupils make compositions and then put them onto staves on the computer. They can talk about the number of beats in a note.

127. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, when the specialist visiting teachers work with pupils, the quality of teaching is very good. Overall, teachers’ knowledge and understanding of the subject are satisfactory. Across the school, pupils are beginning to be aware of different composers such as Sibelius, Prokofiev and Vivaldi, although this is superficial and is not embedded in their real understanding or appreciation. In one lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to listen to “Finlandia”, but this was too rushed. This was because the teacher was concerned to finish the taped lesson in the given time. Examples of music are not sufficiently well used at other times of the day to consolidate learning. Lessons are planned progressively over several sessions to give a clear balance between skills. Although the taped lessons provide a clear and appropriate framework, teachers often miss the chance to make music fun and lessons exciting. For example, in Year 2, the pupils were desperate to respond to the music by moving to the character beat of the animal in Peter and the Wolf. In the Reception lesson, there were missed opportunities to choose and experiment with high and low sounds, even though they had a display of sound making resources. Overall, there were few occasions when pupils actually became totally engrossed in the spiritual elements of music. This was best in one singing practice assembly when the pupils sang with feeling, contrasting moods in the hymns.

128. There is satisfactory leadership in this subject. As a result of other curricular demands, this subject has had a lower profile in school development. Nevertheless, the headteacher is very committed to providing a broad curriculum for pupils. The school has sought to develop links with information technology well and this shows good development since the last inspection. There is a clear policy and scheme of work, although teachers are not paying enough attention to the use of musical vocabulary. Furthermore, the scheme does not identify a range of classical and contemporary composers for study. The range of resources is adequate and shows some improvement since the last inspection. However, the range of posters and multicultural instruments is too limited.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Standards in games and gymnastics are average and in line with that which would be expected for pupils' ages and abilities. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The pupils are developing their individual skills in football and netball and their ability to take part in small sided games. There is a wide variety of ability. Higher attaining pupils shoot and pass at football with accuracy and some perform ‘one touch’ passing to good effect. Other pupils have much less control. At netball, higher attaining pupils get free of an opponent by sprinting and dodging. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 perform a sound sequence of movements across mats, involving rolls, jumps and balances. Standards in swimming are good. By the end of Year 5, almost all the pupils swim at least 25 metres unaided and meet the national standard. Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards in line with their abilities. Pupils with English as an additional language are very well integrated and achieve equally to other pupils of the same age.

130. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 good. One very good lesson in football skills was observed. As a result, almost all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress in developing and refining their gymnastics and games skills. The teachers plan and organise their lessons well. There is effective teaching of specific skills, for example, in using the sprint dodge and the feint dodge in a Year 5 and 6 netball lesson. In other lessons in this year group, the teachers focused on the need to keep the head down in order to kick a football accurately and to keep the ball on the ground as much as possible. They give the pupils opportunities to observe and evaluate the performance of others, with a view to improving performance. The teachers make good use of thought provoking questions, such as “Why is it better to lift the ball for long passing?” to develop a better understanding of football skills. One teacher in Year 3/4 emphasised the need for good body control in gymnastics and good starting and finishing positions to movements and this led to a great deal of improvement in performance.

131. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory and most pupils are making satisfactory progress. A teacher in Year 2 made the pupils think, by asking questions such as “What is the key thing to remember in a team game?” This led to better performance in games using small equipment and in the pupils’ ability to throw and catch balls and bean bags. The teachers make sound use of large apparatus to develop gymnastics skills, although, occasionally, too many pupils crowd together on one piece of apparatus. The teachers move lessons along at a brisk pace and they generally manage the pupils well. At times, class control is less secure and some pupils take too long in responding to instructions.

132. The two co-ordinators offer good leadership, although neither has monitored teaching of the subject throughout the school. A clear policy and scheme of work are in place. Apart from gymnastic mats, which are few in number and are beginning to fray at the corners, there is a good range of high quality apparatus, accommodation and equipment to support learning. The Key Stage 2 curriculum is enhanced by football and netball clubs and by coaching from staff of Watford Football Club. Good opportunities for games and outdoor and adventurous activities are offered to pupils in Years 3 and 6 during residential visits to Swanage and Hudnall Park. This year, Year 5 pupils are to have the opportunity to participate in water sports at Stanborough Lakes. In affording the pupils an insight into the need for rules and fair play in games and into the qualities of being a team player, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils’ moral and social development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. By the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils reach standards that match the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This judgement is similar to the judgement of the school’s previous inspection. In this inspection, no lessons were observed at Key Stage 1, due to the organisation of the timetable, which ‘blocks’ the teaching of religious education. Judgements have been based on analysis of pupils’ work, school documentation and discussion with the subject co-ordinator. At Key Stage 2, judgements are based on the lessons seen, an analysis of pupils’ work and on teachers’ planning.

134. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have an understanding of the basis of Christianity and of other world faiths, in particular, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. They have an awareness of the significance of some Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter and places of worship like an Anglican Church and a Jewish synagogue. They are respectful of beliefs and traditions distinct from their own. Year 6 pupils have a good insight into the practices and traditions of Buddhism, such as that of the Eight-fold path of right conduct. They write about enlightenment in relation to Buddha and apply their own interpretation to the beliefs. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of Muslim traditions and rituals. They talk of the period of Ramadan in the Muslim year and the practice of fasting that is observed from sunrise to sunset and develop an understanding that the festival of Lent shares the common theme of fasting. They know that Eid is the Muslim celebration for the end of Ramadan and use their technology skills to design and make their own Eid cards. Pupils know that books like the Bible and the Qur’an have a special significance for believers. They gain an understanding of the meanings of the main symbols from the faiths studied, such as the cross to Christianity, the star and crescent to Islam and the wheel of life to Buddhism.

135. At Key Stage 1, the pupils' previous work show an appropriate knowledge of how Christians, Jews and Hindus celebrate special times such as Christmas, Hanukah and Diwali. They know some of the stories and people common to the world's faiths, such as the story of the wise men and that of Rama and Sita. They listen to the story of 'Rama and the Demon King' and extend their understanding through creating an illustrated class book. Younger children learn about the work of religious leaders within their own community, for example the role of the local vicar. They develop their spiritual understanding through listening to stories about people's relationships with the natural world, such as St. Francis of Assisi.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is good, when the full range of evidence is considered. In the previous inspection, teaching and learning were deemed to be sound or better throughout the school. A Key Stage 2 lesson about Ramadan illustrated the strengths of teaching religious education in the school. The teacher's planning was detailed with clear learning objectives and group activities covered a range of different skills, such as writing a diary, ordering events and making captions for pictures. Through her secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, she provided a wealth of detail to the pupils and kept their interest throughout the lesson. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace, which maintained the pupils' interest. Resources, such as books and artefacts, were well prepared and simple questions were asked, such as 'Why is the symbol of a new moon used?' in connection with the Islam faith, to increase the pupils' ideas and their understanding. Pupils' experiences are extended through visitors to the school, such as a Muslim parent who spoke of the practices and traditions of her faith to Year 3 and 4 pupils. The analysis of pupils' work shows clearly that, throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are higher attaining make steady gains in their knowledge of this subject.

137. The school's policy and scheme of work is based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, which at present is in draft form. The time allocated to the teaching of religious education is overall satisfactory. At Key Stage 1, it is 'blocked' in a termly unit, whilst at Key Stage 2, it is taught weekly. The curriculum offered is broad and balanced and the planning is relevant to the needs of all pupils. Literacy skills are appropriately developed in the subject, through stories, first-hand experiences and through the expectation of pupils recording their work in different forms. Assessment is generally on-going and based on the pupils' response in lessons and their written work. Themes in collective worship and in personal, social and health education are often closely linked to religious education. The co-ordinator, who is new to the post, is committed and conscientious. She is very willing to attend the relevant courses in order to develop her own knowledge and understanding of the subject. Although she monitors teachers' planning and has gathered together a sample of pupils' work, she has not had the opportunity to monitor classroom teaching. Resources and books to support the teaching of religious education are adequate and well organised. They are particularly suitable for the pupils in Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator has accurately identified the need to provide more appropriate resources for Key Stage 1. The subject provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on a range of issues, to develop moral and social awareness and to respect and celebrate religious and cultural diversity.