

INSPECTION REPORT

Park Junior School

Elm Road, Stonehouse, Gos. GL10 2NP

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique Reference Number: 115539

Headteacher: Mr C R Taylor

School Inspection Number: 187000

Reporting inspector: Mrs Joan Walker
T25461

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number:707340

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Elm Road Stonehouse GL10 2NP
Telephone number:	01453 823108
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body of Park Junior School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lynne Harrison
Date of previous inspection:	12 th - 16 th February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Joan Walker, RgI	English, Information Technology, Art, Equal Opportunities	Teaching; Leadership and Management
Chris Ames, Lay Inspector		Attendance; Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare; Partnership with Parents and the Community; Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources
Patrick Playfair	History, Religious Education, Special Educational Needs	Attitudes, Behaviour and Discipline; Curriculum and Assessment
Margaret Morse	Science, Music, Physical Education,	Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
Paul Whittaker	Mathematics, Design and Technology, Geography	Attainment and Progress; Efficiency

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- There is very good teaching in history and for pupils with special needs.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to their work.
- Most pupils behave very well.
- Pupils make very good relationships with all staff and with each other.
- The school's strategy for literacy is good.
- Overall provision for pupils' moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.
- Provision for pupils' social development is very good.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are good.
- The school takes good care of its pupils.
- The headteacher and staff work hard to ensure close links with parents and the community.
- There is high quality display of pupils' work around the school.
- Overall, the adequacy of resources is good.
- Financial planning is good.
- Financial control and school administration are very good.
- There is good curriculum planning for history.
- The school provides good value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Lack of provision of effectiveness in the work of the senior management team.
- II. There is a lack of a formal structure in the management of special needs provision.
- III. There is considerable noise when the practical areas are used, which affects the concentration of pupils in nearby classes.
- IV. Short-term lesson plans sometimes lack clarity in defining lesson objectives.
- V. There remains a lack of consistency across subjects in the way pupils' attainment and progress are assessed.
- VI. There is a lack of consistency with which assessment is used to inform curriculum planning.
- VII. Not all statutory requirements are met.
- VIII. All subjects should be given sufficient teaching time to ensure a more fully balanced curriculum.
- IX. There is a lack of release time given to co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate pupils' work.

The strengths of the school far outweigh the weaknesses. The governors' action plan will address the weaknesses and a copy of the plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of the pupils at the school.

• **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

Three out of the five issues are from the previous report have been satisfactorily addressed. The two remaining issues are: (1) to continue to develop and establish a comprehensive and consistent system for assessing and recording the pupils' progress: (2) provide opportunities for the subject co-ordinators to monitor the quality and standards of the pupil' work. Issue (1) is very well developed and is close to being fully addressed satisfactory. However, issue (2) needs further development to fully address this issue satisfactorily especially in science, information technology, geography, music, physical education and religious education. Overall, handwriting and presentation has improved. The governors are now effective in monitoring the school's cost-effectiveness. However, teachers' daily lesson plans sometimes still lack clarity in defining objectives and pupils are unsure what they are supposed to be learning. The quality of teaching has improved.

• **Standards in subjects**

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
			Well above average	A
			Above average	B
			Average	C
			Below average	D
			Well below average	E
English	D	D		
Mathematics	D	D		
Science	B	B		

The information shows that, in comparison with all schools, pupils' performance in English and mathematics was below the national average and in science above. The results when compared with similar schools show a similar picture. These results show a considerable improvement in all three subjects compared with those of 1998.

Inspection findings show that when pupils enter school they have attainment below that expected for their age. By the end of the key stage pupils have made at least sound progress in all subjects.

In English, mathematics, science, physical education, music and history progress is predominately good. Attainment is in line with the national average in mathematics, science, English, geography, information technology, art, and religious education. In physical education, music, and history it is above.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English			Good
Mathematics			Good
Science			Good
Information technology			Satisfactory
Religious education			Good
Other subjects			Good

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of all lessons, with only 4 per cent being unsatisfactory. In 24 per cent of lessons, teaching is satisfactory, in 50 per cent it is good, in 19 per cent very good and in 3 per cent it is excellent.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The behaviour of pupils is very good. They generally behave well in lessons and around the school.
Attendance	Attendance is good and is broadly in line with the national average.
Ethos*	The pupils have good attitudes to work. They concentrate well, co-operate with each other, show initiative and are willing to take responsibility. The school is committed to achieving high standards.
Leadership and management	The headteacher, staff and governors support the school well. There is a lack of precision of effectiveness in the work of the senior management team. There is also a lack of formalised meetings between the Special Needs Co-ordinator and the teachers teaching special needs pupils.

Curriculum	· The curriculum is broad and generally balanced and meets the needs of all pupils.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are taught well and make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The school is good at providing pupils', moral development. Social development is very good. Provision for cultural and spiritual development is sound.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Resources are good. Staff training is sound. Accommodation is satisfactory except when classes are in the practical areas and the noise disturbs adjoining classrooms.
Value for money	The school provides good value for money.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- X. They feel the school encourages them to play an active part.
- XI. They find it easy to approach the school.
- XII. The school gives clear understanding of what is taught.
- XIII. They are well informed about pupils' progress.
- XIV. The school enables pupils to achieve good standards of work.
- XV. The school actively encourages pupils to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.
- XVI. They are satisfied with the work pupils are expected to do at home.
- XVII. School values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children.
- XVIII. Children like coming to school.

What some parents are not happy about

- XIX. Some parents feel the school does
- XX. Some parents feel the school does not

Inspectors support the positive aspects of parent's comments. From the inspection findings the school handles complaints thoroughly and takes any necessary action quickly and efficiently. During the inspection week, pupils' behaviour was good with only a few incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Some parents voiced concern at the parents' meeting on homework. The inspectors

found that homework was given regularly and was a reasonable amount for the pupils' ages and ability. The homework policy was fully implemented throughout the school. Parents were also concerned over the one split-age class. The inspectors found due consideration was given to the learning and teaching within this class and that in many cases the pupils were taught in ability groups.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to build on the existing strengths of the school the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Improve pupils' learning by:

- XXI. ensuring that all lessons have clearly identified learning objectives;
- XXII. ensuring a consistent approach to assessing pupils' attainment and progress;
- XXIII. ensuring assessment is used to inform curriculum planning consistently;
- XXIV. ensuring that co-ordinators monitor and evaluate pupils' work in all subjects.
(paragraphs 28, 30, 32, 39, 46, 57, 83, 84, 101, 102, 113, 116, 117, 120, 124, 133, 135, 149, 151, 156, 157, 163, 164)

Strengthen the precision and effectiveness in the work of the senior management team by:

- XXV. defining areas of responsibilities for all members;
- XXVI. formalising meetings by ensuring that records are kept of discussions and actions to be taken;
- XXVII. giving greater delegation of responsibility to the senior management team.
(paragraph 58)

Ensure all statutory requirements are fully met by:

- XXVIII. the prospectus which should include the availability of access for disabled pupils;
- XXIX. a policy for the use of reasonable force to restrain pupils.
(paragraph 50, 61)

Improve the structure of the timetable by:

- XXX. bringing it in line with the school strategy as defined in the headteacher's form for core and foundation subjects;

XXXI. ensuring that all subjects are given appropriate teaching time to give a more fully balanced curriculum.

(paragraph 35, 48, 134)

Improve the structure of the management for special educational needs by:

XXXII. formalising meetings between the special needs co-ordinators and the appropriate members of staff by recording decisions and actions to be taken;

XXXIII. formalising a system to review and evaluate special needs provision.

(paragraphs 28, 31, 40, 56, 58, 64, 73, 86)

In addition to the above issues, and in the context of the schools many strengths, the following point for improvement should also be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan.

XXXIV. reduce the noise level in practical areas to minimise the distraction of pupils in the nearby classrooms.

(paragraphs 65, 81, 94, 142)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Park Junior is situated in the centre of the town and serves mainly the local community. The area immediately around the school is a large housing estate of mostly rented properties dating from the early fifties. New housing in small estates and in-filling in recent years have contributed to a slow change and increase in the proportion of pupils living in smaller owner-occupied housing. There are 329 pupils on roll, which is above the national average compared with all schools. Pupils are organised into eleven classes according to age groups and one class contains pupils from two year-groups. Two children are of non-European origin but no pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Pupils are admitted in the autumn of the year in which they are seven.

2. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds; for example, according to the 1991 census, 8.5% of parents had higher educational qualifications compared with the national average of 13.5%, 22% of children lived in higher social class households and 15.3% were known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. When pupils enter school at the neighbouring infant school there is a very broad range of attainment with a significant proportion experiencing difficulties and the overall attainment on entry is below average. This below average attainment remains evident when the pupils enter Park Junior School, though in the last two years there has been a significant improvement in the standards achieved in the National Assessment Tests at Key Stage 1 by pupils admitted to this school. Prior to these last two years, achievement on entry was well below average, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessment of attainment on entry shows that, overall, pupils are below expectations for their age.

3. The school building was opened in 1985 and is open plan with shared practical areas. Three additional classrooms have been added to the original eight in 1994 and 1996. Extensive modifications in 1998 included extended hall and administration improvements. The school has extensive grounds with ample sports pitches. There is also an attractive wild area planted by pupils in recent years. Plans exist for incorporating adventure play equipment.

4. There are nine pupils with statements of Special Educational Need (SEN). In all there are

108 pupils on the SEN register. This is very nearly one third of the school roll and well above the average for primary schools nationally. Twenty-six pupils are at stages 3 to 5 of the Code of Practice. The school provides support for a wide range of special educational needs principally related to learning and behavioural difficulties. Seventy hours of learning support are provided each week. Three boys have been excluded for a fixed period during the last year. The rate of exclusion is static. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals has fallen since the last inspection. It is now over twelve per cent and below the national average. It is believed that a significant proportion of parents entitled, choose not to claim free meals. The school's assessment of attainment on entry shows that overall pupils are below the national average at that age.

5. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	35	30	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	21	23	31
	Girls	22	19	25
	Total	43	42	56
Percentage at NC	School	66	65	86
	National	70	69	78

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	22	24	31
	Girls	22	21	26
	Total	44	45	57
Percentage at NC	School	68	69	88
	National	68	69	75

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the	Authorised	School	%
		National comparative data	5.3
		School	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0
		National comparative data	0.5

· **Exclusions**

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

·
N
umber

· **Fixed period**
Permanent

3
0

· **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

%

Very good or better
Satisfactory or better
Less than satisfactory

22
96
4

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

- **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

- **Attainment and progress**

6. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds, the proportion of the pupils who attained the national target of level 4 or above in English and mathematics was below the national average and in science it was well below the national average. On the basis of the teacher assessments the proportion who attained level 4 or above in English and mathematics was close to the national average and in science it was below the national average. There is now a useful portfolio of assessed pupils' work in science which gives valuable guidance to staff on different attainment levels for the National Curriculum. A significant proportion, over thirty per cent, of the pupils who took the tests and assessments had special educational needs and this factor affected the school's comparative results.

7. The results of the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that, in science, the pupils' results were above the national average at level 4 or above but, in English and mathematics, although they showed an improvement on the previous year, they were below the national average. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the pupils' results at level 4 and above were below the national average in English and mathematics and they were above in science. However, at the higher level of 5 or above compared with all schools, results were broadly in line with national averages in mathematics and science and below in English. There are no significant variations in attainment among pupils of different gender, ethnicity or background.

8. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the national average and this finding is in line with that of the last inspection. The literacy hour is having a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of texts, and in encouraging them to use a wider range of vocabulary in their speaking. There are effective cross-curricular links, for example, in geography, history, science and religious education.

9. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with the national average. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 2, have a limited vocabulary and speak in simple sentences. More-able pupils speak confidently in front of the class and in small groups. Older pupils are usually

confident in class discussions and show good maturity in listening to other pupils' ideas and opinions. Most pupils throughout the school listen well to their teachers and other pupils. In reading, attainment is above national expectations. Many younger pupils develop a range of reading strategies including phonics and picture clues to tackle unknown words. Older pupils enjoy the 'Partnership Buddy' sessions when they spend time reading to younger pupils and discussing the story. Pupils' attainment in writing is above national average. Most young pupils use joined-up writing and present their work neatly. They recognise speech marks, full stops, question marks and capital letters and understand how to use them. Older pupils produce a good range of written work, for example, story writing, poetry, use of persuasive language and writing from different viewpoints. Their presentation is not always good. Throughout the school there is evidence of drafting and editing, and the development of word-processing skills for the presentation of their work. Pupils' spelling is satisfactory and they use dictionaries to check their work.

10. In mathematics, inspection evidence supports the picture of improvement shown in the national tests but finds pupils' attainment at the age of 11 in line with the national average. This finding is in line with that of the previous inspection and is attributed to the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy which is having a positive impact on raising standards of work in number. At Key Stage 2 the pupils develop simple but secure strategies for mental number work, such as for calculating the doubles of numbers. They are confident in the use of the four operations of number; they have a secure understanding of place value to multiply numbers and decimals by 10 and 100; and, they understand positive and negative numbers.

11. In work on shape, space and measures the pupils know the names of a good range of two-dimensional shapes, such as rhombus and heptagon, identify their properties for example "sides" and "corners" and recognise axes of symmetry. The pupils understand and use imperial and metric units of measure as they apply, for example, to capacity and length. In data handling the pupils produce bar charts from, for instance, tallying the results of a class survey on favourite snacks. However, the pupils are not familiar with using and applying mathematics in a wide range of situations. For example, they are not secure in applying their understanding of area from, say, a rectangle to a compound shape made up of two or more rectangles and there was little evidence of using and applying mathematics in other subjects.

12. Attainment in science, from the evidence of the inspection, is in line with the national

average. Pupils' attainment in experimental and investigative science are in line with national expectations and they have sound knowledge and understanding of scientific facts. At Key Stage 2 the pupils can, for example, discuss the importance of a healthy diet and how simple electrical circuits work.

13. Pupils' attainment in information technology is satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 the pupils understand and use the computer to enhance their work; for example, pupils in a Year 4 class used the program 'Colour Magic' when completing pictures of the 'Blitz' and in another class pupils had good understanding of handling data in science as they recorded graphically the growth of plants.

14. Progress in religious education is in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus. The pupils in Year 3 can write the story of the Good Samaritan in their own words and Year 4 pupils understand the importance of rules and commandments in both the Christian and Jewish faiths. Pupils in the Year 5 and 6 classes develop a sound knowledge of the Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths and consider the importance of commitment, belief and prayer to religious followers.

15. The attainment of the pupils in the non-core subjects of the National Curriculum is satisfactory and, in history, design and technology and physical education, it is good.

16. The pupils make good progress overall. They make good progress in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history and physical education; they make sound progress in information technology, geography, art and music. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

17. There are no significant trends in attainment and the school does not always set quantitative targets in all subjects. There are no significant variations in attainment in relation to gender, ethnicity and background.

· **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

18. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Throughout the school they respond enthusiastically to their lessons and work productively in groups and independently. They are co-

operative and eager to answer questions. Pupils generally take great pride in their work and want to do well. For example, in physical education, Year 4 pupils show good team spirit. In many literacy lessons the pupils' concentrated effort and capacity to respond positively to a variety of activities ensures that they derive great benefit from their work. In science, Year 5 pupils can produce good results from their investigations with the minimum of supervision. However, there are occasions when, because of a lack of pace in the teaching and undemanding activities, a minority of all pupils fail to maintain concentration and lose interest towards the end of the lesson.

19. Very positive attitudes to learning are seen from pupils with SEN, especially when they are withdrawn from lessons to work on literacy, numeracy and thinking skills. For example, pupils from Years 3 and 4 concentrate well and take a pride in their work. They persevere and want to do well. By working together sensibly on word identification activities they improve their speaking and listening skills. Pupils from Year 6 make an excellent response to their work on numeracy skills. They enjoy each others' company and are genuinely pleased with their successful answers and carefully considered explanations. They are developing the confidence to suggest possible answers and are not deterred by the possibility of being wrong.

20. Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion and their behaviour is good. They are courteous to visitors, their teachers and each other. Their respect for property and their trustworthiness are evident in the care they give to the extensive displays throughout the school, equipment and personal belongings. Very occasionally pupils get restless towards the end of lessons and here, their silly behaviour leads to some distraction for the rest of the class. The school behaviour policy successfully promotes a positive ethos throughout the school. There is a pleasant and positive start to the school day. Pupils are self-disciplined, well organised and waste no time in getting to their classrooms. Behaviour in the playground is generally good. The pupils' play is lively and energetic which can, at times, lead to some boys behaving in too boisterous a fashion. Pupils behave sensibly when eating their midday meal and keep to the established routines. The school has a good policy on bullying. The headteacher takes immediate and effective steps to investigate and deal with any allegations of bullying or harassment. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment by or towards particular groups during the inspection. There have been three fixed period exclusions during the year prior to this inspection. All procedures were correctly carried out with the appropriate authorities notified.

21. Relationships between pupils and all staff are very good. Pupils show respect for each others' ideas and show a commendable willingness to help each other when difficulties arise. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 music lesson the pupils respected the efforts of their fellow pupils and, in a withdrawal group for Year 3 pupils, one pupil helped another on the computer. Almost without exception staff know their pupils well and respond with kindness and sensitivity to their needs. These relationships make a significant contribution to the very positive ethos and to the pupils' attainment and progress.

22. The pupils' personal development is very good. They develop self-confidence, reliability and responsibility. Very often simple acts of kindness are undertaken not for reward but simply for the pleasure of helping others. Such attitudes are making a positive contribution to the pupils' moral and social development.

23. The concerns regarding behaviour raised by some parents prior to the inspection have not been confirmed by the evidence seen during the week of the inspection. The school is successfully meeting its aims in providing a co-operative and supportive environment which enables pupils to become adaptable and independent learners. Of particular note is its success in creating a secure, stimulating and well-ordered environment in which high standards of moral and social behaviour, a concern for others and a sense of tolerance and understanding are promoted. The school has maintained the high standards of pupil attitudes, behaviour and personal development noted at the time of the last inspection.

Attendance

24. Attendance is good across the school. Absence rates are comparable to the national average. There is very little unauthorised absence, which is good, and there is an improving trend in the absence rate, which has been good for some years. Unexplained absence is pursued rigorously by the secretary and headteacher on a daily basis. The education welfare officer inspects the registers approximately termly and becomes involved in specific cases when called on. There was no evidence of absence in any particular groups.

25. Punctuality is good and lessons begin on time, thus ensuring the best use of time available. Registers are properly completed by staff and kept in the secretary's office.

26. There were three boys excluded from the school for a fixed period during the last year. There were no permanent exclusions in that time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

27. The quality of teaching overall is good. It is a strength of the school and promotes a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Teaching throughout the school prioritises the learning for all groups of pupils. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of all lessons, with only 4 per cent being unsatisfactory. In 24 per cent of lessons, teaching is satisfactory, in 50 per cent it is good, in 19 per cent very good and in 3 per cent it is excellent. These findings are an improvement since the last inspection. Where teaching is good there are very high expectations of work and behaviour and this makes a significant contribution to standards and progress. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum is secure for subjects. Planning is good, with clear reference to the National Curriculum programmes of study, and the teachers plan work together carefully, especially in each year group. Work is usually planned to meet the needs of the whole ability range. High-attaining pupils are usually set extension activities or challenging tasks, particularly in mathematics. Where teachers have a good level of specialist knowledge, especially in the core subjects, they help the pupils to attain high levels of performance through their enthusiasm and giving specific feedback. Assessment of pupils' progress is developing and very good in English. There is some evidence that teachers use assessment and evaluations to help them plan their next lessons, ensuring successful and appropriate progress by all pupils. Assessment is not consistently used throughout all subjects and by every teacher. Work is well marked, often with pupils and constructive oral comments help move learning on. Future targets are frequently written on work when it is marked.

28. Teaching staff are fully aware of the requirements of pupils' education plans and they usually plan effectively to meet their special educational needs. For pupils with statements of SEN there is generally good liaison between class teachers and learning support workers in planning literacy and numeracy activities. There is not the same level of liaison in planning in the foundation subjects, with learning support workers. The quality of teaching in withdrawal groups is never less than good and sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Lessons are well planned and provide well structured activities in line with the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and to meet specific difficulties. In the best lessons the activities have the

right level of challenge to stimulate the pupils' thinking; well judged interventions are made to assess pupils' understanding and clear explanations are given to pupils who are encouraged to maintain a positive attitude to their work and not to become disheartened.

29. Teachers are committed, hard working and generally enjoy good relationships with the pupils, based on mutual respect. Where teaching is good, the lessons are well structured to fulfil the learning objectives, and suitable activities for different levels of prior attainment are provided. Tasks are purposeful and varied to maintain interest and make progressive demands to move pupils forward. Resources are well prepared, accessible, and used well, especially in art, science and English. Introductions are lively and well structured, often with revision of previous work, there are clear explanations and instructions, good demonstrations, and good use of subject-specific language, particularly in English, mathematics and science. There is good interaction with pupils, who are stimulated and involved, good support is given to everyone, including pupils with special educational needs, and there is effective use of praise and encouragement. Teachers are obviously interested and involved in their work; many show a good sense of humour, which the pupils appreciate. Most teachers value pupils' ideas and opinions. The teaching of literacy is good throughout the school. Most teachers use lively and interesting text to stimulate the pupils. Some teachers are beginning to use text from other subjects for example, in one lesson it was a scientific text. There are good cross-curricular links with other subjects, for instance, in history, mathematics, art and geography. The teaching of numeracy is sound and there are cross-curricular links in English, design and technology, information technology, physical education and history. Teaching throughout the school promotes the learning for all groups of pupils.

30. In lessons judged to be satisfactory it was one or more of the following weaknesses that prevented the lessons from being good. The pace of the lesson was too slow, there was a lack of challenge, pupils' behaviour was inappropriate and pupils were unsure of what they were supposed to be learning. The major cause of lessons not being good was the lack of specific learning objectives: often they were too general.

31. Class teachers plan effectively for pupils with special educational needs, either through the provision of specific work or through additional support activities. Learning support workers are usually well deployed and they support pupils effectively, either within the class or individually. However, there was little evidence of individual lesson plans for the support staff to follow.

32. Most teachers manage pupils well and maintain good standards of behaviour. Teachers achieve this through good organisation, good relationships and an emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions. When behaviour deteriorates it is because teachers have too low expectations or because pupils have sat too long being inactive and have lost interest in the lesson.

33. Homework is given regularly and expected to be completed by all pupils. It makes a positive contribution to learning.

The curriculum and assessment

34. The last inspection identified two areas for development within the schools' curriculum provision. There was a need for subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate the quality and standards of pupils' work, for pupils to give greater attention to the variable standards of presentation; and, as a key issue, to bring a more consistent approach to the provision of homework. The school has worked hard to respond to these issues. A portfolio of pupils' work has been established and moderated to monitor and evaluate pupils' work and standards of presentation are good overall. The school has made good progress in providing homework. A suitable policy is now in place for all pupils with homework currently being provided in support of literacy and numeracy. Less attention is being given to opportunities for research and investigative homework related to topics in other subjects.

35. The school has a broad and generally a balanced curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the agreed syllabus for religious education. However, not all subjects are given sufficient teaching time to give a fully balanced curriculum. It reflects the aims of the school, provides equal opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress. Pupils develop their information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. Through the science curriculum there is satisfactory provision for sex education and drugs awareness. There are no time-tabled lessons for personal, social and health education. The length of the taught week continues to be in line with the national average. Additional emphasis has been given to ensuring that the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy strategies can be met. All literacy and numeracy lessons throughout the school take place during the morning. All other subjects during the inspection were taught during the afternoon. Because of the pressure on the use of the school

hall for physical education lessons, some lessons have to be split. In addition, some lessons are too short, during the afternoon and require skilful planning and judgement of pace by the teachers to ensure that pupils make suitable progress and benefit fully from the lesson.

36. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the full range of the curriculum. The school has a sensible policy of withdrawing, at appropriate times during the week, a number of pupils with significant weaknesses in literacy, numeracy and thinking skills. Effective provision is made in lesson plans to meet the diverse needs of pupils on the register of SEN. However, there is a lack of consistency in the way provision for pupils with SEN is identified in schemes of work. The school promotes a positive attitude towards special educational needs and pupils with SEN are able to make a full contribution to the life of the school.

37. In all subjects the curriculum is planned effectively and provides for good continuity and progression. Detailed policies and schemes of work are used to support curriculum development. In history the policy is very good and supports effective curriculum planning and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress and is a strength of the school. Many cross-curricular links are evident in the teaching of the different subjects. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 produce stimulating chalk pastel pictures to enrich their study of the second world war. In Year 6 pupils' literacy skills enable them to produce attractive and well researched work on explorers. All groups of pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or background, have equal access to the curriculum and the life of the school.

38. The curriculum is enriched by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. There are clubs which provide for pupils' interest in games, gymnastics and dance, musical activities and school choir. Pupils from all years contribute to the publication of the school magazine and there is a very popular reading 'buddy' scheme which enables pupils in Year 6 to support and encourage pupils in Year 3 with their reading. A good range of educational visits undertaken throughout the year enrich the pupils' educational experience although they are currently underdeveloped to support the religious education curriculum.

39. There are sound procedures in place to assess the attainment and progress of pupils. The school has made satisfactory progress in meeting a key issue from the previous inspection which was to develop and establish a comprehensive and consistent system for assessing and recording

the pupils' progress. This improvement is reflected in the significantly better quality of the annual reports to parents. However, the current assessment procedures are at different stages of development and there remains a lack of consistency across subjects in the way pupils' attainment and progress is assessed. A similar situation persists in the consistency with which assessment is used to inform curriculum planning. With the introduction of new schemes of work the school recognises the need to link specific assessments to the planned curriculum and to ensure that the assessments cover fully the knowledge, understanding and skills that apply to each subject of the curriculum. The school is at an early stage in analysing assessment statistics and the target setting is undertaken through informal staff discussion and corporate agreement.

40. The school makes good use of the assessment details transferred from the infants' school at the end of Key Stage 1. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils is appropriately placed in ability groups for literacy, numeracy and science. The school are able effectively to identify, diagnose and meet the learning and behavioural needs of SEN pupils. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for reviewing SEN statements and makes good quality provision for their implementation. Individual education plans for pupils in Years 3 and 4 are of good quality but lack the detailed background information and the breadth of assessment and diagnostic information which contribute to the plans for pupils in Years 5 and 6. All plans contain achievable targets which are regularly reviewed. The high standard of screening assessments noted in the previous inspection report is being maintained and present procedures meet the requirements of the schools' policy for SEN. However, there is currently a lack of consistency in the recording of the progress made by pupils in the register of special educational needs.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

41. Overall, the school's provision for this area is good. Provision for social development is very good and for spiritual and cultural, sound. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. These facilities make an important contribution to the positive ethos of the school and the quality of learning and standards achieved. This aspect was identified as a strength in the last report, and this inspection finds the provision continues to be a strength of the school.

42. The social development of pupils is very well provided for in this calm, orderly and caring environment. There is good provision for pupils' moral development and sound provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The school encourages respect for beliefs and cultures other than the pupils' own while promoting a mainly Christian ethos. Sound spiritual development

is often and effectively promoted through daily collective worship, which fully complies with statutory requirements, religious education and some topic work. Assemblies are good. They provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their lives. They are varied, relevant to pupils and mainly Christian in character. Across the school pupils think about ideas such as, “How can reading partners help each other?” and relate them to their own experience. Pupils are encouraged to think about the origin of the universe in science and religious education, discuss questions such as, “What do we mean by truth?”, and consider what is special about being human. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to learn about the teaching of other faiths through topic work and through religious education.

43. The school is good at promoting pupils’ moral behaviour. Pupils are taught to know and understand the difference between right and wrong. Teachers successfully and sensitively use stories, often focussed on moral matters, to illustrate the consequences of right or wrong behaviour. The school promotes a set of appropriate values. There are clearly stated boundaries of acceptable behaviour and pupils understand the need for rules. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own actions and are expected to carry out jobs allocated to them, with the minimum of supervision. These jobs include taking registers to the office, tidying up work areas and giving out books and equipment. Pupils with special educational needs are given consistent guidance and help. Teachers, support staff and other adults who help at the school work to the same standards of conduct as they expect of pupils. Pupils successfully raise money for a number of charities.

44. The school is very good at promoting the social development of pupils. Pupils are confident and respectful to adults and to each other. They are polite, happy to talk to visitors, and to make conversation. Older and younger pupils get on well together. Girls and boys relate well together, they mix well, for instance when participating in the school choir and in lunchtime football clubs. During lessons they collaborate well and very good examples were seen during the inspection, for example of high quality discussion and sensible sharing of equipment during practical science lessons. In the small number of lessons observed in information technology (IT) there was a good sense of social development when pupils worked well in pairs to present a bar chart. Good team spirit was demonstrated when one pupil in Year 4 could not perform a particular task. His team partner quickly showed him the method which he then practised successfully. These features have a good impact of the quality of social skills and personal development. Extra-curricular activities and visits enhance the social development of pupils.

45. The school satisfactorily promotes pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures. This is often taught through religious education, music, art and geography. Pupils' awareness of their own cultural heritage is enhanced by visits to museums and other places of interest often connected with topic work, for instance, through studies of the local environment as part of a geography topic, when pupils were able to compare working life in the past to that of the present day. However, pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity of this country and the contribution of many cultures to the scientific and technological world is less well developed.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

46. Considerable improvements have been made to the monitoring of personal progress and behaviour since the last inspection, it is now satisfactory. Further efforts are needed to complete the programme and ensure consistency of records and their use for target setting. There is a specific personal, social and health education policy and staff are briefed informally and many of the curriculum documents make explicit reference to pupils' behaviour and personal development.

47. The school makes good provision to meet the particular needs of pupils with SEN. There is good communication between pupils and SEN staff which makes an effective contribution to the review of their statements and individual education plans.

48. Policies on behaviour and discipline are well developed and implemented. However, some minor lapses of discipline occur in classes, especially when the lessons are too long for example, in English and mathematics, or lack challenge. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment by or to particular groups during the inspection. Staff act quickly and decisively when incidents occur and the strategies are effective.

49. Good, effective systems are in place to encourage regular and prompt attendance. One senior member of staff is designated to deal with suspected child abuse and the staff and pupils are well briefed. Health and safety issues are dealt with as required by statute with adequate fire drills, and risk assessment carried out and reported to the governing body appropriately. There are minimal first aid facilities with only one fully trained person available for medical emergencies.

Partnership with parents and the community

50. The school has made strong, successful efforts to improve communications with parents with newsletters, open evenings, homework diaries, a home / school agreement and an open door policy. Parents are made welcome and warmly accepted into classrooms and the headteacher is always on hand for similar discussions. Approximately 12 parents help in class and this work makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning opportunities. The prospectus is also well presented but it omits to make statements on the access for disabled and on a policy on the use of force to restrain pupils. In all other respects the school conforms to statutory requirements.

51. Homework is managed well, with the quantity and variety increasing up the school. The end-of-year reports have been significantly improved since the last inspection. For example, reports now place each pupil in ability groupings as an indication of how they compare with their peers. Many reports also contain individual targets for pupils to aim at; this is especially so in mathematics and English. The school receives good support from outside agencies and links with both the infant school and secondary school ensure that good communications are maintained in respect of pupils with SEN. The school works hard to involve parents in the review of statements of SEN and individual education plans. It is justified in being concerned at the lack of support from and contact with a minority of parents.

52. The parent/teacher association is very active and effective in raising funds and providing a good, social element. Good links exist with the neighbouring infant school and family centre. Staff make regular, informal contact with each other on a professional level and the transfer of pupils from infants to juniors is well rehearsed. A good example of co-operation is the reading partner scheme where pupils from Year 5 link with Year 2 pupils in the infants' school. This scheme helps the reading programme for both age groups but also cements relationships, teaches tolerance and understanding, and helps the younger ones over the transfer period.

53. Good links exist with Maidenhill Comprehensive School. Staff interaction is encouraged and is mutually beneficial. For example, the special needs co-ordinators meet regularly and exchange information in depth. Joint dance and music groups operate, students are accepted at Park Junior for work experience and a mini Olympics is held annually.

54. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities including music, sport and culture. Very successful visits take place, all of which make good use of the local facilities and enrich the pupils' experiences.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

55. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school. He gives confidence to the pupils, staff, parents and governors, and a strong sense of working together for the good of the school and its community. He is dedicated, leads by example, and plays a very effective part in the management of pupils. Parents greatly value his involvement in every aspect of life in the school, and his commitment to the wellbeing of the community it serves. His clear sense of purpose is reflected in the efficient day-to-day management of the school, and the positive atmosphere within the classrooms. The school has maintained the good findings from the previous inspection report.

56. Good leadership is provided by the governing body in making provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The headteacher, in his role as co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO), is effective in providing the resources to improve the provision made for SEN. However, the current management arrangements for the teaching, assessment and staffing of SEN provision is too informal and relies too heavily on individual initiatives. The distinction between the responsibilities of the headteacher in his role as SENCO and the work undertaken by SEN teaching staff and the management of learning support workers is a weakness that is not helped by the lack of a formal system to review and evaluate the provision and the lack of regular minuted meetings for all SEN staff. With the exception of an omission in the governors' annual report to parents regarding the admission of disabled pupils and the funding provided for SEN, all other statutory requirements are met.

57. The governing body and all teachers have been actively involved in setting and carrying out the action plan from the previous inspection report and most of the key issues for development have been met, or are progressing very well. The issue concerning the system for assessing and recording the pupils' progress is developing well but needs further development, especially in the foundation subjects and in the core subjects of science, religious education and mathematics. Progress in relation to the need to provide opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor the quality and standards of pupils' work is unsatisfactory and needs further development especially in

science, geography, music, physical education, religious education and information technology. Co-ordinators have established and collated useful samples of pupils' work to record attainment and progress over time. There has been limited time over the past two years to implement fully both of the above issues due to the introduction of the literacy hour and the numeracy initiative, which has resulted in a great deal of time and training being needed to implement these initiatives. However, the other three issues have been fully implemented, written reports to parents have been improved, there is a consistent approach to homework and the school has maintained and developed the good quality of provision for special educational needs.

58. The staff are very committed and this can be seen in the way in which they work together as an effective team with a real desire to improve the quality of education. A senior management team supports the headteacher well. Its members co-operate well informally but very few formal meetings are held and therefore no records of decisions and actions are made. The same is true of the co-operation between the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and the teachers who teach pupils with special educational needs. They meet informally but due to a lack of formal meetings there is no record of action taken or of decisions made. However, the special needs register is kept well up to date by the SENCO. The school should improve formal meetings on both these aspects so that all staff are aware of decisions made and if necessary can act upon them. The senior management team is involved in classroom observations, especially the headteacher, and the feedback given to staff aids teaching development. Subject co-ordinators have been closely involved in introducing and reviewing schemes of work, and in ensuring adequate resources are provided in their subjects. The professional development of the staff is satisfactory and there has been a great emphasis on training for the literacy hour and numeracy initiatives over the past two years. The strategies set for the monitoring of English constitutes a good model to follow. The initiatives in literacy and numeracy have already had an impact on the rest of the curriculum. All staff have been appraised in the past but because of union directives formal appraisal is on hold for the time being. However, informal appraisal does take place. All staff have job descriptions. Leadership is clearly focused on setting targets for raising educational standards and improving the quality of education provided. There are clear strategies to maintain high standards, including regular testing and the analysis of test results.

59. The school has comprehensive aims for social and intellectual development and for forming a lively, caring community with pupils, parents, governors and the wider community.

There are a range of extra-curricular clubs, which echo the broad curriculum offered. The good model presented by staff contributes effectively to the school's very positive ethos in which its social aims and values are reflected. The school has a clear policy for equal opportunities meeting the needs of pupils effectively, whatever their gender, ethnic or social background. The policy is well promoted by all teaching and non-teaching staff, and the aims and objectives of this policy are generally met.

60. The school has a clear policy for pupils who have special educational needs; which meets the requirements of the Education (Special Educational Needs) Information Regulations of 1994, and support is well targeted to meet the pupils' needs. The Code of Practice is implemented in all procedures. The governing body meets its legal responsibilities in naming a responsible person as the SEN governor.

61. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and staff in the management of the school. The chair of governors visits the school regularly and knows the school well. Other governors visit the school and generally keep a "watchful eye" on what is happening in the school. The governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities and operates through a structure of committees which meet regularly. It has produced policies for guiding its work in line with legal requirements, including those of the Race Relations and Sex Discrimination Acts. The school development plan (SDP) is prioritised, costed and success criteria is stated with achievable dates for completion. However, there is no policy for the use of reasonable force to restrain pupils. There is also no inclusion in the school's Prospectus of access for disabled pupils. There is monitoring of attainment by governors, as measured through the national standard assessment test scores, the outcomes of which are taking the school forward. All statutory requirements for National Curriculum, health and safety, and child protection procedures are met.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing

62. The school continues to provide adequate levels of teaching staff who are well deployed across the school. Teachers' subject expertise is appropriate to the demands of the curriculum only in information technology is it under developed. The five support assistants are used well across

the school and the school secretary and her assistant are deployed to best advantage.

63. Staff training is integrated into the development plan as appropriate, ensuring that the individual as well as the school gain best benefit. For example, two members of staff have just completed a literacy support programme and returned to give the rest of the staff a full briefing on their findings. No formal appraisals have been carried out over the last two years, as a result of union directives. However, informal appraisal takes place and the training of staff has not suffered and adequately meets the current needs of the school and of the individuals. New staff are given a mentor and adequate levels of guidance and support are provided by senior staff.

64. There are sufficient suitably qualified staff working with SEN pupils. There has been little specific in-service training for staff other than that provided for the initial training of learning support workers. Issues relating to SEN are regularly considered during staff meetings. The accommodation currently provided in the school library for the two teachers of SEN is inadequate as it prevents use being made of the library by other group sessions during the morning. Learning resources for SEN pupils are well chosen, of good quality and appropriate to the range of SEN in the school

Accommodation

65. The rise in numbers has put pressure on space with two new classrooms added three years ago. This increase has been planned and managed well. However, the open plan accommodation occasionally presents problems. For example, the use of the library to accommodate two small special needs groups is not ideal. There is also a noise problem due to the close proximity of some classes to the practical areas. For example, in a Year 6 circle time some pupils could not be heard when responding to questions without raising their voices considerably and the opportunity for reflection and quiet was negated.

66. Classrooms are adequate in size, well lit, heated and ventilated and the whole-school is kept clean and tidy. All areas of the school are well decorated, some of which has been undertaken by parents and staff during school holidays. The quality of decoration and displays across the school provides pupils and visitors with a welcoming and purposeful atmosphere. The main hall accommodates whole school events and is also effectively used for gym and musical activities. The

secretary's office is well situated to receive visitors and deal with school administration matters.

67. The outside of the building is well maintained, despite the vandalism. There are no graffiti or litter in the playground. The hard play area is adequate in size and safe for pupils' use whilst the grassed area is used well for sporting activities and is also well maintained.

Resources

68. The library has been refurbished and re-sited since the last inspection. It is now used for special needs groups each morning, which precludes its use for research or reference by other classes during that time. However, the content of the library has improved and is now very good for fiction and non-fiction. The quality and quantity of artefacts for art, religious education and history have improved considerably, and are now good.

69. Resources in every subject are ample in quantity and quality, and in many subjects they are good. In all cases the resources are appropriate for the age of pupils and the curriculum taught. The parent / teacher association has been very generous in its donations for new equipment but the introduction of this equipment is held up due to the threat of vandalism.

70. Good use is made of resources external to the school such as visits to the Ironbridge Museum, Bristol Museum, the Oldbury power station and residential trips for older pupils for a range of scientific studies to the Forest of Dean.

The efficiency of the school

71. The quality of financial planning is good. The headteacher and the school secretary draw up a draft budget which is based in part on historical patterns but principally on projected costs. The school development plan identifies the school's priorities which is put together in conjunction with the individual subject co-ordinators' plans and priorities. All priorities are appropriately costed. The school development plan, therefore, steers the budget. The draft budget is presented to the finance committee for full consideration before going to the governing body for adoption. This is an effective arrangement. The school plans ahead for one year only at a time but is alert to projected trends, such as adjustments to the numbers of pupils. Consequently, the school prudently

retains an element of contingency in its budget. Spending is monitored closely by the headteacher and the chair of that committee; budget monitoring statements are received at regular intervals by the finance committee.

72. An area identified for development in the last report related to the school not having a formal mechanism for evaluating its cost-effectiveness. Members of the governing body are now attached to individual subjects and are closely involved in the planning for the use and the management of resources. This arrangement makes a sound contribution to the process of evaluation, but is still not fully developed.

73. The funds for pupils with special educational needs provide for additional support staff. Within Years 3 and 4 the support staff are well deployed but, in Years 5 and 6 there are fewer support staff even though there is a large proportion of the classes with pupils who have special educational needs. They are not adequate in terms of numbers and, as a consequence, the support is less effective. This impedes the progress made by the pupils in these year groups. Additional funding has been made available to the school to support the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy through staff development and this spending is proving effective in the teaching and pupils' learning.

74. The school makes good use of the learning resources and accommodation and, overall, its level of deployment of teaching and support staff is satisfactory. Teachers are appropriately deployed according to need and expertise and, as curriculum co-ordinators, effectively discharge their responsibilities.

75. The financial control of the school, undertaken principally by the school secretary, is very good. It is underpinned from the good quality support received by the local education authority's financial services. The headteacher and governing body receive regular up-to-date financial information. Full and effective use are made of computerised financial management systems. The day-to-day organisation and administration of the school is very effective and efficient. The high quality administration gives good support to the work of the teachers and to the smooth running of the school.

76. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils and their level of attainment on entry is

low. The pupils' progress is good and the level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with national expectations. The quality of education provided by the school is good and the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development is very good. The unit cost per pupil for a school of this type are just below the average. This is a good school and, taking all factors into account, the school, as at the time of the last inspection, gives good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

77. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments show that overall attainment at level 4 or above was below the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher scores of level 5 or above was also below the national average. In comparison with the average for similar schools, results at level 4 or above were below. There was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the 1999 cohort. Teacher assessments are broadly in line with National Curriculum results. However, the school results for this year, especially at level 5, show an improvement on pupils' performance since last year. Pupils who have special educational needs attain appropriate standards and make good progress towards meeting targets set for them in their individual education plans.

78. Currently, overall attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing are in line with levels expected nationally and these findings are broadly similar to the results of the previous inspection report. The results from the tests administered by the school when pupils enter at age 7, indicate that pupils' attainment is below that expected for their age in all aspects of English.

79. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is in line with the national average. Some younger pupils have a limited vocabulary and speak in simple sentences. More-able pupils speak confidently in front of the class and in small groups. Where the lesson is well supported by visual aids and the context for talk is clear, such as during the 'Big Book' sharing session in the literacy hour, pupils show a sound understanding and respond to questions accurately and with imagination. Sessions which focus on the development of oral skills provide the occasions for extended talk through role-play. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 2 listen very well to the teachers and others. Older pupils generally listen well, follow instructions and show that they understand what is required of them. They can discuss the importance of the 5 Ws, ("who", "when", "where", "why" and "what",) when writing the first paragraph in a newspaper article to make it eye catching. Many pupils show good maturity in class discussions and listen to other pupils' ideas and opinions for example, in one lesson pupils were discussing how a verb could be turned into an adverb. They really enjoyed acting out the adverb when talking in front of the class.

80. Overall, pupils' attainment in reading and writing is above the national average. Younger pupils make good progress in reading and are learning the connection between sounds and letter symbols. Most pupils develop a range of reading strategies including phonics and picture clues to tackle unknown words. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about reading. During the reading of the text in the literacy hour pupils were able to give summaries of character and plot, and many pupils could predict outcome. They enjoy the 'Partnership Buddy' sessions when older pupils spend time reading to them and discussing the story. Good personal development is achieved during this time. However, there was little evidence of the use of circle time to develop their personal skills further. Most young pupils use joined-up writing and present their work neatly. Many pupils recognise speech marks, full stops, question marks and capital letters and know how to use them. Pupils are beginning to use more interesting sentences; for example, in one lesson they were presented with 'boring sentences' and, through very skilful teaching, were taught how to extend them into interesting and imaginative ones. Older readers, in discussion, expressed an interest in a range of reading material which included fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Above-average readers read with fluency and expression. Most pupils give good accounts of the story and predict outcome. Older pupils use joined-up writing and their presentation is sound. However, a few pupils' writing is untidy and poorly presented. Higher-attaining pupils achieve high standards in writing, for example, changing the text from personal to instructional. Pupils are producing a range of written work, including extended story writing, poetry, use of persuasive language and writing from different viewpoints. Throughout the school there is evidence of drafting and editing and the development of word-processing skills for the presentation of work. Pupils of all ages understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction and can locate information using contents and index pages. Older pupils can retrieve information through information technology programmes.

81. Standards of literacy are good. The literacy hour having been fully implemented for just over a year, is having a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of texts, and in encouraging them to use a wider range of vocabulary in their speaking. Pupils are taught in ability groups within each year group. For the literacy hour in Year 3 a third class is formed and pupils work in the space between the other two classrooms. There is a considerable level of noise, which permeates between these classes, and many pupils lose concentration and behaviour deteriorates, especially in the practical area. Younger pupils are beginning to write stories and develop an understanding of character, setting and plot. There is a strong focus on developing vocabulary and sentence structure especially in the lower-aged group classes. Writing

is used effectively in other curriculum areas, such as geography, history, science and religious education. Reading for comprehension is well supported. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in achieving the literacy targets identified in the individual educational plans.

82. Pupils' progress in all aspects of English is good. Very good progress is made in the literacy hour in the development of reading skills through reading as a class and shared reading in small groups, especially in the Year 4 and 5 classes. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers. The older pupils can discuss in depth characters from their reading books and can use different sources to locate information they need for work in other subjects such as history and science. Personal target setting results in good progress in pupils' writing; targets are often based on a teacher's marking comment. Most pupils carefully check their work before giving it in. Progress is very good when pupils' are set challenging tasks, know and understand what they are supposed to learn and motivated to complete the activity.

83. Pupils' attitudes to English are good. They enjoy listening to stories and poetry. Most concentrate well on their work. However, some fail to sustain interest without the intervention of the teacher, especially at the end of Key Stage 2 and when they are not sure of the learning intentions. When pupils' attitudes are very good they stay on task, look up spellings for themselves and organise their own work well. They listen attentively for substantial amount of time, find tasks demanding but achievable, and are motivated by very good teaching.

84. Overall teaching is good, at times, very good, and occasionally excellent. Where teaching is good, there is clear learning objectives and sound subject knowledge. In the best lessons, there are effective planning for all abilities, prior knowledge of the pupils is assessed by questioning techniques at the beginning of the lesson, and pupils are fully aware of the learning focus. Tasks are challenging and pupils are well motivated by the quality of teaching. Pace of lessons is brisk and punchy, resources are well prepared. In other lessons although satisfactory, they would have been good if teachers had given clear learning objectives and classroom organisation had been well structured. In general pupils are managed well. Much praise is given to motivate pupils. However, there are occasions when pupils are less well managed, especially at the end of Key Stage 2, and pupils show inappropriate behaviour. Generally group activities are well organised, although short-term deadlines are underused to keep pupils on task. Throughout the school, assessment is used effectively to set targets and to inform teaching. Relationships with pupils are

good, and there are good expectations of performance and behaviour. Marking is good and provides pupils with future learning targets.

85. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their choice of books. In the study of text and poetry, pupils are learning that language can be used to convey emotion. Themes in their written work are developing their awareness of environmental issues.

86. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has produced a policy and scheme of work for English, which gives teachers good support. There is very good guidance on the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. There are very good assessment procedures, which are used effectively to inform planning. Liaison between the learning support workers and class teachers is used effectively and joint planning across year groups ensures there is equality of access to the curriculum. However, there was little evidence of the learning support workers having specific lesson plans in order to support the teacher and pupils fully. The co-ordinator gives teachers good support through inset at staff meetings and regular monitoring of teachers' planning. Pupils' quality and standards of work are well monitored by the co-ordinators in this subject. The development of literacy is a priority in the school development plan. Resources are good. There is a very good range of books including fiction and non-fiction and the school has been very successful in obtaining extra finances to support English. The library is used during the mornings as the special educational needs base, which precludes other pupils and groups using these facilities during these sessions. There are opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills in school through lunchtime clubs. Pupils are actively encouraged to take books home to read and homework is set regularly to develop reading and writing skills further. The school is well placed in English to make further improvement. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met.

Mathematics

87. Results in the 1998 national tests for 11 year olds in mathematics indicate that the percentage of pupils reaching the average standard of Level 4 or above was below the national average for all schools and well below and for those with pupils from similar backgrounds. However, the results of the 1999 national tests show that pupils have made an improvement

although they remain below the national average for all schools. In comparison to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results are also low. Inspection evidence supports the improvement shown in the national tests. This finding is in line with that of the previous inspection.

88. During Key Stage 2 the pupils acquire a good knowledge and understanding of work in number. The introduction this year of the National Numeracy Strategy has contributed to the pupils' development of simple but secure strategies for mental number work, such as for calculating the doubles of numbers. In Year 6 the pupils are confident in the use of the four operations of number; they have a secure understanding of place value to multiply numbers and decimals by 10 and 100; they are familiar with positive and negative numbers and they accurately plot co-ordinates. The pupils recognise different types of fractions, such as an improper fraction and calculate percentages from fractions.

89. In work on shape, space and measures the pupils know the names of a good range of two-dimensional shapes, such as, rhombus and heptagon identify their properties, for example, "sides" and "corners", and recognise axes of symmetry. They are not secure, however, in applying their understanding of area from, say, a rectangle to a compound shape made up of two or more rectangles. Pupils understand and use imperial and metric units of measure as they apply, for example, to capacity and length. In data handling the pupils produce bar charts from, for instance, tallying the results of a class survey on favourite snacks. However, the pupils are not familiar with using and applying mathematics in a wide range of situations and subjects.

90. At Key Stage 2, all pupils make good progress in mathematics, notably in their work on number. Pupils develop well their knowledge and understanding of the four operations of number and how they apply, for example, to work on money. They progress well in their acquisition of new mathematical vocabulary, as it relates to the names of shapes and angles, for instance. In lessons where the teaching is of a high standard the pupils are positively motivated and, in the plenary sessions, they consolidate well their understanding of the key points they have learnt. With suitably targeted support, the pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

91. Pupils response to mathematics is good and, in a significant proportion of lessons, it is very good. Pupils enjoy mathematics and make an immediate start on tasks when working on their

own or in groups. They are confident and prepared to have a go at an answer. The pupils listen well to the teachers and to each other. When required, the pupils collaborate very effectively, sharing ideas and approaches to solving problems, such as in relation to the translation, reflection and rotation of two-dimensional shapes. Behaviour is good and the pupils sustain interest well in what they are doing. However, in lessons where the teaching is less effective, the pupils become restless and they do not stay on task. Opportunities for the pupils to develop their capacity for personal study are few.

92. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 ranges from unsatisfactory to very good but, overall, it is good. The main strengths in the teaching stem from the teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, their high expectations of the pupils in terms of their application to the work and their behaviour, and the effective use of questions to ensure that the work is understood. The arrangements for setting the pupils in each year by ability assist the teachers in matching the work to the pupils' needs, but the better lessons are characterised also by individual lesson plans which identify clear learning objectives in light of the pupils' assessed ability levels. Additional adult support in the classrooms is effectively deployed, mainly to assist the pupils with special educational needs. However, higher-attaining pupils are provided with work which lacks appropriate challenge.

93. The co-ordinator for mathematics provides a clear educational direction for the subject and has played an important part in seeing that the strategy has been introduced satisfactorily. There is a sound structure for assessment which is generally used to inform teachers' future planning. There is good support for teaching and developing the mathematics curriculum and monitoring teaching in lessons and sharing good practice.

94. Mathematics is celebrated well in the classrooms with bright stimulating and informative displays. However, in practical areas, the scope for display and ready access to resource materials, is restricted. Accommodation in Year 3 and 6, where the classes are in very close proximity to each other frequently makes noise intrusive and imposes limitations on the nature of the learning activities. The subject makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' social development in their learning to work together constructively. There is a positive ethos in mathematics lessons which reflects the school's aims for higher standards.

95. The school's strategy for teaching the skills of numeracy is in its early stages with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy only this term. However, effective use is made already of numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in history, the pupils' number work is reinforced through the use of time lines, their spatial awareness is developed through work in art, and their understanding of handling data is furthered in science as the pupils record graphically the growth rates of plants. The school is well placed to make further improvements in this subject.

Science

96. Results in the 1998 national tests for 11 year olds in science indicated that the percentage of pupils reaching the average standard of level 4 or above was well below the national average for all schools and for schools with pupils of similar background. However, the results of the 1999 national tests show that pupils have made an improvement on last years' tests and are above the national average for all schools and for pupils from similar backgrounds. Inspection evidence supports the improvement shown in tests but finds attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in line with those expected nationally. These findings are in line with those from the previous inspection report. The results of tests indicate a trend of improvement from 1997 to the most recent tests in 1999.

97. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment and progress in experimental and investigative science are in line with national expectations. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and ideas such as the way human body-processes work, the types of food groups available and the importance of a healthy diet, how friction affects the way things move, the structure of the earth and how simple electrical circuits work. For instance, as part of their investigations into ways of varying the current in a circuit to make bulbs brighter or dimmer, some of the older pupils showed sound understanding of how to represent series circuits by drawings and diagrams and how to construct their own simple series and parallel circuits. Pupils successfully carry out investigations planned by teachers. Sometimes pupils make predictions and often they record results in forms prepared by teachers, and draw conclusions from them. In some instances, pupils present their results on bar charts using the computer. Pupils' observational drawing is good. However, there is limited evidence of some of the oldest pupils planning their own investigations, deciding what to change and what to measure, choosing equipment or the best way of presenting their results.

98. Pupils make good progress across the school and build on previously acquired skills and knowledge in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties work well and make appropriate and often good gains. However, there are occasions at the top end of the key stage when the knowledge and skills of some of the highest-attaining pupils are not extended sufficiently.

99. Across the school, girls and boys show obvious enjoyment of science. Pupils work well collaboratively and enhances their personal and social development. The quality of discussion during practical group-tasks is high. For instance, some of the younger key stage pupils can talk about their work, showing a lively interest in the experiments they are conducting when investigating how to keep things cool. They learn how to use thermometers and to make careful measurements of temperature, and compare and talk about findings with enthusiasm. In general, all pupils can sustain concentration for extended periods and persevere well with tasks set.

100. Teaching is always satisfactory and, on the majority of occasions, it is good. Lessons are well planned and delivered, with time and resources used effectively. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and use intervention well to probe pupils' understanding and extend it further. Teachers have high expectations of the work and behaviour of their pupils. Where the teaching is best, learning objectives are clear and teachers find ways to help pupils raise their own questions for their investigations and encourage them to test out their own ideas. The science curriculum makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' skills of literacy and numeracy.

101. The science curriculum is broad and adequately balanced and meets statutory requirements. Planning for science, which is through a cycle of topics, is done well and teachers with classes of the same age groups collaborate closely. Plans show that teachers intend to cover the full range of aspects in science. The school has recently adopted a new scheme of work with plans to amend and refine it further following evaluation of its effectiveness in practice. A useful portfolio of assessed pupils' work in science has been compiled which gives valuable guidance to staff on the different attainment levels for the National Curriculum. Assessment systems have recently been put in place but are not yet fully implemented. The school is aware of the need to ensure that the progress made by pupils is consistently monitored within all year groups.

102. The subject is enthusiastically and well managed by the co-ordinator who has a good

overview of the science curriculum across the school. However, at present there are no formalised meetings or time allowed for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning of science within the different year groups. Resources are good. The school is well placed to make further improvements in this subject.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Design and Technology

103. Because of timetabling arrangements during the week of the inspection it was not possible to see any lessons in design and technology. Judgements, therefore, are based on the scrutiny of planning documentation and the pupils' work, talking with pupils and discussions with the subject co-ordinator.

104. The pupils make good progress in design and technology and this finding is broadly in line with that of the last inspection which found that standards of achievement, in relation to the pupils' abilities, were "appropriate and sometimes better". The pupils develop well their skills of designing, making and evaluating. Initially, when designing, they use their experiences of using materials, techniques and products to create ideas, as in the designing of sandwiches in Year 3. The pupils document what food items they will need, the tools they will require, such as a knife, and how they will put the parts together. They draw suitably annotated diagrams to explain their designs further and, on completion, they evaluate their work by stating what their opinion was of the sandwich from the points of view of appearance and taste. In Years 4 and 5 the pupils work according to stipulated requirements as, for example, when they design and make an "iron man" which must have one moving part and also light up. The pupils plan well, acknowledging that there has to be a sequence to the making and that it is important to select materials and techniques of assembly according to purpose. At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils take account of users having views and preferences with regard to appearance, for instance, when they design power driven model cars. In making the model cars the pupils measure, mark out and cut the selected materials and assemble them using a variety of techniques - staples and glue guns, for instance. Evaluations of work at the end of Key Stage 2 are thorough and detail what works well and what does not work well and why. With targeted support, the pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

105. The pupils' response to design and technology is good. They enjoy talking about what they have done and listen very attentively to each other. The quality of the presentation of their designs is good and undertaken with considerable attention to detail.

106. Design and technology is planned to link with other subjects and topics. For instance, the preparation of sandwiches in Year 3 is done in association with the pupils' work on healthy eating in science, and the designing and making of weaving looms in Year 5 links with the study of local woollen mills as part of a history topic. Information technology is deployed well as, for example, in the design of patterns which may be woven on the looms. The subject is also used as an effective means of furthering ties with local business, as in the work on designing and making menus in association with a local bakery and cafe.

107. The design and technology co-ordinator has a significant impact on the standards in the subject throughout the school. Planning documentation is detailed and the individual pupils' design-and-make activity sheets are routinely assessed to establish levels of attainment and to monitor progress. A portfolio of exemplars of pupils' work serves as a valuable document for the moderation of further work. The school is adopting the guidelines of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority with effect from this year. Resourcing for design and technology is good; there are sufficient materials and tools which are of good quality, centrally stored and readily accessible.

108. Design and technology makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' literacy and numeracy developments through the requirements for pupils to write down what they propose to do and then evaluate their work and through the need to estimate, measure and produce scale drawings. The requirement for the pupils to work collaboratively in design and technology plays an important part in their social development.

Information Technology

109. Attainment across the school is satisfactory and in line with that expected nationally and with the findings of the previous inspection report. The school operates with a combination of Acorns and personal computers. Most pupils arrive at Year 3 with basic keyboard skills, including

word processing and graphics skills. At the start of Key Stage 2 most pupils have been exposed to the basic handling of information using simple, pre-set spreadsheets into which data can be entered and outputs obtained. Typically, many pupils have attained level 2, but a few struggle to achieve it.

110. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are adequately skilled in the use of the keyboard and mouse. Most pupils have achieved at least level 3 with a few below that level but many more above. A few pupils are limited in their understanding of fonts and type size, how to change them and what effects can be created. Most are skilled in cut-and-paste techniques and they can save, print and retrieve their work unaided.

111. In a Year 5 class some pupils were not familiar with spell check and similar commands and standards are variable. A few Year 6 pupils were seen using CD Roms to conduct their own research although the use of this technique is limited, mainly due to the unavailability of suitable computers. Word processing skills are satisfactory. Many good examples are to be seen on display showing satisfactory use of fonts, colour and space. Many can use clip art to good effect and presentation of information is generally good. Some higher attainers can enter data using a database and extract information successfully for analysis purposes. Some can apply a spreadsheet to create a table and add up columns of figures, but good attainment in this area is limited to a few and most examples seen were heavily teacher directed. Although all aspects of the curriculum are offered, measurement and control work has been less well covered than other areas. The school has recently connected to the Internet and several pupils are aware of its opportunities, many having computers at home as well.

112. Pupils with special needs are given equal access to computing facilities and their progress and attainment is in line with all other pupils in the school. In the special needs unit the use of the computer is effective in supporting word formation and number, with several useful programs available. Many were able to make correct answers to simple, single-digit sums with no teacher intervention, which is good and supports the numeracy skills programme well.

113. Progress across Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. The co-ordinator for information technology has adopted the QCA scheme of work and devised long-term plans for the whole school. The strategy is to offer the older pupils the PCs, leaving the younger pupils with the Acorn machines.

The co-ordinator has devised a good system of monitoring personal performance with a check sheet showing each pupil, the particular applications to be used and a qualitative indicator of how well the activity was performed. Unfortunately, not all teachers have adopted this system and in several classes only a simple tick sheet exists which does not indicate rates of progress.

114. Although all pupils are exposed to a good cross section of the National Curriculum, the level of exposure is not always sufficient to ensure a sound capture of skills. The strategy for placing hardware is to provide a minimum of one computer in the classroom with others outside in the open plan areas. Teachers have chosen to use the classroom machines for preference, leaving the ones outside idle for much of each day. This is poor and ineffective use of equipment. All PCs have a CD Rom attached but not all pupils know how to access this facility, although the situation is improving. Observations and a portfolio of sample work show that some research is conducted on the CD Rom but from the many lessons observed during the inspection and from a large selection of lesson plans it appears that insufficient use is made of the computers in other subjects. Consequently it is clear that, although most pupils make satisfactory progress, with a few making good progress in information technology, some do not.

115. Most pupils are very well behaved when using the computers and associated devices. No bad behaviour was observed. Indeed good examples were seen of pupils working well together in pairs, often a boy and girl. Collaborative work is satisfactory, with more-able pupils helping the others to good effect. The opportunities to show initiative are few. Most pupils show due respect for other peoples' property.

116. No teaching of information technology was observed and none was timetabled during the inspection. The number of lessons observed where any IT was taking place was very limited but from discussions with staff and pupils and from the level of progress made, the quality of teaching is generally judged to be satisfactory. Management of pupils is generally satisfactory. Few lessons were seen where information technology had been identified as a necessary part of the topic or where pupils could use the computer to enforce another skill or verify answers. Lessons start on time but sometimes insufficient use is made of the equipment because of ineffective lesson planning. Where teaching is weak the work has generally not been adequately explained and is lacking challenge. Good teaching occurs when pupils are excited by what they are learning and it produces something of which they are proud. There was some homework issued during the

inspection and further evidence indicates that homework is occasionally issued, always to good effect. In discussion with a few teachers it is clear that all command basic skills which adequately equip them for implementing the National Curriculum, but a few require additional training, especially with the new PCs and the Internet applications. This lack of knowledge by some contributes to a general lack of expectation.

117. The scheme of work shows the system of progression that is required for each year group. The application of these plans into the daily lesson plans in other subjects does not however, take place consistently across the school. The co-ordinator discusses progress with the other teachers and visits classrooms to view work but these visits do not contribute significantly to the assessment of work or the improvement of the curriculum planning process. Consequently the formal assessment and recording of attainment in information technology in the school generally is unsatisfactory and no formal means is employed to use assessment records to inform planning.

118. Very little spiritual or cultural development was noted during lesson observations. A few examples were seen of teachers enforcing the moral codes of the school rules. Indeed the good role model employed by staff generally is a significant factor in developing pupils' moral values. The small number of lessons observed did indicate a good sense of social development when pupils worked well in pairs to present a bar chart for example.

119. The governing body has had some involvement with the introduction of the information technology curriculum. They have sponsored the introduction of new machines, some using tokens from supermarkets as well as through the budget. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the necessary environment and ensure compliance with the national curriculum. She has recommended training courses and has carried out training of staff herself.

120. The co-ordinator has ensured that all teachers have been exposed to most of the curriculum detail, sufficient to deliver the basic subject. However, the training programme is not complete and some members of staff do not feel totally comfortable with all areas of the curriculum. Some of the classroom assistants do not have formal training in computer technology, which reduces the effectiveness of the delivery. The co-ordinator is allocated very little lesson time to monitor other teachers and relies on discussions with colleagues during staff meetings to moderate grades. The ratio of 19 pupils to each computer is barely adequate to deliver the curriculum, and the quality of

some machines is unsatisfactory. The new PCs have been installed over a period of 12-18 months and their impact has not yet been fully felt. In addition to the computers there are some good peripheral devices such as a digital camera, scanners and colour printers, all of which have been used well to support the curriculum.

121. The accommodation for the delivery of information technology is adequate across the school. In some classrooms the equipment is confined to a small corner and ideal posture positions to see the screen and operate the keyboard are not always possible but, unless pupils are to be seated at these machines for considerable periods of time, this is not an essential requirement. The positioning of computers outside classrooms requires reviewing, as it is these machines which are used far less than those inside.

122. The budget for information technology, other than the capital purchase of machines, is quite small and is managed well by the co-ordinator. Suitable software is obtained based on a priority list created for the purpose. The purchases are in line with the plans developed by the co-ordinator at the start of each year and are made in conjunction with the teachers and management team.

123. The co-ordinator herself is anxious to extend her own knowledge by attending suitable courses and this has been generally well managed. Such training is essential if she is to maintain effective control of the curriculum management.

124. The information technology curriculum meets statutory requirements but delivery is only just satisfactory. All elements of the National Curriculum are embraced within the schemes of work but their introduction into other subjects through a comprehensive range of activities and topics is lacking. To make further developments in information technology, the school should consider reviewing the number of computers, assessment to inform planning and to record pupils' attainment.

History

125. In addition to the lessons observed during the inspection, judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning, displays of work, policies, resources and discussions

with pupils and teachers. Standards in history have improved since the last inspection and the subject is now a strength of the school. Throughout the school, pupils are attaining standards beyond those expected for their age. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Some higher-attaining pupils in Year 4 are making very good progress. Pupils make similar progress both in the acquisition of knowledge and in their ability to use historical evidence and the skills of historical enquiry. The subject is making a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Through their use of timelines pupils appreciate the application of number to identify key dates in history.

126. In Year 3 pupils can recognise features of the Roman civilisation and know that there is evidence available to the young historian of Roman life and civilisation. In their work on the Second World War some pupils in Years 3 and 4 use documentary evidence and historical artefacts to consider the effectiveness of air raid shelters and the impact of food rationing. They are gaining powerful insights into the effect of war on peoples' lives. Other pupils in Year 4 have good factual knowledge of the Tudor period. They understand the importance to historians of the evidence contained in Tudor inventories. They can make reasoned judgements about the quality of life of Tudor people by referring to illustrations and extracts from historical documents. Pupils in Year 5 have a good breadth of knowledge of life during Victorian times and are able to compare social conditions in the last century with today. There is evidence of good enquiry skills being used by Year 6 pupils as they compile topic books on the Ancient Greeks. Personal writing is detailed, well researched, attractively illustrated and supported with material taken from CD Rom.

127. Overall, pupils make a good response to history lessons. They are enthusiastic and co-operative, interested in other pupils' contributions and willing to share ideas. In a Year 4 lesson the pupils were highly motivated, responding very positively to challenging work and high expectations. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils in the Years 3 and 4 visit the nearby war memorial in association with their work on the Second World War and consider the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 reflect on Victorian childhood and make their own interpretations of Greek illustrations.

128. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Teaching is never less than good and in two thirds of lessons it is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and effectively link

history with science, geography, religious education and art. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 plan a balanced and nutritious meal from the ingredients that would have been available during rationing in the Second World War. Teachers have high expectations and set challenging work for pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4. For example, in Year 4 pupils use their reasoning skills to distinguish between the possessions of rich and poor people in Tudor times. Lesson planning is generally good with well designed activities to meet the pupils' broad range of ability. Good questioning reinforces knowledge and is used effectively to rectify pupils' misunderstanding. Resources are well chosen and very productive use is made of the extended lesson time. Good use is made of the pupils' work both as examples of the expected standard and to celebrate excellent effort.

129. The subject benefits from very good leadership. The recommended improvements noted in the previous inspection report have been made. The schemes of work now ensure systematic coverage of the key elements of history planning for the curriculum is now good. In addition, significant developments in assessment, colourful displays of pupils' work across the school and increasing use of information and communication technology are all having a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Resources have been supplemented through the purchase and provision of suitable artefacts. Educational visits to places of historical interest remain a strong feature of the school's provision.

Geography

130. The pupils' progress in geography is satisfactory and this finding is consistent with that of the last inspection. Initially, the pupils show an awareness of places beyond their own locality. They recognise physical and human features, such as mountains and villages, which contribute to the character of a place, from looking at photographs of selected features from different countries. The pupils know the shape of the world and that it may be represented as a globe or a map. They are familiar with the names of the continents and oceans and use geographical words, like "equator" and "northern hemisphere", with understanding. Through an on-going topic of "geography in the news" the pupils learn the location of places featured, in this country and abroad, and, make good progress in understanding how physical processes can change the features and affect people's lives, as in the aftermath of the recent cyclone in Orissa, India. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress on targets set.

131. In Year 6 the pupils' skills in using and interpreting maps develop soundly through, for example, a study on rivers. The pupils can read the Ordnance Survey map of Gloucester and the Forest of Dean by interpreting the conventional signs, for example, contours to recognise hills. They determine physical features associated with the River Severn and understand how they influence human features, like the location of Gloucester as a crossing point on the river. The pupils accurately relate earlier work on erosion and deposition to specific features on the map such as flood plains.

132. The pupils enjoy geography - learning about their own locality and places in other parts of the world. In lessons they are generally well behaved and take pride in the presentation of their work. They work together effectively in producing charts and annotated maps, for instance. Collaborative work makes a useful contribution to the pupils' social development. However, the pupils have few opportunities for developing their capacity for personal study.

133. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory. The teachers' expectations of the pupils' behaviour and standards of work are good and their knowledge and understanding of the subject is secure. The planning for geography is structured well and provides appropriate continuity and progression in the development of the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Individual lessons, however, do not adequately take into account the pupils' abilities and lack the identification of clear learning objectives. In classes where geography topics are currently being taught, there are stimulating and informative displays, such as of river profiles, which incorporate well the pupils' work with pictures and relevant geographical vocabulary.

134. The timetabling of some geography lessons to extend over the major part of an afternoon results in their being unduly protracted. This has a negative effect on the pupils' levels of concentration and on the standards of work.

135. The subject co-ordinator has had a positive impact on the development of the geography curriculum although the school is in the throes of adopting curriculum materials from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about geography and keen to promote further the subject in the school. However, opportunities to monitor the teaching of geography have yet to be developed. The subject is well resourced with an adequate

range of maps and atlases. Assessment is achieved from discussion with pupils of their knowledge and understanding and the scrutiny of pupils' work. The co-ordinator recognises the input that information and communication technology may make to the subject and has arranged the purchase of good quality geographical programs.

136. Geography makes a useful contribution to the pupils' development in literacy by effectively extending their vocabulary and, in looking at scales of maps and grid references, it furthers their understanding of number. Opportunities for fieldwork and contrasting another locality with their own are provided when the pupils go to the Forest of Dean on a residential visit.

Art

137. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and, at times, good. Pupils explore line and colour to produce drawings and collages; for instance, in a Year 3 class pupils were given a picture of half of an animal face and had to complete the other half. They produced some very good results. In Year 6 pupils were studying the work of Picasso and the way he had used light and dark. They experimented with tone and colour before completing a still life picture showing what they had learned.

138. Progress is satisfactory and, at times, good, especially in Years 3 and 4. For example, progress was good when pupils created their idea of a face, having previously studied faces painted by Picasso. They cut, curled and stuck paper to produce a three-dimensional face. In a Year 4 class, pupils experimented with tones of red and tried to reproduce the tones from a given strip of paper. The results are to be used later to make leaves and to create a three-dimensional collage of a "fiery wood". Good use of sketchbooks is made throughout the school and records good progress over time. Pupils study a range of artists including Mondrian and Picasso. All pupils with special educational needs attain well according to their abilities and progress is satisfactory.

139. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to art are overall good and occasionally very good. All pupils are keen and enthusiastic to undertake the art activities set. Pupils share resources fairly and use them sensibly. Pupils are taught appropriate techniques, their work is constructively criticised and they persevere with the improvement of their techniques and gain personal satisfaction from their success. They work with care and good concentration. They listen

carefully and are quick to apply the skills and knowledge they are learning. The behaviour of pupils is good and is helped by the good working habits, keeping work areas tidy and clearing away after lessons. It enhances pupils' development of their social and moral skills.

140. The quality of teaching is overall satisfactory and, at times, good. Activities are well planned and teachers have enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. There is a good range of teaching materials that are well organised and support the development of skills as well as focusing on cultural diversity, appreciation and the work of artists. Teachers' explanations and sensitive work with groups and individuals help to improve pupils' love of art as well as raising standards. Where teaching was judged to be good, there were very high expectations for pupils. For instance, in Years 3, 4 and 5, they were expected to experiment with colour and technique. The teachers constantly moved between groups and individuals, commenting on and encouraging pupils in their work. Such strategies had a significant impact on pupils' progress in the course of the lessons. There are cross-curricular links, for example, in the mixed-aged class pupils used the computer programmed "Colour Magic" to produce pictures of the Blitz.

141. There are many examples of well-displayed work around the school and in folders which raise the status of the subject for pupils and parents. Pupils receive a wide range of experiences in painting, printing, drawing, modelling and also three-dimensional work. They make good progress in the use of tools and techniques. Visiting artists such as the Daylight Theatre give performances in the school and will do so again in December and these experiences further enhance the status of art in the school. The subject makes a good contribution to the moral and social development of pupils and enhances the ethos of the school.

142. The co-ordinator has produced a policy and an appropriate scheme of work; both assist teachers in their planning of lessons. Portfolios of pupils' work are kept to record progress. Assessment is matched against the programmes of study. Accommodation is adequate and provides a satisfactory range of working surfaces and areas of appropriate flooring and sink facilities, and includes a kiln. However, when one class uses these work areas, the noise often disturbs pupils working in the classes close by. The resources are good and artifacts to support the subject have now been increased since the last inspection.

Music

143. It was not possible to observe music lessons during the inspection because of the organisation of the school timetable. However, teachers' planning shows that the full range of the National Curriculum requirements for music is covered and that rates of progress across the school are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress according to their targets set in individual educational plans

144. The overall standard of singing across the school, seen in assemblies and school choir is above those expected nationally. Pupils articulate words clearly and sing with accuracy and expression. A significant number of pupils are responding well to recorder and violin tuition. It is reported that pupils perform to a good standard on public occasions such as Christmas concerts and local music festivals. They listen attentively to pieces of music such as excerpts from "The Planets Suite" and "Vlatva" by Smetana and begin to distinguish satisfactorily the differences of structure, melody, rhythm and tone. They are knowledgeable about musical instruments.

145. During the school assemblies and choir practice observed, pupils showed good attitudes to music. They enjoyed, behaved and listened with interest and enthusiasm. They listen carefully to instructions and tried hard to sing with accuracy. They co-operate and work with sustained effort. Music enhances the pupils' development of cultural, moral and social skills.

146. As no teaching of music was observed during the inspection it is not possible to comment on the quality of the teaching in this subject. However, judging by standards achieved by pupils, teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers have appropriate command of the subject and plans include activities which are appropriate to the pupils level of understanding.

147. Pupils learning to play musical instruments such as recorder and violin are able to rehearse and perform well in groups of varying sizes. Pupils who take part in the extra-curricular choir practice show good progress in learning to sing accurately with regard to the full range of musical elements. The teaching is of good quality, delivered through the use of a range of professional skills.

148. The music policy has recently been reviewed, re-written and agreed by all staff. A new scheme of work now exists for the autumn term in each year group. Spring and summer plans are

being developed. Instructions for music games and some pointers for composing activities form a useful part of the scheme of work.

149. The current organisation of the school timetable shows that the majority of music lessons are planned for Friday afternoons. This has implications for the availability of resources across the school as well as levels of noise in some classrooms areas.

150. The school has a good range of resources, including those from other cultures. Resources are well organised and accessible. Some are stored centrally. Each class has its own smaller collection.

151. At present, the co-ordinator has limited opportunities to monitor and evaluate the teaching, assessment procedures and learning of music across the school.

Physical Education

152. Pupils are making good progress. Evidence of pupils' current standards and rate of progress indicates that by the end of Key Stage 2 they should be attaining above the national expectations in the majority of the required range of activities. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection report. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress on the targets set in individual educational plans.

153. Younger pupils are able to engage successfully in activities designed to develop their muscular strength, cardio-vascular health and stamina. They are making good progress, too, in striking and throwing skills and have a good understanding of the effects of muscular exertion on their bodies. The older pupils demonstrate good progress in creating gymnastic sequences, consisting of take off, balancing and landing using apparatus. They understand the importance of safe and correct movements when engaged in activities such as forward roll, cartwheel and handstand. When playing team games such as netball, they are able to anticipate the result of movement when shooting, throwing and jumping and the effect on performance. They perform with confidence and versatility showing good control when pivoting and defending. They show a growing sophistication in planning, evaluating and performing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress during physical education lessons and work to achieve their individual

targets. More-able pupils successfully incorporate more complex sequences into their routines. Pupils in Year 3 and 5 swim at a local leisure centre where they are making good progress. They are taught by teachers and an instructor based at the centre. Physical education skills are enhanced by extra-curricular clubs for football, netball and gymnastics.

154. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and work quietly and purposefully. They are well motivated and enjoy lessons. They behave well and collaborate in group work, sharing apparatus sensibly. They concentrate and use time well, this contributes positively to the standards of performance. Boys and girls work well together.

155. The quality of teaching is always good and on occasion, very good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and performance. There is good use of intervention and use of pupil demonstration to improve standards. Warming up and cooling down sessions are carefully used, with their importance being made clear to the pupils. There is great emphasis on safety procedures. Teachers successfully encourage discussion to enable pupils to make judgements about their own or others' performance. This means that good opportunities are taken to improve the accuracy and quality of their work.

156. There is a good policy which gives clear guidance on best procedures for teaching and learning. There are useful frameworks for the teaching of skills and activities including gymnastics. There are no formal systems in place for assessing pupils' progress in physical education. However assessment of pupils' progress in swimming is good.

157. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator who is a specialist in physical education. However there are no formalised times available for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school or to assess pupil progress.

158. The hall and outdoor playing surfaces are suitable for a range of activities. There is a satisfactory range of resources for indoor and outdoor activities, and apparatus is in very good condition. They are well organised into accessible storage areas.

159. The school successfully takes part in a good range of inter-school sporting activities which include football, netball, rounders, athletics, swimming and dance.

Religious Education

160. Standards in religious education have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Progress in lessons and over time is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that challenging lessons in Year 3 are enabling pupils to make better progress than in later years. Throughout the key stage progress in the acquisition of knowledge is significantly better than in the development of the pupils' ability to reflect on the meaning of religious stories, ceremonies and artefacts. The subject is making a sound contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

161. In Year 3 pupils can write the story of the Good Samaritan in their own words. They reflect on the qualities of saints and acquire knowledge of how Christianity arrived in Britain. Pupils in Year 4 understand the importance of rules and commandments in both the Christian and Jewish faiths. During their final two years in the school pupils develop a sound knowledge of the Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths and consider the importance of commitment, belief and prayer to religious followers. However, although most pupils in Years 5 and 6 make sound progress in acquiring factual knowledge of world religions and their practices, they find the concept of religious symbolism and stewardship difficult to understand.

162. Overall, pupils make a satisfactory response to religious education lessons. They are co-operative, willing to answer questions and settle to work sensibly. Confident teaching promotes a better attitude from pupils who show respect for each other's contributions and are eager to use their homework to contribute to class discussion. Very rarely, however, is a suitable atmosphere established where pupils can think deeply on both the religious and humanitarian topics presented to them. Although the subject makes a sound contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development there is considerable scope for greater attention to be given to this aspect of the pupils' personal development. Towards the end of some lessons the interest, attention and concentration of some pupils begins to wane and they become easily distracted

163. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in sixty per cent of lessons it is good. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject

and provide their pupils with accurate information. Lesson planning is satisfactory but lesson objectives frequently fail to refer to the knowledge, skills and understanding being presented to pupils views. Expectations are good and lessons are well organised. Teachers make good use of class discussions. For example, pupils in Year 6 presented good ideas on conservation and its relation to both the Christian and Muslim view of creation. Little use was made of religious artefacts during the inspection although a well chosen video of adult baptism used in a Year 5 lesson made a very good contribution to the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consistent encouragement and support combined with good assessment during the lesson ensures a good response from pupils. Good use is made of homework, particularly in Year 6 where pupils are well prepared for a lesson on world conservation. Occasionally, teachers endeavour to present too much information to pupils, lack the confidence to develop ideas through discussion and fail to vary the pace of the lesson. This causes some pupils to lose interest and make insufficient progress during the lesson.

164. The knowledgeable co-ordinator provides good leadership. She is aware of current developments with regard to the locally agreed syllabus and scheme of work and has embarked on developing improved systems for assessment; responded well to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection and is particularly sensitive to the need to support colleagues who may not be entirely confident in their teaching of the subject. There are limited opportunities for the co-ordinator to undertake classroom monitoring and evaluation. Resources are satisfactory and include a good selection of artefacts. The school acknowledges the need to organise visits to places of worship and to encourage visits to the school by representatives of world faiths and others able to provide pupils with first-hand evidence of humanitarian work.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

165. The inspection of Park Junior School was undertaken by a team of five inspectors who, over a four-day period, completed a total of 19 inspector-days in the school.

166. For the majority of time in school inspectors visited classes, talked with individuals and groups of pupils and evaluated the work they had done. A total of 66 hours was spent on these activities. In addition, 23 formal interviews were held with the headteacher, other staff with curriculum responsibilities, parents, pupils and governors. In addition many other informal discussions took place with adults and pupils about their work and the life of the school.

Each year group had the following number of lessons observed:

Y3(19), Y4(15), Y5(13), Y6(26).

Furthermore:

XXXV. 24 pupils were heard reading and questioned on their knowledge and understanding of books;

XXXVI. samples of pupils' work covering the full attainment-range were scrutinised in all year groups;

XXXVII. a wide range of documents, including the school development plan and policies, were analysed;

XXXVIII. teachers' planning documents, records of pupils' progress, reports and attendance were analysed;

XXXIX. financial plans and budget figures were analysed;

XL. individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs were scrutinised;

XLI. registrations and assemblies were visited;

XLII. all full-time and most part-time teachers were seen teaching the literacy hour;

XLIII. all full-time and most part-time teachers were seen teaching numeracy.

167. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y3 – Y6	329	9	108	42

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y3 – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	13.21
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8

Education support staff (Y3 – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week	73.5

Average class size: 29.9

Financial data

Financial year: 1998-99

	£
Total Income	472,877
Total Expenditure	469,397
Expenditure per pupil	1509
Balance brought forward from previous year	55,109
Balance carried forward to next year	58,589

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	270
Number of questionnaires returned:	112

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	24	56	11	6	3
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	35	46	7	6	5
The school handles complaints from parents well	12	44	21	16	7
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	17	62	12	8	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24	46	15	9	5
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	19	61	12	7	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	26	55	15	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	17	63	5	13	4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	23	51	15	10	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	17	40	19	13	11
My child(ren) like(s) school	45	42	7	3	4

Other issues raised by parents

31 parents attended the parents' meeting. Most were very supportive of the school. Parents feel their children are happy at school and like their teachers. A few parents were concerned about equal coverage of the curriculum in the mixed-age class. It was stressed that planning for delivery, progress and the continuity across the school will be inspected. Some parents expressed concern over the amount of homework given being either too much or not enough. All above issues are addressed in the main report.