

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BLACKTHORNS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lindfield

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique Reference Number: 125946

Headteacher: Ms A Bullock

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Reporting inspector: Mrs P Francis

Dates of inspection: 29 November - 3 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707873

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	3 Blackthorns Close Lindfield West Sussex RH16 2UA
Telephone number:	01444 454866
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr I Jones
Date of previous inspection:	12-16 February, 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Mrs P Francis, Registered Inspector	Mathematics Science Religious Education Art Geography History Under-fives Equal opportunities	Attainment and progress. Teaching. Leadership and management. The efficiency of the school.
Mrs M Bebo, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Attendance. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare. Partnership with parents and the community. The curriculum and assessment.
Mr P Buckley	English Information technology Design and technology Music Physical education Special Educational Needs The work of the Special Support Facility	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The very strong professional leadership of the head teacher and the high commitment of the governors and teaching team provide a very positive ethos in which the main priorities are the raising of standards for pupils and continuous improvement.
- Standards in reading and writing across the school and in science at seven are above the national average.
- Pupils' attendance is good, they have good attitudes, behave well, have good relationships with each other and their teachers, and have good personal development.
- Teaching is exceptionally good overall because it is of a consistently high quality throughout the school.
- The school provides a very good curriculum that is planned very well and meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers plan from a very clear assessment of what the pupils already know.
- The school has a good partnership with its parents, provides very good support and guidance for pupils, provides very good social development for pupils and takes good care of them.

### Where the school has a weakness

- In mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have weak skills in mental calculation.

**The weakness is far outweighed by what the school does well, but it will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has accelerated the rate of improvement and has made good progress against the key issues of the previous report and most have been fully resolved. The school has very good capacity for further improvement due to the headteacher's very strong leadership, together with the recent positive changes in teaching staff and the existing strengths of the very good support staff. In a short time, the key improvements in teaching, the planning of the curriculum and its assessment, have had a positive impact on pupils' standards of attainment and progress. These, have been brought about by the impact of the improvement of the leadership and management, which was unsatisfactory and is now very good, the very good monitoring of the school's work and the effectiveness of the school's plan for development.

### Standards in subjects

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

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		Key
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
English	A	C	<i>average</i>	C
Mathematics	A	C	<i>below average</i>	D
Science	B	C	<i>well below average</i>	E

The information shows that in 1999, the performance of pupils was well above the national average in English and mathematics.

There is some evidence of improvement in English and information technology across the school and the work seen in English was of a good standard. Pupils' competence in science is about average at eleven, but good at seven. In mathematics, standards are about average but there are weaknesses in mental arithmetic for pupils in Years 5 and 6. There is no longer any underachievement in design and technology, art and geography and standards in design and technology are good across the school. Due to the consistently good teaching, pupils across the school make good progress in most lessons. However, because it takes an extended period for improvement in teaching to have a positive

impact over the period of a key stage, progress over time is not as good as the progress evident in the lessons observed. This is especially the case in Key Stage 2 where improvements in the quality of teaching are yet to have their full impact.

Four year olds make a good start to school and achieve average standards in most of their work and above average standards in personal and social development.

· **Quality of teaching**

· <b>Teaching in</b>	<b>Under 5</b>	<b>5 – 7 years</b>	<b>7 – 11 years</b>
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science	N/A	Good	Good
Information technology	N/A	Good	Good
Religious education	N/A	Good	Good
Other subjects	Good	Good	Good

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons. In 74 per cent it was good; in a further ten per cent it was very good and in two per cent it was excellent. The teaching in classes for the under fives, 5-7 year olds and most of the seven to eleven year olds was predominantly good.

*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	Good, both during lessons and at play.
Attendance	Good. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual and lessons begin promptly.
Ethos*	Very good, positive ethos.
Leadership and management	Very good. The head teacher provides very good professional leadership that imparts a clear educational direction to the school and is focused upon raising standards. Overall, subject co-ordinators give good leadership and support to their colleagues. The governors make a good contribution to the school's work.
Curriculum	The monitoring of the school's work is very good. Very good. The procedures for assessing the attainment of pupils are very good and teachers use them well to plan the next steps for pupils.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school makes good provision to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes and in the Special Support Facility.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. The provision for pupils' social development is very good, for their moral and cultural development it is good and it is satisfactory for their spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good. The school has a satisfactory number of appropriately qualified staff although most teachers are inexperienced; this is balanced by the very good number of experienced support staff. Resources and accommodation are sufficient to deliver the school's curriculum. However, the accommodation could be used more efficiently.
Value for money	Good.

\*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

- II. The school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school and they feel welcome.
- III. The values and attitudes that the school teaches.
- IV. The school sets good standards of behaviour.
- V. Children receive proper help and guidance from the school.
- VI. Parents are satisfied with their children's standards of work.
- VII. Children are happy in school.

### What some parents are not happy about

- VIII. Some parents are concerned that pupils who
- IX. Some parents, particularly those of pupils in Year 6,
- X. Some parents are concerned about the volatile

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors found that pupils who attain more highly are challenged sufficiently in their work and that there was no evidence during the inspection of any volatile behaviour by boys in Year 6. Inspectors share parents' concerns that standards in some aspects of mathematics, particularly in mental calculation in Years 5 and 6, are weak.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve the standards in the school further, the headteacher and governors have identified realistic and relevant priorities within their school's plan for development. The inspection team agrees with these priorities, especially the emphasis on mental calculation in mathematics as the main priority, and endorses the school's own plan.

*(This weakness is mainly discussed in paragraphs 10 and 91)*

In addition to the priorities in the school's plan for development, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

XI. to improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development; *(paragraph 41)*

XII. to make more effective use of the staff, resources and accommodation in the Special Support Facility and of the school's accommodation; *(paragraphs 29, 67)*

XIII.

XIV. to improve the quality of the annual written reports to parents by giving more information on pupils' progress and how pupils can improve their work in the future; *(paragraph 53)*

XV.



## INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

1. Blackthorns Community Primary School is an average sized suburban school in Lindfield, on the north eastern edge of Haywards Heath in West Sussex. There are 185 pupils on roll (182 full-time equivalent because seven pupils attend for mornings only) which is very similar to the time of the last inspection. Most pupils are white and no pupils have English as an additional language. There is a slight imbalance of genders with ten per cent more boys than girls. A minority of pupils live in the area around the school; the majority, around 70 per cent, come from Scaynes Hill, Cuckfield and Haywards Heath as a result of parental choice. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged home backgrounds. About six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average for primary schools and has halved since the last inspection. Most pupils have attended pre-school provision. Pupils are admitted to the Reception class in the Autumn term before their fifth birthday and attend school on a part-time basis until they become familiar with school routines. During the inspection, there were 15 four year olds in the morning and eight in the afternoon. On entry, the school population reflects the full range of ability. The proportion of pupils of statutory school age on the school's register of special educational needs, 24 per cent, is above the national average. Fourteen pupils, eight per cent, have statements of special educational need, which is well above the national average. Eight of these pupils spend approximately 20 per cent of their time in the school's Special Support Facility for severe specific learning difficulties.

1. The school's main aims are:

- to foster confidence and independence in the children within a happy, secure and calm environment;
- to encourage pupils to have positive attitudes towards themselves and their achievement;
- to develop a sense of mutual respect and co-operation and to be sensitive to the needs of others;
- to help children to respond to and play their part in a changing society in both their immediate world and in the wider community so that they develop respect for their moral values and understanding of individuals and cultures.
- 

1. The school's priorities for development in 1999 and 2000 in order to raise standards are:

- in the curriculum:

to implement the National Numeracy Strategy in mathematics;

to improve reading levels in Key Stage 1;

to improve the proportion of pupils writing at Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1;

to achieve the school's target in English at the end of Key Stage 2 with a special focus on the performance of boys;

to improve pupils' composition in music;

to improve the use of formative assessment in the classroom to raise standards for pupils who attain more highly;

to raise standards in design and technology and physical education;

to develop a policy and scheme of work for personal, social and health education.

- in the buildings:

to create a millennium garden with a covered seating area on the junior playground;

to install cycle racks;

to refurbish two classrooms in Key Stage 1.

4. Targets for 2000 have been established as 81 per cent of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 to achieve Level 4 and above in English, and 76 per cent to achieve Level 4 and above in mathematics with 18 per cent at Level 5. The implications of 36% of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 6 have been recognised in these targets.

**Key indicators**

**Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	9	32
	(1998)	(12)	(14)	(26)

National Curriculum Test/Task		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
<b>Results</b>				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	16 (12)	16 (8)	22 (12)
	Girls	9 (15)	9 (12)	9 (15)
	Total	25 (27)	25 (20)	32 (27)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	78 (96)	78 (71)	100 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	17 (11)	20 (12)	19 (12)
	Girls	9 (14)	9 (15)	9 (14)
	Total	26 (25)	29 (27)	28 (26)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	81 (89)	90 (96)	88 (93)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

### Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>1</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	11	14	25
	(1998)	(13)	(16)	(29)

National Curriculum Test		English	Mathematics	Science
<b>Results</b>				
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	9 (9)	9 (7)	13 (11)
	Girls	12 (12)	11 (7)	9 (14)
	Total	21 (21)	20 (14)	22 (25)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	84 (72)	80 (48)	88 (86)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	8 (9)	8 (7)	11 (13)
	Girls	12 (13)	10 (12)	12 (14)
	Total	20 (22)	18 (19)	23 (27)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	80 (76)	72 (66)	92 (93)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised absence	School	%
		National comparative data	4.5
	Unauthorised absence	School	5.7
		National comparative data	0.0

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## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:			Nu
			mber
	Fixed period		3
	Permanent		0

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## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:			%
		Very good or better	12
		Satisfactory or better	96
		Less than satisfactory	4

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

#### **Attainment and progress**

5. Since the last inspection, at the ages of seven and eleven, in English and information technology, standards of attainment have been improved and in mathematics and religious education they have been maintained. Standards of attainment in science at eleven have been maintained and at seven have improved. A key issue in the previous inspection to improve pupils' standards in design and technology and geography in Key Stage 2, and to improve standards in information technology across the school, has been fully addressed successfully. There is no longer any underachievement in design and technology, art and geography. Due to the good teaching, pupils across the school make good progress in most lessons. However, good progress over a key stage is more evident in Key Stage 1 because pupils' learning builds on what has gone before. In Key Stage 2 the current, consistently good teaching since the beginning of this term will take longer to have an impact on progress over the key stage.
1. Pupils make a good start to school in the Reception class. The under-fives make satisfactory progress from their average attainment on entry in all the areas of learning except in personal and social development where progress is good. By the time they enter statutory education at the age of five, they attain the expectations of the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They exceed the expectations for five year olds in personal and social development. Most speak confidently and articulately to adults and each other. They listen attentively to the teacher and are keen to ask and answer questions. They have good attitudes to reading. They know how books work and that print carries meaning. Some children recognise familiar words and use their phonic skills to support their reading. They enjoy talking about the stories they have read and effectively relate them to their own experiences. They are particularly good at using the clues in pictures to help them understand and re-tell stories. Children are beginning to write; they write words using their phonic knowledge and are willing to try to write them independently, using clues around the room, such as their name cards and the display on the letter of the week. They identify and write their names with appropriate use of upper and lower case letters; their handwriting is clear and letters are formed satisfactorily. They recognise and count in sequence up to ten. They match numbers around the classroom, as seen when children found nines in everyday objects after watching a television programme on nine. They sort objects into sets such as sweet and savoury when tasting flavours. They use the correct mathematical language to describe shapes and can identify the shapes of coins by feeling them. In practical activities they add one more object to a number and complete and make simple repeating patterns with mathematical shapes of different sizes.
7. In 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1, the attainment of seven year olds in national reading and writing tests was average in comparison with national results. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results in reading were below average and in writing, were well below average. In mathematics tests, attainment was well above national averages and above the average for similar schools. Over the three years 1996 to 1998, in English, there has been a steady improvement in test results but girls performed better than boys at seven; in mathematics boys performed better than girls.
1. Test results for eleven year olds in 1999 show that attainment in English and mathematics was well above the average points score; in science it was above average. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results in the three subjects were in-line with the average. Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, the figures show that there has been a steady improvement in English and science and although results in mathematics worsened in 1998 when mental arithmetic was added to the tests, there was a significant improvement in 1999. From test data for eleven year olds over the three years, there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls in science; boys perform better than girls in mathematics and girls perform better than boys in English. The school has analysed the results of nationally standardised tests in Key Stage 2 to set targets for individual pupils. This information was used to set targets for eleven year olds for test results in English, mathematics and science for the Year 2000.

9. Inspection findings differ from the test results in 1999 due to the nature of the different cohorts that took the tests each year. The current Year 6 has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, over a third of the class, and a high proportion, about 60 per cent, of pupils who were born in the summer and have, therefore, spent less time in school than older pupils in the year group. The school realises that the targets set for this cohort in the national tests at the end of the key stage are high and they may not achieve them. In English, pupils make good progress throughout the school and, by the end of both key stages, attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing is above the national expectation. Pupils are attentive and interested in answering questions. As pupils move through the school they are increasingly able to organise what they want to say. In Year 4, pupils confidently select rhyming words in a poem, sound them out and change them by identifying the root of the word. Pupils in Year 6, when discussing the rats' point of view in the 'Pied Piper' give reasoned views in coherent sentences. Pupils enjoy books and read for pleasure. By the age of eleven, most pupils are accurate readers, the more able being fluent and confident, and their understanding and response to characters and themes is quite well developed. They confidently locate books in the library and extract information from a variety of sources. In writing, pupils write in a range of styles and use appropriate punctuation and grammar. Their handwriting is well formed and joined. Their good literacy skills support standards in other subjects as pupils write well in different styles to record their findings across the curriculum.
10. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress overall and the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is in-line with the nationally expected levels for seven year olds. These findings differ from the 1999 test results as the present Year 2 includes a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs than last year's cohort. In Key Stage 1, progress is generally good in lessons and over the key stage most pupils make satisfactory progress from their average attainment on entry. They systematically develop a sound understanding of mathematical concepts and consolidate their skills. Pupils use and apply the mathematics they learn satisfactorily in mathematical problems and in other subjects, for example, in science when pupils in Year 1 sorted materials into sets based on whether they were attracted or not to a magnet. In Key Stage 2, all pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 make good progress in lessons and satisfactory progress over time but the rate of progress slows in Year 5 and is unsatisfactory. Attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is in-line with the nationally expected levels for mathematics overall. The vast majority of pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a sound knowledge and understanding of mathematics. They are able to use number accurately and appropriately in different contexts. Their understanding of place value is good and helps them to calculate quickly and accurately. There is a significant weakness in pupils' skills in mental calculation in Years 5 and 6. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use their mathematical knowledge effectively in other work. For example, in Year 4, pupils collected data and analysed it as part of their scientific investigation on whether the size of the surface area of a parachute has an effect on the time it takes to fall to the ground.
11. In science at Key Stage 1, inspection findings show that progress over time is good. By the age of seven, attainment is above the expectation for the end of the key stage. Most pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the content of the curriculum in science and good investigative skills to increase their knowledge and understanding of scientific phenomena. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 make good progress in all aspects of science. Records show that pupils in the present Year 6 entered Key Stage 2 with attainment in science that was average nationally; they make satisfactory progress and the majority is on course to attain the national expectation at the age of eleven, due to the good teaching that they receive. Pupils undertake experimental work effectively. When pupils in Year 6 investigated the solubility of salt, they understood the need for a fair test and showed that they understood the need for some factors to remain constant while others vary. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use measuring skills accurately and information technology competently to collect data, record and analyse it.
1. The school has made significant improvements in teachers' expertise, planning, and procedures for assessment and recording in information technology and these have had a positive impact on the development of the subject. As a result, pupils make good progress and standards of attainment are in-line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Pupils develop their skills in word processing, drawing pictures and in retrieving information. They use word processing programs skilfully, they use spreadsheets to record and interrogate data, and they use CD-ROMs to find information and send and receive e-mail messages to communicate with pupils in a Caribbean school. They use information technology effectively across the curriculum.
13. In religious education across the school, progress is satisfactory, and attainment at the end of both key stages

meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices and their ability to express their thoughts and ideas about religious ideas is good. They understand the moral dimensions of parables and reflect meaningfully on experiences in their lives. By the end of Key Stage 2, they have sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and two contrasting religions, Judaism and Islam, shown by the comparisons of prayer in the three faiths written by pupils in Year 6.

14. In both key stages in art, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils make satisfactory progress; in design and technology pupils make good progress. In art, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are developed progressively as pupils move through the school, their work at eleven is more controlled, detailed and there is a more sophisticated use of skills. Whilst pupils make good progress in learning techniques and applying them in their compositions, they make limited progress in their use of art as a means of expressing a response to emotions and imagination because teachers provide insufficient opportunities to use art in this way. In geography, pupils in Key Stage 1 have satisfactory skills in drawing simple maps and in using drawings for physical features. In Key Stage 2, pupils make more detailed maps, they undertake fieldwork locally and on residential field trips and make good use of geographical terms. Pupils' skills and understanding of maps are also sound. Good features are their knowledge and understanding about environmental concerns such as recycling and the effects of pollution on water. In history, pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of the past, and skills in historical enquiry are well developed. As pupils move through the school they develop increasing skills in performing music. In physical education, pupils show appropriate control, co-ordination and awareness of space in gymnastics, dance and games. In design and technology, pupils in Key Stage 1 show good manipulative skills using scissors, and folding and sticking card. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils use their design books effectively. When designing they make step-by-step plans and show increasing accuracy, paying attention to the quality of finish and function. They give a written explanation of their design, modifications and evaluation.
15. Across the school, pupils with higher prior attainment make sufficient progress because appropriate challenge is provided for them in the teachers' good planning. Work is well matched to their needs, teachers set high expectations and questioning by teachers is very effective. Several pupils also attend the local education authority's enrichment programme for more able pupils.
16. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, due to the well planned, short-term, realistic targets in their individual educational plans and the very good support that they receive from teaching assistants. Pupils from Key Stage 2 in the Special Support Facility make satisfactory progress overall. All pupils benefit from their equal access to the full curriculum in classes with their peers and they make appropriate gains in knowledge, understanding and personal development. There are some strengths where individuals make very good progress in motivation and are keen to read and write extended stories. However, there are some weaknesses for a minority of pupils where a lack of progress in reading was detected at previous annual reviews in 1997 and 1998 but sufficiently specialist programmes and detailed targets were not devised to overcome the deficiencies.

## 12. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

1. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, respond well in lessons. There was at least a sound response from the pupils in all lessons observed. In two thirds of lessons, pupils' response was good; in a further fifth of the lessons, pupils' response was very good. The school has successfully maintained the high standards pupils showed in the last inspection.
2. In the Reception class, the response of the under-fives is consistently good. They have positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. They have very good relationships with other children and the adults with whom they work and play. Children are helpful to each other, for example, when children helped each other to remember the routines for using the water tray. They show good personal independence when they select resources and activities after they have finished their initial activity and the teacher is busy with a group of pupils, and they dress themselves in aprons for messy activities and change independently for physical education. They know the routines well, move sensibly from one activity to another and settle to work quickly. They work co-operatively in groups, which was seen when children practised rocking movements in a physical education lesson, and they also work independently. They are willing to take turns and show this when they take turns to

speaking about their feelings in 'circle time'. They are aware of the right and wrong way to treat each other during classroom activities and at playtimes. The children's good response at the beginning of the school provides a firm foundation for their future life and work in school.

19. The pupils show good attitudes towards their learning. They arrive in lessons prepared to work, settle quickly and apply themselves well to the task in hand. They are keen to learn and pupils show a high level of interest and enjoyment in their lessons. Pupils persevere when encountering problems and take a pride in their work. A good example was seen in design and technology in Year 2 when pupils worked hard to make a container for Christmas sweets to a standard of which they were proud. Pupils of all abilities are usually able to sustain good concentration, even when there is no direct intervention from the teacher. For instance, this is particularly evident during the group based part of the literacy hour, when pupils work responsibly on their own, concentrating well on their reading and writing tasks. However, on rare occasions, they chatter unnecessarily amongst themselves; usually due to the teacher's insecure management and discipline. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers' instructions. They are confident and enthusiastic in offering ideas and suggestions in response to questions and are keen to contribute to discussion. Pupils develop their capacity for personal study as they move through the school. For instance, in English in Year 4, pupils worked well independently when writing a report, as part of their environmental study in geography, on rubbish around the school. Pupils in the Special Support Facility have good attitudes and want to be included in class work. The attitudes of the other pupils are good in their acceptance of learning disability.
  
1. Overall, the pupils' behaviour in lessons, in the playground and around the site is good, contributing to an orderly and secure environment that is conducive to learning and personal development. Pupils also behave well when representing the school off-site, such as on a fieldwork study around the village. Occasionally, there is a little restless behaviour in class in both key stages, particularly when teachers keep pupils sitting on the carpet for too long in introductory sessions. Inspection findings, however, did not substantiate some parents' views of volatile behaviour from a small minority of boys in Year 6. Pupils throughout the school respect and follow the school's code of conduct. They are polite, helpful and friendly to each other and to adults. The pupils are trustworthy; for example pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the option to stay in during playtimes and lunch-times without direct supervision from a teacher. They respect this privilege and use the time sensibly and well to read or work on the computers, for example.
  
21. Pupils show respect for property and are careful, for instance, when handling books or delicate science equipment. The school is free from graffiti or litter. No bullying or harassment was seen during the inspection. The school has had three fixed period exclusions in the past 12 months, which were handled appropriately.
  
22. Relationships between the pupils are good and they show care and concern for each other. They offer good support to each other in class and a major feature is the way they help each other when they are stuck. They work well together in mixed gender groups and paired activities, sharing resources well when required. For example, pupils in Year 4 in science, collaborated well in pairs when testing the air resistance of a paper parachute. Pupils in the Special Support Facility collaborate well where appropriate, both when working together in the unit and when integrated into classes. Boys and girls play well together in the playground. The pupils' relationships with both teaching and support staff are also good. The pupils know they are valued and there is a high level of mutual respect.
  
1. The pupils' personal development is good. When opportunities are given, pupils show good independence and initiative in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 in a literacy hour on The Christmas Story, showed good initiative in a role play situation empathising with Mary when she was confronted by the angel. Pupils listen quietly and carefully to their peers' ideas and thoughts in lessons and 'circle time', and show respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to take responsibility for classroom tasks and readily volunteer to help. There is increasing scope for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative, as they become older, for example, when monitors in Year 6 contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils with special educational needs respond well and build their self-esteem when they help younger pupils with language and literacy. All classes take part in paired reading on a weekly basis which pupils enjoy. The personal development of a significant number of pupils is enhanced by their participation in community activities, such as performing country dancing during Town Week or entertaining the elderly at a local church club.



23. **Attendance**

24. Attendance levels at the school are good and are above the national average. There are no reported instances of unauthorised absence during the previous academic year. The school has successfully maintained the high levels of attendance since the last inspection. It is, however, concerned about the number of parents requesting permission to take their children away on holiday during term time. Punctuality is good and most pupils arrive at school on time. Lessons begin and end on time so that no teaching time is lost.

23. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

23. **Teaching**

25. Across the school the quality of teaching is mostly good. The great consistency of the good teaching is a very strong feature of the school and results in the judgement that overall teaching is exceptionally good. In three quarters of the lessons observed it was good and it was very good in a further ten per cent with one example of excellent teaching in mathematics. There was a very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching in both key stages. The teaching of children under five in the Reception class is consistently good. In Key Stage 1 and 2 over 80 per cent of teaching was good and better. Most of the teaching in all classes and all subjects was good and there were examples of very good teaching in English in both key stages, and in mathematics, religious education and information technology in Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress in most lessons is good due to the impact of the predominantly good teaching. This high quality of teaching has only been consistently experienced for a term and will take more time for its effect on progress over a key stage to have its full impact. In some subjects, such as mathematics, there is much ground to be made up, especially for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

1. Overall, teaching for the under-fives in the Reception class is consistently good. The teacher and her assistant have secure knowledge and understanding of the needs of the four year olds and of the curriculum to meet those needs. The teacher plans the curriculum to ensure that the under-fives undertake many practical experiences and makes good use of play to extend learning. She plans effectively from the areas of learning and clearly identifies what she intends children to learn. The strengths in the teaching are the high expectations of children's behaviour and attainment and the good management of children based on very good relationships and a calm, secure discipline. The organisation of the small area is good; children know what is expected of them, know the routines well and become independent very quickly. Resources match the children's needs and are well organised for them to have access independently. However, the classroom environment is not very stimulating, particularly the area for imaginative play and the book corner. The teacher uses homework very well to ensure that learning is reinforced at home and parents are able to make a worthwhile contribution to their children's attainment and progress.

27. Overall, the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy is good across the school in both key stages. The use of the National Literacy Strategy Framework to teach the skills of reading and writing is having a positive effect. Teachers use the correct terminology in all subjects to increase pupils' vocabulary and teach skills such as spelling and writing within other subjects. This was seen in religious education in Year 2, when the teacher used the white board in the introduction to Christian weddings for the spelling of special people, clothes, food and objects, for pupils to use in their subsequent writing. In Year 5, the skills of note taking were planned in history, for pupils to take notes when interviewing people who had lived in the 1950s and 1960s. Overall, the teaching of numeracy is good, is based on the National Numeracy Strategy and has a positive effect on raising standards. Teachers use numeracy satisfactorily across the curriculum, for example in science and design and technology.

1. Throughout the school teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Teachers' expectations of pupils' attainment are usually high and are shown by the challenging questions that teachers ask. In Year 6, the teacher's expectations are very high; she continually probes pupils' understanding with very skilful questioning and it is abundantly clear to pupils that only their very best effort is acceptable. Across the school, pupils are usually challenged sufficiently, as seen in mathematics in Key Stage 2. When a pupil made a suggestion about obtaining further discounts with a reward card when planning a budget for a party, the teacher

turned the suggestion into a further personal challenge within the pupil's work. A strength of the teaching is the consistently good quality of planning; it is detailed, identifies what pupils are to learn, what is to be assessed and is linked well to the National Curriculum and the school's curricular map. Within planning, work is well matched to the different ability groups in the class to cater for their needs. Lessons are well structured and are based on the structure in the National Literacy Strategy. There is a good balance of direct explanation from the teacher, an activity and a plenary in which the teacher reviews what has been learned. In the direct teaching there are usually clear explanations, which in Year 3 are very good and in Year 6 are excellent.

29. The support by classroom assistants provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good and it enables them to make good progress. The strength in the support provided by the specialist teacher and teaching assistants ensures that pupils in the Special Support Facility are included equally in all lessons during their time in mainstream classes, which is for most of the day. Class teachers rarely make efficient use of the specialist teacher within their lessons as she is used as a teaching assistant rather than a teacher.
30. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and generally manage their classes effectively. Teachers prepare and use resources well, for example in information technology, the organisation of the whole-class teaching of skills by using a projector linked to a computer to project the display on to a large screen, was very effective. The pace of lessons is usually brisk; in Key Stage 2 in science, pupils are given deadlines for each part of the lesson and a good pace is maintained. On rare occasions in both key stages, the introduction is too long which slows the pace at the beginning of the lesson. Teachers brief their teaching assistants and parent helpers well to ensure their time is used effectively in lessons. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is good. In Year 6, the brisk pace and rapid questioning to challenge pupils and improve their thinking were strong features of the very good and excellent teaching. Written marking, in science in Year 6, often includes evaluative comments that assist pupils in understanding how they might improve their work. In most other subjects and year groups, marking is merely a tick and a word of praise. The good evaluation of the work taught during the week is used well to plan for the subsequent week's work. Teachers use homework well; it is included in their planning of lessons and reinforces work learned in school and promotes progress.
1. There has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Overall, teaching is exceptionally good now, compared with the judgement of satisfactory previously. The improvements have been in teachers' command of the subjects they teach, in their planning and the challenge provided for all pupils, particularly for the most able. The use of assessment has improved from unsatisfactory previously to good now and homework has improved in its consistency and is progressive through the school. Lower attaining pupils in both key stages now receive very good support, as there has been an improved distribution of teaching assistants. However, marking is still inconsistent across the school.

31. **The curriculum and assessment**

32. Since the appointment of the current headteacher the school has taken positive steps to address the weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum and its assessment identified in the last inspection and the improvement in provision has been very good.
33. The overall curricular provision of the school is very good. The curriculum for children under the age of five is broad and balanced and it covers all the areas of learning specified in national guidance. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broadly based and well balanced in the range of subjects taught. However, in the under-fives and Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' creative response to emotions and feelings in art and music are underdeveloped. The subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There is an appropriate amount of time allocated to all subjects except physical education, which has an over generous allocation. This is due to pupils in Years 1 to 4 swimming once a week throughout the year. Although pupils in these years cover all aspects of the National Curriculum in physical education, the balance of physical activity is heavily weighted towards swimming. The curriculum successfully promotes the physical, personal and intellectual development of the pupils. Personal and social education is taught effectively, often through 'circle time'. Drugs awareness, health and sex education are integrated into the curriculum appropriately. The curriculum promotes intellectual development by providing increasing opportunities, as pupils get older, for personal study. For example, pupils in Year 6 use the internet, amongst other methods, for personal

research.

1. The school's provision for literacy and the induction of the principles of the literacy hour is well established. The school successfully devotes specific time outside the literacy framework for guided reading and extended writing. This is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. The school has made a satisfactory start in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. The school's ethos strongly promotes the use of literacy across the curriculum and examples such as the written explanations of designs in pupils' design and technology books are evidence of this. There is evidence of a similar use of numeracy across the curriculum, especially in science, for example, when pupils in Year 6 measured millilitres of water accurately, when testing the solubility of salt. The planned use of information technology across the curriculum is a strong feature.
2. There is very good access to the curriculum for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and those in the Special Support Facility. Pupils in the Special Support Facility are fully integrated into their appropriate class for most of their time in school. Individual educational plans, with short-term achievable targets, are set termly for all pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream classes. The governor for special educational needs is closely involved and meets regularly with the co-ordinator for special educational needs. She observes termly meetings between the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the educational psychologist. The school has an effective policy for high attaining pupils and selected pupils attend the local education authority's enrichment courses to challenge their thinking. The school has a clear policy for equal opportunities, which has a positive effect on pupils' learning and standards of achievement. There has been monitoring of data from test results in English to evaluate the relative attainment of boys and girls. The result has been increased support to boys and books have been purchased to increase the range of suitable literature for them. There are plans to check next year's test results to ascertain whether these measures have improved the standards for boys.
36. Good quality policies supported by detailed schemes of work contribute to the very good systematic, consistent and comprehensive planning system that the school has developed. Long-term planning provides a good overview of what is to be taught through a curricular map of content for each half-term for each year group. Medium-term planning identifies the main learning objectives and activities through which the objectives are taught. It also identifies extension activities for high attainers, strategies for teaching and learning, the resources required, how the pupils' learning will be assessed and how the time for each subject is allocated. Short-term, weekly plans identify clear, precise learning objectives for teaching and assessment in all subjects. At the end of each week, when the teacher has completed assessment of pupils' work and evaluation of the week's teaching, the plans are monitored by the headteacher and she reports back to staff on her findings. The school has a clear long-term plan of reviewing and re-writing policies to match the introduction of national guidance and the introduction of the new National Curriculum.
37. The curriculum is enhanced with a good range of extra-curricular activities, which include football, netball, games, athletics, guitar, choir, country dancing, information technology and French. Peripatetic teaching of the trumpet and viola enhance the musical provision. Residential visits support the curriculum and the personal development of pupils very well. Pupils benefit from a variety of visits to places locally and from visitors to the school. They compete in numerous sports matches and tournaments with other schools, which gives them experience of competitive sport and of working as a team.
1. The procedures for assessing the attainment of pupils are very good across all mainstream classes including the Reception class. There is a very well developed policy outlining the assessments to be undertaken and an annual timetable for assessment. This, and the regular monitoring of teachers' assessment files by the headteacher and co-ordinators, promote accurate assessment and the recording of pupils' progress in all subjects. Samples of work in writing, spelling and speaking and listening of six pupils in each year group are analysed to monitor progress. The work of a further three pupils is analysed in the other subjects. Termly reviews of individual educational plans contribute to very good arrangements for the assessment of pupils with special educational needs. Adequate assessment is made for pupils in the Special Support Facility for annual reviews and the review of targets on their individual educational plans. However, systems have yet to be established that provide for more detailed diagnostic assessment of pupils' specific needs to inform the setting of individual targets.

39. The school uses its assessment information well to inform teaching and planning. Focused teaching and the use of criteria for evaluation and assessment have resulted in raising standards. The setting of targets for individual pupils has begun to raise standards for each pupil. There are good examples of specific targets being set in mathematics. The school analyses all national and school test results and uses this information effectively to evaluate the progress pupils are making and to raise standards.

38. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

40. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. It is fundamental to school life, although there is no written guidance for staff of what the school intends to happen. Provision is implicit rather than explicit in subjects and collective worship, and this results in more variation than might otherwise be the case. For example, even though there is a policy in place for collective worship, it makes no reference to its contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The school has particular strengths in promoting social awareness. Adults provide good role models for pupils to emulate, through relationships with pupils and with each other that are marked by sensitivity and respect. They manage pupils kindly and consistently, and give high regard to building confidence and self-esteem.

41. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils attend a daily act of collective worship, which is broadly Christian in content. Although these are sound in quality overall and make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual development, there are times, when a clear spiritual element is missing and the sense of the school as a worshipping community is lost. At the same time, important contributions come through religious education where pupils explore their feelings and emotions through asking probing questions to the teacher and each other. A good example was seen in a Year 3 lesson on the birth of Jesus when one pupil sensitively answered another with her understanding that 'we are all God's children'. Some other subjects also contribute to pupils' spiritual development, for example in a science lesson in Year 1, when pupils were fascinated by the pattern made by a collection of pins that had been attracted to a magnet. Nonetheless, opportunities for spiritual development are not embedded in the curriculum and there is scope for further development.

42. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in good behaviour and to show care and respect for others through the well established yet simple whole-school code of conduct. They also develop an understanding of the principles that separate right from wrong through discussing and agreeing their own class code of conduct with their teacher. Teachers make consistent use of these as a reference point for the behaviour of their pupils. Each class has its own innovative individual and whole-class reward system in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. In addition, pupils' work and efforts are celebrated in a weekly assembly, when they share their achievements with the whole-school and are awarded certificates for good work. Moral issues are used in the curriculum to reinforce values. For example, in English in Key Stage 2, pupils write poems on bullying and in geography good consideration is given to environmental issues such as recycling and the pollution of water. Through support for local and national charities, pupils also acquire an emerging sense of social and moral responsibility.

43. There is very good provision for pupils' social development through learning to live and work together responsibly within a caring school community. The successful integration of the Special Support Facility into the general life of the school is a very good example of positive social development in action, with pupils taking a full and responsible part in all school activities. Pupils are very proud of their school and there is a sense of shared ownership. For instance, the whole-school is working together to create a 'millennium garden'. There are good opportunities for social collaboration within classes, including in the recently introduced personal, social and health education lessons, which emphasise developing positive relationships. Older pupils undertake routine tasks around the school, and also exercise a useful leadership role as monitors. Younger pupils take responsibility for jobs within the classroom and they are never discouraged from helping whenever they volunteer, which they do willingly. All classes participate in a weekly reading activity where older pupils make a pair with younger pupils to hear them read. This activity allows pupils to learn the important skills of relating to children younger than themselves. Residential study visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6 provide further opportunities for learning to live together in a social context. Pupils become more aware of needs in the local community through, for instance, their visits to a local residential home for the elderly.

44. Provision made for pupils' cultural development is good. In art and music, they gain useful insights into the achievements of celebrated artists and composers and the literacy hour is broadening their experience of poetry, story and drama. For example, in the Summer term older pupils wrote their own script for 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', which they performed, successfully to parents and friends. Through current work in history, pupils empathise with people from a different age and generation, making further valuable contributions to their overall cultural and aesthetic development. Pupils participate in a variety of visits, for example to the British Museum, and welcome a number of visitors with various skills into school, such as an author and illustrator during Book Week. Good consideration is also given to raising pupils' multicultural awareness. For example, pupils in Year 3 have established an e-mail link with pupils in the Caribbean. In design and technology, pupils in Year 4 created an Indian feast as part of their project. By taking pupils by train and underground to museums in London, the school is doing much to make pupils fully aware of the cultural richness, diversity and cosmopolitan nature of modern British society.

**38. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

45. The school provides very good support and guidance for its pupils. This enhances the quality of life in school and has a positive impact on standards. The school has successfully improved yet further on the safe and secure environment identified during the last inspection, particularly in its arrangements for promoting good behaviour.

46. Staff provide very caring support for pupils, and parents appreciate the support given to their children. Teachers and ancillary staff, support pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Special Support Facility, well in class. The school has very good relationships with external support agencies, and these contribute positively to the standards pupils achieve and to the pastoral provision of the school. Pupils are given a caring introduction into school through the well organised induction programme and parents are happy with the way their children have settled. Older pupils receive good support in a number of ways for their transfer to secondary school, for example through the type and quantity of homework they are given and the opportunity for residential visits to foster greater independence. All pupils now follow a weekly time-tabled programme for personal, social and health education, which indicates the high value placed by the school on this aspect of its work.

47. There are good procedures for monitoring the academic progress of pupils. For example, the headteacher and appropriate curriculum co-ordinators monitor half-termly assessments in English, mathematics and science and termly assessments in information technology and the foundation subjects. Targets are set for the whole class and individuals in English and mathematics. Thorough records are kept for pupils with special educational needs and their progress is monitored effectively through review of their individual educational plans each term. Although as yet, there is no whole-school system for monitoring the personal development of pupils, class teachers know their pupils well and monitor their personal development through their own detailed knowledge and individual records.

48. The procedures for recording and reporting attendance are very good. Class teachers complete registers carefully and details of any absence or lateness are noted in the registers to show any patterns at a glance. They are monitored weekly by the secretary and procedures for following up any unauthorised absences are very thorough. Measures to promote discipline and good behaviour are very effective. The management of pupils' behaviour was recently reviewed and strategies put in place to ensure a positive and consistent approach by all staff. Teachers make good use of praise and rewards to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem and to encourage achievement and good behaviour. Pupils and parents do not consider bullying an issue in school and this view is confirmed by inspection findings. Pupils are happy to tell staff of any minor incident and are confident that the matter will be handled appropriately. The governing body is fully informed of any situations that arise.

49. Arrangements for child protection are good and staff are well aware of the procedures to be followed. The school has very good arrangements for promoting the health and safety of pupils through safe working practices. For example, fire drills are carried out termly as required, but times and situations are always carefully varied to improve on practice. There are very good arrangements for dealing with accidents and illness and several members of staff are qualified in first aid. Regular risk assessments are carried out and any issues identified are promptly addressed. The school is rightly concerned about the safety of pupils at the beginning and end of the day, when cars are used to drop and collect pupils. Despite doing all it can to address this issue, including

numerous reminders to parents, there are still some parents who park inconsiderately and hazardously.

### 38. **Partnership with parents and the community**

50. The overall good links with parents and the community, which the school enjoys, contribute positively to pupils' learning, social development and understanding of the world outside school. The positive links identified in the previous inspection have been improved still further, particularly links with parents. The parents' questionnaire showed a very high level of satisfaction with the school in all areas.
51. Parents' involvement in the school is very good and they feel welcome. This was highlighted in the parental survey. They find it very easy to approach staff to discuss any questions or problems regarding their children. The school takes parents' concerns seriously. A good number of parents make an important contribution to standards through help with school activities, for example running extra-curricular clubs. In addition, the Parents' and Teachers' Association is active in supporting the school. It organises regular social and fundraising events, as well as operating a deed of covenant scheme to support swimming and providing refreshments at school functions. Events are well supported and raise considerable funds to enhance the school's facilities. Parental opinion is sought through regular questionnaires about aspects of the school's work, including formulating the home school agreement, and results have contributed to the school's development plan. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in their children's learning at home and they all have a copy of the school's homework policy detailing expectations. They respond well to the homework policy, in particular with reading, and reading diaries show a good level of dialogue between home and school. Parents are very supportive of events involving their children, such as productions and sports days.
52. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is good. They are very well informed about day-to-day events through, for instance, weekly newsletters from the headteacher. Curricular information is also very good. Parents know what their children will be studying each term through informative and well produced bulletins for each year group. They appreciate the information the school provides on how they can help with their children's learning at home, for example the detailed booklet for new parents and the evenings on literacy and numeracy. Pastoral information is very good and parents are informed about any aspect of their child's personal development. Although the prospectus and the governors' annual report are informative, they both contain minor omissions.
53. There is an annual written report for each child, which is detailed in many areas. However, there is some inconsistency in quality between subjects and between classes. Reports frequently focus only on what pupils have attained or their attitudes to work and do not give enough information about pupils' progress. There is also very limited information on what pupils need to do to improve. This detracts from their usefulness to parents. Inspection findings support the comments of some parents at the pre-inspection meeting who criticised the reports. Nonetheless, very good opportunities are provided for parents to discuss their child's progress through formal and informal meetings. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are provided with good information. The school has, for example, recently written a parental guide to special educational needs. Parents are informed about the termly reviews of their children's individual educational plans and an opportunity for further consultation is provided if this is required.
54. The school enjoys good links with the local community. It welcomes a number of visitors from the community into classes and pupils make several visits into the local area, for example pupils in Year 1 made a study of village homes for their project in history. There are some links with local businesses, but this aspect of the school's work is not well developed. There are good links with local churches of different Christian denominations. Visiting clergy regularly take assemblies and special services in school and one church is used as a resource for religious education and the annual carol service. Pupils enjoy participating in activities in the community. There are close links with a nearby residential home, which the pupils visit and provide entertainment. Good links have been established with the local playgroups that facilitate transfer arrangements. There are very good pastoral and curricular links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. These links enable all curriculum co-ordinators from the primary schools within the secondary school's area to meet regularly, through financial support provided by the secondary school. There are good links with other local schools, for example, pupils compete in numerous sports matches and tournaments and some pupils are currently

practising for a joint opera production. Good links have been forged with a local university whose students visit for teacher training. The school makes good use of a local swimming pool each week. The community makes very good use of the school's facilities, which generates a significant income and helps keep it in touch with the school. All these opportunities enhance the curriculum in a number of areas and make a significant contribution to pupils' intellectual and personal development.

## 38. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### 38. Leadership and management

55. Overall management of the school is very good. The headteacher, in close co-operation with her acting deputy head, provides very good professional leadership that imparts a clear educational direction to the school and is focused upon raising standards. Since September, the new teachers and the existing support staff have come together to form a very hard working, committed team. The chair of governors and other members of the governing body successfully bring a wealth of expertise to the school; they are committed to the school's success, are well informed about its developments and give good strategic leadership to the school. Overall, subject co-ordinators give good leadership and support to their colleagues. The co-ordinator for special educational needs maintains a very good overview of the provision within the mainstream school, while the headteacher has the responsibility for the management of the Special Support Facility until permanent staff are appointed. This ensures that the school complies with the Code of Practice and fulfils its statutory requirements as regards pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs meets termly with the class teachers to review pupils' individual educational plans and teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils in reaching these targets.

56. The staff and governors contribute to the establishment of a very good ethos in the school, and a very effective learning environment for pupils. The school's aims are met successfully and relationships among all groups are good. The school's values and policies are reflected strongly in its work except for the policy on marking which is applied inconsistently. Most policies are based on practice and they are monitored regularly to ensure their consistent implementation. The school leadership has a positive effect on relationships within the school, and ensures that all pupils are treated equally and fairly.

1. There are very good procedures for giving support to teachers and in monitoring teaching and curricular development. The headteacher and acting deputy head have provided very good support for teachers in the consistent procedures for curricular planning and assessment. The headteacher and co-ordinators monitor each teacher's short and medium-term planning regularly and the headteacher critically evaluates it to improve teachers' work and has regular meetings with teachers to discuss planning and assessment. Pupils' work is regularly monitored and some co-ordinators, for example, in mathematics and religious education, have begun to produce a portfolio of pupils' work to illustrate levels within the subject. The head and deputy head undertake detailed analyses of national and school test results to identify weaknesses and improve standards. Targets that are set are realistic and the ethos of continuous improvement has a positive impact on standards for pupils. The head teacher and co-ordinators have monitored teaching regularly and have a planned programme for visiting classes to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. When the evaluation from observations raises issues, all teachers discuss in staff meetings how the difficulties can be overcome. The governing body has set up systems sensitively and with teachers' agreement, to monitor the work of the school and there is a planned programme of visits to match the priorities of the school's plan for development. The governing body has appointed governors with responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. These governors visit the school frequently, liaise appropriately with the specific co-ordinator, observe teaching and report to the governing body, using an agreed proforma, to assist them in monitoring and evaluating the school's provision.

58. The school's very good plan for development is detailed and is a practical working document that is appropriately constructed in full consultation with staff, governors and parents through a questionnaire. It is very effective in improving standards in the school. The plan has relevant targets related to improving standards of attainment in mathematics as a main priority, improving reading and writing at the age of seven, improving the attainment of boys in English at the age of eleven, improving standards in design and technology and physical education, as well as improving the challenge for high attainers. In answer to the criticisms of the last inspection, the plan is over a three-year period and the co-ordinators' yearly planners are related specifically to targets in

standards in their specific areas of responsibility. The only criticism that has yet to be resolved is that the school's budget is not linked sufficiently to the priorities of the plan; the governors' improvement working party has recognised this deficiency and has planned the way forward to address this issue. Each term, the headteacher and co-ordinators meet to check the progress of the work in the yearly planner, to discuss any training needs for the co-ordinator and any issues that have arisen from their monitoring that need to be discussed at a staff meeting.

1. Most statutory requirements are met. One exception is that in their annual report to parents, the governors make a brief general statement about the progress they have made in their action plan since the previous inspection, with no details of how each key issue has been addressed. Also there is insufficient detail on special educational needs and rates of pupils' absence. Secondly, in the prospectus, pupils' absence rates have been omitted.
2. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has accelerated the rate of improvement and has made good progress against the key issues of the previous report and most have been fully addressed. The school has very good capacity for further improvement due to the headteacher's very strong leadership, together with the recent positive changes in teaching staff and the existing strengths of the very good support staff. In a short time, the key improvements in teaching, the planning of the curriculum and its assessment, have had a positive impact on pupils' standards of attainment and progress. These, in turn, have been brought about by the impact of the improvement, from unsatisfactory to very good, of the leadership and management, the very good monitoring of the school's work and the effectiveness of the school's plan for development.

#### 60. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

61. The school employs a satisfactory number of hard working teachers who are appropriately qualified to teach the age range and have a balance of expertise to meet the demands of delivering the curriculum. The teaching staff is young, most are inexperienced and only two class teachers have been in the school longer than a term. All Key Stage 1 classes have fewer than 30 pupils. Teachers have clear responsibilities and plan together. There is a generous number of teaching assistants who work conscientiously with the children. The staff in the Special Support Facility has relevant experience and qualifications for their role.
62. Procedures for the professional development of teaching staff are very good with strategies in place for the induction of new and newly qualified teachers. All teachers have curricular responsibilities, with newly qualified teachers shadowing a co-ordinator, and appropriate job descriptions are in place. Teaching assistants also have clear job descriptions and access to further training. The headteacher carries out a high quality programme of continuous professional development that includes appraisal, for both teachers and teaching assistants. The school supports initial teacher training through receiving between six and eight students on teaching practice during the year. The school benefits from this by the use of subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching and to keep staff informed of current practice.
63. The accommodation in the school is good. Classrooms are arranged in a single storey building and include a library, resource room, shared areas and a classroom for pupils in the Special Support Facility, which is satisfactory for their needs. However, they spend most of their time in mainstream classes. The classrooms are cramped, particularly in Key Stage 2 and there is insufficient space for practical activities within classrooms. The hall, playgrounds and grassed area are well suited for the teaching of physical education. The under-fives are accommodated in a mobile classroom that leads out on to a well developed secure outdoor play area. A rolling programme of maintenance and improvement over the last two years has been implemented. Classrooms have been refurbished; improvements to the infant and junior playgrounds begun, school security improved and the exterior of the building repainted. The grounds have been attractively developed and include a small woodland area and a millennium garden. The school has plans to provide a library in the kitchen, which has recently become available as a teaching area.
64. Overall learning resources are satisfactory. Resources to support the literacy hour are good. The school has undergone a process of removing outdated resources and has a programme of replacement. Although the school is not well equipped with resources for information technology, those that they have are sufficient in number and



quality to teach the curriculum. All resources are systematically organised, well stored and accessible.

65. There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection. The identified weaknesses in staff appraisal and lack of clear job descriptions in the last inspection have been significantly improved since the appointment of the new headteacher.
60. **The efficiency of the school**
1. Overall, the efficiency of the school is sound. The efficiency of financial control and school administration are good and financial planning is sound. The last auditor's report from the local education authority, undertaken in May 1999, stated that the school's financial records were well maintained and there were no recommendations. The clerical staff's unobtrusive, effective general administration enables teaching staff to focus on their work with pupils. Last year the work of the governors' finance committee was dominated by staffing difficulties, which had a negative impact on the budget. They spent most of their time in discussing the maintenance of staffing levels and effectively managing the crisis. They appreciate the need for strategic management of finance, they have planned the way forward to ensure that their future financial planning should relate more closely to the school's development plan and plan to develop procedures to judge the impact of their financial decisions. Co-ordinators are preparing financial bids to resource their subjects after consultation with staff. These are intended to help the headteacher and governors to allocate money according to the priorities of the school's development plan.
67. The school makes sound use of its staff, accommodation and learning resources. The quality of assistance given by the support staff is very good, is a strength of the school and is having a positive impact on the progress of pupils with whom they work. Teachers and classroom assistants are conscientious, relate well to their pupils and work together well as a team. There is some good use of individual teacher's expertise, for example, the music co-ordinator teaches recorders to groups while the headteacher shares a story with her class. There is inefficient use of the specialist expertise of the teacher in the Special Support Facility by teachers in mainstream classes when pupils from the unit are integrated into classes which is for the majority of the day. The use of accommodation is generally satisfactory, however, the room for the Special Support Facility is under used and is empty for most of the week because the pupils in the unit work in classes for 80 per cent of their time. The classrooms, especially in Key Stage 2, are cramped for the numbers of pupils particularly for practical activities, as the school is making inefficient use of some of its space. Computers are used well across the curriculum, however, those in the Specialist Support Facility are under used. The school uses specific grants, such as the fund for teachers' professional development and funds for pupils with special educational needs, effectively for the purposes for which they were intended.
68. Taking into account:
- .the favourable socio-economic circumstances and the average levels of attainment of the pupils on entry;
  - .the amount spent per pupil;
  - .the overall satisfactory standards of attainment at the ages of five, seven and eleven;
  - .the good progress made by pupils in most lessons and particularly in English, science, information technology and design and technology;
  - .the good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of most pupils;
  - .the good quality of education, particularly the good teaching, the very good curriculum and its good assessment; the school gives good value for money.
69. The school has improved its efficiency since the previous inspection; senior teachers are used well to set overall objectives for the school and there is very good monitoring of teaching and standards of attainment. The judgement on the school's value for money has been raised from satisfactory to good.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

70. Children are admitted to the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. Entry is phased so that pupils who have their fifth birthday in the spring and summer, attend school in the mornings only until the term in which they become five, when they attend for a full day. During the inspection there were 15 four year olds in the morning and eight in the afternoon. From discussion with teachers and inspectors' observations, it is clear that the range of attainment on entry to the school is average. Under-fives are accommodated in the small Reception class. They make sound progress in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, and good progress in their personal and social development. By the time children reach statutory school age, they meet the expectations of the Desirable Learning Outcomes, specified in national guidance, in all the areas of learning and exceed them in personal and social development. The assessments to identify children with special educational needs were incomplete at the time of the inspection. No comparisons can be made with the findings of the previous inspection, as the school did not admit four year olds at that time.
71. The curricular provision for under-fives is good. The procedures for the assessment of their work are very good and are used well. An initial assessment of children's attainment when they enter school helps to provide appropriate curricular challenges. The teacher makes careful observations of each child and records them in a way that gives clear evidence of what each child knows and can do and the procedures link into the consistent system for assessment across the school. Teaching for the under-fives in the Reception class is consistently good. The teacher and her assistant have secure knowledge and understanding of the needs of the four year olds and of the curriculum to meet those needs. The teacher plans the curriculum to ensure that the under-fives undertake many practical experiences and makes good use of play to extend learning. She plans effectively from the six areas of learning for under-fives and clearly identifies what she intends children to learn. The strengths in the teaching are the high expectations of children's behaviour and attainment and the good management of children, based on very good relationships and a calm, secure discipline. The organisation of the small area is good; children know what is expected of them, know the routines well and become independent very quickly. Resources match the children's needs and are well organised for them to have access independently, but the classroom environment is not very stimulating, particularly the area for imaginative play and the book corner. The teacher uses homework very well; a weekly letter is sent to all parents explaining the homework which includes learning the letter of the week, a book to share, a mathematical task and work from one other area of learning. The letter explains the work to parents and describes the support needed for the child. In this way, learning is reinforced and parents are able to make a worthwhile contribution to their children's attainment and progress.
71. **Personal and social development**
1. The under-fives make good progress and achieve above the expectations described in the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes in personal and social development on entry to statutory education. By the time children reach five, their behaviour is good, they have very good relationships with their teacher, nursery nurse and each other and often help each other. This was seen when children helped each other to remember the routines for using the water tray and when a child used his initiative to fetch a box of pencils when a group were complaining that they could not work without any. They work co-operatively in groups, as seen when children practised rocking movements in a physical education lesson, and they also work independently. They are willing to take turns and show this when they take turns to speak about their feelings in 'circle time'. They are aware of the right and wrong way to treat each other during classroom activities and at playtimes.
  2. Children share resources fairly, are confident and they treat property with care, for example, in the role-play area, Grandma's Cottage, where they showed great care for the resources. Children show their feelings and enjoy the tasks they are given. Their pictures and simple writing on display show their understanding of the value of friendship. A hand, made from ice, fascinated them when they were studying the three states of water. They sustain concentration, sometimes for a long time for their age, and persevere, as seen when they identified coins by touch. They show good personal independence when they select resources and activities after they have finished their initial activity and the teacher is busy with a group of pupils and they dress themselves for physical

education and in aprons for messy activities. The teaching is good; the teacher and nursery nurse have high expectations, they establish good routines and their discipline, based on very good relationships, is quiet but firm.

73. **Language and literacy**

74. Children make satisfactory progress and, by the time they are five, most attain in-line with the recommended outcomes for children of this age in language and literacy. Most speak confidently and articulately to adults and each other. They listen attentively to the teacher during literacy sessions and are keen to ask and answer questions. They have good attitudes to reading. They know how books work and that print carries meaning. Some children recognise familiar words and use their phonic skills to support their reading. They enjoy talking about the stories they have read and effectively relate them to their own experiences. They are particularly good at using the clues in pictures to help them understand and re-tell stories. Children are beginning to write; they write words using their phonic knowledge and are willing to try to write them independently, using clues around the room, such as their name cards and the display on the letter of the week. They identify and write their names with appropriate use of upper and lower case letters; their handwriting is clear and letters are formed satisfactorily. One child recognised an exclamation mark when the class followed the story of 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' in a literacy lesson.

1. The teaching in language is good. The teacher's expectations are appropriate for the four year olds and activities meet their needs. The teacher and classroom assistant give very good support to the children. The good quality of teaching has a positive impact on the children's progress in this area of learning.

75. **Mathematics**

76. Four year olds make satisfactory progress and they meet the expectations that are in the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are of statutory school age. They recognise and count in sequence up to ten. They match numbers around the classroom, as seen when children found nines in everyday objects after watching a television programme on nine. They sort objects into sets such as sweet and savoury when tasting flavours. They use the correct mathematical language to describe shapes and can identify the shapes of coins by feeling them. In practical activities they add one more object to a number and complete and make simple repeating patterns with mathematical shapes of different sizes. Teaching is good; the teacher has a good understanding of how young children learn and she makes good use of practical activities to consolidate children's knowledge and understanding of number.

75. **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

1. Children make satisfactory progress and most attain the expectations in the Desirable Learning Outcomes by statutory school age. Children talk about their environment and the purpose of some of its features in previous work when they went for a walk round the school grounds and when they walked to the village pond in the spring. In their writing from these walks they sorted objects they found into sets of things that were alive and not alive, they noticed signs of spring and made simple maps on which they identified landmarks. The current topic in the Reception class is 'Senses' with a bias towards knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils talk about and sometimes record their observations in pictures and some simple writing when they explore sounds, sight and smell. They accurately recorded their observations of the three states of water in pictures with labels. Due to the teacher's good teaching of safety considerations, they were very careful to warn the visitor about going too near the kettle because of the dangers of hot water and steam. They ask questions about why things happen and how things work; they were very curious about a hand made from ice and wanted to know how it had been formed. They explore and select equipment when they use the water tray. There are opportunities to use information technology to support early learning as seen in children's pictures of fireworks. Teaching is good. The teacher uses a good balance of activities for children to explore the world around them, some of which are directed by an adult and some where children find out for themselves. The good organisation of the Reception classroom and the high expectations of children's behaviour and independence enable children to increase successfully their knowledge and understanding of the world.

77. **Physical development**

78. Children make satisfactory progress and their attainment is in-line with the expectations described in the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five. They moved confidently and imaginatively and demonstrated sound awareness of space when they became sea creatures in a dance lesson. They remembered their sequences of movements from the previous lessons on the same theme, and improved the control and co-ordination of their movements in response to the music. Children's manipulative skills are sound, in that they handle pencils and other tools with increasing co-ordination and control. The teaching of physical development is good. The teacher and the nursery nurse work enthusiastically with the children and ensure their safety and equipment is used very sensibly. Children derive great enjoyment from their physical activities, as expressed by one pupil when he said to the teacher, 'I like being a crab' during the dance lesson when, for the first time, he was successful in moving sideways. The teacher gives children frequent opportunities to use large wheeled vehicles in their play outdoors, to develop their physical skills.

77. **Creative development**

1. Children make satisfactory progress and achieve the expectations of the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five. No teaching of art was seen but evidence of opportunities for creative development was available in the scrutiny of work. Children make observational drawings of leaves, they blend oil pastels to match skin tones, they mix colours in paint and make a collage of a face on a paper plate. They have limited opportunities to paint pictures from their own experience and to respond to their imagination. The role-play area is regularly changed to provide opportunities for imaginative play. During the inspection it was Grandma's Cottage from the story of Red Riding Hood and was well used by the nursery nurse, in the character of grandma, to reinforce work on coins as children prepared to buy presents for Red Riding Hood. No music was seen.

79. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

79. **English**

80. In 1999, in national tests, against average National Curriculum levels, attainment for seven year olds in reading and writing was in-line with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, standards in reading were below average and well below average in writing. The results in English for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above the national average and in-line with the average for pupils from similar schools. The proportion of eleven year old pupils attaining the higher grade, Level 5, is above the national average although below average in comparison with similar schools. There has been a steady improvement in test results over the three years 1996 to 1998 but girls performed better than boys at seven and eleven.
81. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' levels of attainment in reading, writing, speaking and listening at the end of both key stages are above national expectations. Inspection findings differ from the most recent test results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The tests for eleven year olds indicated that pupils' performance was well above the national average whereas inspection findings show that currently standards are above, rather than well above the national average. This is because the current Year 6 has almost 60 per cent of pupils who were born in the summer months and over a third of pupils have special educational needs. Standards for the present year group of pupils in Year 6 are, therefore, lower than those of the previous year.
1. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above the national expectation at the end of both key stages. They enter the school with average standards and make good progress. In the literacy hour, when the whole class share text in books, pupils are attentive and interested in answering questions. Teachers encourage them to extend their vocabulary and to speak in more complex sentences. Teachers place a strong emphasis on the development of speaking and listening. In developing speaking, they plan activities in various sizes of groups, to provide opportunities for pupils to ask and answer questions, express opinions, describe events and predict outcomes. In Year 1, pupils make stick puppets of characters in the Nativity and use them to enact the story. In developing listening skills, pupils respond to a range of stimuli such as poems and nursery rhymes, complex instructions and word games. As pupils move through the school they are increasingly able to organise what they want to say. In

Year 4, pupils confidently select rhyming words in a poem, sound them out and change them by identifying the root of the word. Pupils in Year 6, when discussing the rats' point of view in the 'Pied Piper', give reasoned views in coherent sentences.

83. Standards in reading, at the end of both key stages, are above national expectations and the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to use a combination of a phonic approach, breaking down unfamiliar words into simple phonic units to decipher the text, and use evidence from the context to establish meaning. Pupils enjoy the use of 'big books' in the literacy hour and gain from reading together, most pupils following well when the teacher reads. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are accurate readers, the more able being fluent and confident, and their understanding and response to characters and themes is quite well developed. Literacy lessons give pupils opportunities to read from a variety of texts. Pupils in Year 2 read 'The Giant's Tale' and consider their own fantasy creature, while pupils in Year 5 study the style and language of Enid Blyton. Pupils in Year 6 study the text of the three witches' spells from Macbeth. Pupils confidently locate books in the library and extract information from a variety of sources. Most pupils enjoy reading and read for pleasure. Pupils take their book home to read and parents and those who hear pupils read in school, contribute to the individual reading journal. The school has a very successful bookshop run by one of the teaching assistants. Pupils can purchase books by using a savings card scheme if they wish, and the shop is open to parents after school.
84. The majority of pupils attain above average standards in writing by the end of both key stages and their progress, including pupils with special educational needs, is good. In Year 2, using 'The Giant's Tale' as a stimulus, pupils confidently write a poem based on a fantasy creature with reasonably accurate spelling. In other examples of written work in the classroom there are class books of recipes, rules of playground games and poems. Pupils use appropriate punctuation and their handwriting is well formed and joined. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils write with reasonable accuracy, using a good range of vocabulary in complex, well punctuated sentences. Their handwriting is a mature legible script. Pupils in Year 3 use a passage from 'Charlie and Ben Move House' to show how paragraphs are used to organise dialogue. Pupils in Year 4 look at ways of presenting information in an interesting manner when studying environmental issues in the school grounds. Pupils in Year 5 write a story in the style of Enid Blyton while the reading of a passage in Macbeth inspires pupils' written work in Year 6.
85. Standards in literacy are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils can answer questions and try to explain themselves in detail with accurate vocabulary. For example, in a Year 3 design and technology collaborative project on 'pop up' cards, pupils used sound arguments to explore different possibilities. In religious education in Year 2, the teacher used the lesson to extend pupils' vocabulary about characteristics of weddings. Pupils read with good expression and understanding and use these skills to read instructions. Standards in writing are good and this enables pupils to communicate effectively. In Year 2, pupils record investigations in science to find the warmest place in the room using the time taken for ice cubes to melt. All pupils have a design and technology book, in which they plan their designs, giving a written description and evaluation. There is a strong commitment in the school to using literacy across the curriculum and opportunities are taken in all subjects to improve pupils' literacy skills.
86. Pupils enjoy English and are keen to talk about their work. Their attitudes to learning are consistently good and they show good levels of sustained concentration. They behave very well, are courteous and enjoy good relationships with each other and all adults who help them with their work. Pupils co-operate very well during shared tasks such as group reading and discussion.
87. Teaching is consistently good at both key stages and this contributes significantly to pupils' progress in English. Teachers plan their lessons well using the National Literacy Strategy framework for teaching as a basis. They clearly identify the learning objectives and provide high quality oral work that encourages and extends pupils' contributions. Lessons have a brisk pace and expectations are high. Teachers' organisation in the classroom and management of pupils is good. Resources are appropriate, readily available and are used well. The very effective use of well briefed teaching assistants is another significant contribution to pupils' progress and the standards they achieve.
1. The headteacher and the English co-ordinator have made a very strong contribution to the development of the

subject. Both planning and teaching are monitored effectively. Detailed policies, guidance and procedures support the National Literacy Strategy framework. Assessment procedures are very good, with detailed assessments of pupils, using the local education authority's literacy system to record progress. These ongoing assessment procedures are used effectively to inform planning and to predict future levels of attainment for each pupil. Resources for English are generally sound and those to support the National Literacy Strategy are good. The recent audit of the reference library has revealed a need for re-stocking.

89. There has been significant improvement in English since the last inspection. Standards in English are above average overall at the end of both key stages and teaching is now consistently good across the school.

88. **Mathematics**

90. The national tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that standards were well above the national average and were above average in comparison with similar schools. Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, the figures show that the performance of pupils in the tests is consistently above average and that boys performed better than girls. Inspection findings show that the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is in-line with the expected levels for seven year olds. These findings differ from the 1999 test results as the present Year 2 includes a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs than last year's cohort. By the end of the key stage the majority of pupils have a sound understanding of the number system. They discuss their mathematics using appropriate mathematical language and use symbols accurately. In Year 1 they know that standard measures are more accurate than non-standard units and that five sticks are not a reliable measure of length. All pupils in Year 2 can tell the time, on an analogue clock face; the pupils of average and above ability match times in quarter hours on an analogue clock to the same time on a digital clock. The higher attainers add 15 minutes and accurately record their answers in analogue and digital forms. Pupils in Year 2 understand the value of tens and units in a two-digit number, and a few high attaining pupils understand the value of the hundreds in a three-digit number. The majority of pupils use mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils use and apply the mathematics they learn satisfactorily in mathematical problems and in other subjects, for example, in science when pupils in Year 1 sorted materials into sets based on whether they were attracted to a magnet or not.

1. In 1999, in national tests, against average National Curriculum levels, attainment at eleven was well above average. In comparison with similar schools, standards were in-line with the average. Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, the figures show that the performance of pupils in mathematics in the tests was consistently above the national average until 1998 when standards dropped. In 1999 there was a significant improvement. From test data for eleven-year-olds over the three years, boys perform better than girls in mathematics. The evidence from the inspection is that the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is in-line with the expected levels for mathematics overall but there is a significant weakness in pupils' skills in mental calculation in Years 5 and 6. Inspection findings differ from the most recent test results because the current Year 6 has almost 60 per cent of pupils who were born in the summer months and over a third of pupils have special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a sound knowledge and understanding of mathematics. They are able to use number accurately and appropriately in different contexts. Their understanding of place value is good and helps them to calculate quickly and accurately. In Years 5 and 6 pupils identify multiples and factors but too many pupils of average and below average ability have an insecure understanding of mental calculation and unsatisfactory skills in mental arithmetic. In Year 5, a significant proportion of pupils are unable to choose the correct operation to solve mathematical problems. A majority of pupils in Year 6 interpret data from a graph but a third of pupils are unable to draw the correct conclusion. Pupils in Year 6 use and apply their numeracy skills effectively in converting currencies and in planning a budget to obtain the best value for their money when shopping for a party. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use their mathematical knowledge effectively in other work; for example, in measuring in seconds and millilitres and in collecting data and analysing it as part of their scientific investigations.

92. Overall in both key stages, pupils make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 1 progress is generally good in lessons and over the key stage most pupils make satisfactory progress from their average attainment on entry to the key stage. They systematically develop a sound understanding of mathematical concepts and consolidate their skills. Across the school, the good quality, detailed planning by all teachers matches the needs of all ability

groups and provides appropriate tasks for pupils and challenges the high attainers. In Key Stage 2 pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 make good progress in lessons and satisfactory progress over time but the rate of progress slows in Year 5 and is unsatisfactory. This is due to the difficulty of the planned work in the National Numeracy Strategy for the current Year 5 who do not have the necessary knowledge, understanding and secure skills on which to build more advanced work. In Year 6 the teacher has tracked the progress of pupils by means of test results since Year 2. They made unsatisfactory progress when they were in Years 3 and 4 and they are making good progress currently due to the good and sometimes excellent teaching they receive to make up the lost ground. Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes and those from the Special Support Facility make good progress due to the good support they receive from the teaching assistants and the specialist teacher.

93. Overall, across the school, pupils' response to their mathematics teaching is good. At both key stages the behaviour of pupils in lessons is good. Pupils listen attentively to the teachers and try very hard to succeed in what they are doing. They work together well in groups, for example, when pupils in Year 6 discussed the requirements for a party and sought opinions from each other before making a decision on food to be bought. In Key Stage 1, pupils have good attitudes to the subject and enjoy the work. Occasionally in Years 5 and 6, pupils have a lack of confidence in mathematics, which gives them a negative attitude to the subject. Pupils in Year 2 were well motivated by their success when matching times on analogue and digital clocks. Pupils work with sustained effort and are eager to tackle new challenges as seen in a Year 4 lesson when higher attainers wanted to conquer thousands, hundreds, tens and units. They are confident to demonstrate work on the board and are not afraid to show that they misunderstand and discuss their mistakes openly in class. Pupils take a pride in their work and present it neatly.
1. The quality of teaching is good overall. At Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is consistently good and makes a significant contribution to the sound standards and satisfactory progress made by pupils; at Key Stage 2 it is good with some examples of very good and excellent teaching and a single instance of unsatisfactory teaching. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and Years 5 and 6 was good and was satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Throughout the school most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Expectations of pupils' work are usually high and are shown by the challenging questions that teachers ask. In Year 6, the teacher's expectations are very high; she continually probes pupils' understanding with very skilful questioning and it is abundantly clear to pupils that only their very best effort is acceptable. When a pupil made a suggestion about obtaining further discounts with a reward card when planning a budget for a party, the teacher turned the suggestion into a further personal challenge within the pupil's work. A strength of the teaching is the consistently good quality of planning; it is detailed, identifies what pupils are to learn, is well linked to the National Numeracy Strategy and is well matched to the different ability groups within the class to cater for their needs. Lessons are well structured with a good balance of mental calculation, direct explanations, a mathematical activity and a plenary in which the teacher reviews what has been learned. In the direct teaching there are usually clear explanations and in Year 3, these are very good and in Year 6, are excellent.
2. All teachers know their pupils well and establish good relationships. There is a mutual respect between the pupils and teachers, which promotes good discipline and sets good role models within the school. Resources are used well and the pace of lessons is usually brisk, except in Year 5 where the initial introduction is too long and results in pupils becoming restless and inattentive until the mathematical activity starts. In Year 3 the teacher settles the class very quickly to work by the use of a sand timer. In Year 6 the teacher uses the internet very well as a resource to introduce the pupils to researching for information to buy food for a party when they plan a budget. Teacher's day-to-day assessment of pupils is a strength. As well as the skilful questioning seen in most classes, teachers use their evaluations of the week's work to plan the subsequent week. They use information from their assessments to plan targets for each pupil in Year 6, to group pupils in Year 3 and test results are used to identify weaknesses in the teaching and plan any action to be taken to improve standards. Marking across the school is variable; most is praise for work completed. In some books there is good marking with evaluative comments and questions to improve pupils' work. Teachers use their teaching assistants well; they focus the extra support on the lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs, and the good support given by teaching assistants and the specialist teacher from the Special Support Facility has a positive influence on their good progress. The expertise of the specialist teacher is not always used efficiently by class teachers.
96. At both key stages the curriculum is broad and balanced. It includes all elements of the National Curriculum.

There is a sensible emphasis on the teaching of number but due emphasis is also given to other aspects of mathematics including mathematical investigations. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' mental agility and matches the school's main priority in its development plan to improve standards in mathematics. Finance has been targeted at providing support for pupils in Year 6 who attain Level 3, to boost their attainment to Level 4. The money provides a teaching assistant who works with this group to improve their attainment. Across the school, there are very good, effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment which are consistently used by all teachers. Pupils are regularly assessed through on-going assessments, which give the teacher an insight into what each pupil knows, understands and can do. The progress of a sample of pupils is tracked through the school and the co-ordinator regularly monitors pupils' work, teachers' planning and observes teaching. She reports to the headteacher and her colleagues on what she has identified and plans are made to overcome any weaknesses. The co-ordinator gives very good leadership and support to colleagues and monitors the subject very well. Her yearly planner from the school's development plan ensures that she has a very positive impact on the development of the subject linked to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

97. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching and pupils' response to teaching have improved, as they are much more consistently good across the school. Standards of attainment have been maintained across the school but pupils in Years 5 and 6 are still not fully competent in using mental methods to solve problems, a weakness identified in the previous report. The school's development plan is now highly effective in addressing the weakness and to improve standards, compared with the plan in the previous report that was judged to be 'of limited use'.

95. **Science**

98. In 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1, the attainment of seven year olds in national teachers' assessments was below average in comparison with national results and well below in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. However, the proportion of pupils who attained a higher level, was above the national average and in line with results for similar schools. In 1999, in national tests, against average National Curriculum levels, attainment at eleven was above the national average and in line with results in similar schools. Taking the three years from 1996 to 1998 together, the figures show that the performance of pupils at seven and eleven has steadily improved. From test data for eleven-year-olds over the three years, there are no differences in the performance of boys and girls in science.

99. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved on the average attainment found during the previous inspection. From the evidence of pupils' work and a limited number of lessons, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain above the national expectation. As pupils enter the school with a range of attainment, which is broadly average, they make good progress over the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, due to the good support that they receive during lessons from teaching assistants. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all aspects of science. Pupils in the present Year 6 entered Key Stage 2 with attainment in science that was average; they make satisfactory progress and the majority is on course to attain the national expectation at the age of eleven, due to the good teaching that they receive. Inspection findings differ from 1999 test results at the end of both key stages due to the differences in the cohorts from year to year. In the present Year 2 and Year 6 there are above average numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and in Year 6, there is a high proportion (almost 60 per cent) of pupils born in the summer months. In the last inspection, eleven year olds attained below average standards in scientific investigation; these skills have been improved to the levels expected for their age.

100. In Key Stage 1, most pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the content of the curriculum in science and good investigative skills to increase their knowledge and understanding of scientific phenomena. Pupils in the Reception class know that water can be found as steam and ice as well as a liquid and they record their findings in pictures. Pupils in Year 1 sort materials using a magnet. They sort the materials using their predictions of the outcome, test materials with a magnet to check their predictions and begin to seek reasons for results. They make good progress due to the good teaching where the lesson was well structured and the teacher used skilful questioning to help them to improve their thinking about their results. This was seen when pupils were puzzled when the plastic handles of a pair of scissors appeared to be attracted to a magnet. In Year 2, pupils investigate which part of the classroom is the warmest using melting ice cubes. They predict the outcome of their



tests and with support from the teacher they identify the resources needed and plan the investigation. They make careful observations every ten minutes and record these in drawing and writing. They understand that their test needs to be fair, they suggest sensible reasons for their results and recognise that ice can be turned back into water.

101. In Key Stage 2, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the science content of the curriculum. They make effective use of scientific terminology to communicate findings and use mathematical skills to measure results and present data. They make good use of information technology to record and analyse their data. This was seen when pupils in Year 4 tested paper parachutes of different surface areas. The results of their tests were entered into a data handling program and a graph of the average time taken for the parachute to fall was plotted against the surface area of the parachutes. Pupils undertake experimental work effectively; pupils in Year 5 investigated the pitch of musical instruments and pupils in Year 6 investigated the solubility of salt. They understand the need for a fair test, how to control constants and variables in their tests and record their results in drawings, writing and tables accurately. As pupils move through Key Stage 2 they make insufficient progress in recording their investigations; pupils in Year 6 are still using the school's system of planning boards to structure their work rather than writing independently.

1. Pupils' response to their science teaching is good across the school. They enjoy science, they behave well, work conscientiously, and co-operate appropriately to ask scientific questions and discuss ideas when working in groups. As they become older, they take more responsibility for organising their work. Pupils in Year 4 worked under the teacher's direction while pupils in Year 6 organised themselves independently and worked in the shared practical area when they undertook an investigation. Pupils handle equipment safely and share resources sensibly. When pupils encounter difficulties, they persevere to solve problems as seen when pupils in Year 4 tested their paper parachutes. On occasions pupils are fascinated by their discoveries, illustrated by pupils in the Reception who were excited when they saw an ice hand and pupils in Year 1 who were amazed when a two pence coin jumped towards a magnet.

2. Overall the quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Across the school, teachers have good knowledge and understanding of science, use a good balance of explanation, discussion and practical activity in their lessons and they use resources competently. Their good planning is detailed, is related to the National Curriculum, identifies clear objectives for the lesson and usually matches the needs of all pupils. In Key Stage 2, pupils with special educational needs from the Special Support Facility are well integrated into science lessons and they receive good support from the specialist teacher within the mainstream classes. Class teachers do not always make efficient use of the specialist teacher within their lessons as she is used as a teaching assistant rather than a teacher. Generally teachers have an effective, quiet, firm discipline, which is based on good relationships with their pupils. A positive feature of the good teaching is the teachers' skilful questioning to challenge pupils' understanding, to extend their thinking and to assess their work. This is particularly effective in Year 6 where the teacher shares what she is to assess with pupils and continually probes their understanding with very skilful questioning. The teacher's marking in Year 6 is also very effective as written questions are asked to improve pupils' work; this is rarely seen in other year groups. Teachers also give deadlines to pupils for each part of the lesson and encourage them to work at a brisk pace. Teachers use and teach literacy well and use the correct technical language. There is good use of mathematical skills of measuring and good use of information technology for data handling. Teachers give their pupils sufficient opportunities to develop responsibility for organising themselves.

3. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. There is a good balance of scientific investigation across the other Programmes of Study in the National Curriculum; health education and attention to drugs misuse is included in the curriculum. The very good consistent planning processes are based on the scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. It provides good guidance for teachers and effective progression within the subject. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, which include assessment tasks at the end of each unit of work, illustrated by a collection of examples of work that is annotated with the date and levels of the National Curriculum. Teachers use information from assessments well to plan their lessons and to meet the needs of all ability groups. The headteacher as subject co-ordinator, provides very good leadership in the subject. The strong feature is her very good monitoring of the subject. Test results are analysed to identify weaknesses and ways are sought to improve standards. Each teacher's planning is monitored regularly and teaching is observed, followed by constructive criticism that is shared with the teacher. The co-ordinator plays a very important role in helping to achieve the priorities in the school's development plan

through her yearly planner, which outlines her work for the year. She manages a budget to provide adequate resources for the subject.

4. There has been good improvement in science since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have risen, particularly in investigative skills, pupils' response and teaching have improved from sound to good, the planning and assessment of the curriculum have improved significantly and the leadership of the subject is very good.

## 105. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### 105. **Information technology**

106. Since the last inspection the school has significantly improved its provision for information technology. Improvements in planning, assessments, recording and teachers' expertise have had a positive impact on the development of the subject. As a result standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school.

107. Children in the Reception class make a good start. They understand the basic keyboard for writing activities and learn how to control the computer's mouse. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use computers to write, change, save and print out their work with some adult help. They can programme a 'Roamer' to follow a set pathway and use simple graphics and data handling programs effectively to illustrate their work. For example, in Year 1 pupils move text around to re-assemble text to which they add pictures. Pupils in Year 2 use data handling capably in mathematics and geography. They look at the work of Mondrian and use a graphics package to create their own pictures formed from straight lines. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 use e-mail to correspond with pupils in St. Maartens in the Caribbean. Pupils in Year 4 improve their word processing skills by learning to use a spell checker. They understand that the checker cannot identify homophones, an aspect of grammar they recently studied in the literacy hour. In Year 5, pupils measure the temperature in different parts of the room and record and use the data effectively. Pupils in Year 6 use the internet to search for the best value in party food at supermarkets. In their study of Britain since 1948 they use research programs appropriately to find out about life in the historical period. In using control and monitoring programs they explore light sensors in street lamps. Pupils use a range of modelling programs competently to explore patterns and make predictions about the consequences of their decision making.

108. Pupils' response to information technology is very good. Pupils enjoy information technology. They are well motivated and have positive attitudes. They sustain concentration and persevere when work is difficult. Pupils work well co-operatively, supporting each other in pairs and in small groups. They take a pride in their work and care for the equipment. Many pupils have access to computers at home and this enhances their enthusiasm.

109. The teaching of information technology is consistently good throughout the school. All teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, have high expectations and are enthusiastic about the use of information technology. They understand the skills to be taught and plan to use information technology across the curriculum. The organisation of the whole-class teaching of skills, by using a projector linked to a computer to project the display on to a large screen, is very effective. The teaching is well paced to maintain pupils' interest. Management of pupils is good in both whole-class lessons and when they work in pairs. Teachers assess pupils' skills and keep a good ongoing record of their attainment and progress.

1. The co-ordinator gives very good leadership and has identified a suitable programme of computer skills that are incorporated into the weekly planning sheets to improve coverage and progression, often supporting topic work. This is already raising standards, particularly in communicating ideas in writing stories, creating pictures and data handling. The resources to deliver the National Curriculum are satisfactory. Each class has access to a personal computer and there are other computers available.

110. **Religious education**

111. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school and standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are in-line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils in Year 1 show a good understanding for their age of the Christmas story and use stick puppets to talk about their chosen character. Pupils in Year 2 know about the special clothes, objects, people and food associated with a Christian wedding and understand that the bride and groom take vows to promise to look after each other during their future life together. Previous work from pupils in Key Stage 1 shows their ability to express their thoughts and ideas about religious ideas. Pupils in the Reception class wrote sentences about forgiveness from their own experience. Pupils' understanding that there are special times in the year is developing satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 4 understand the meaning of the Christmas story for Christians and the reasons why the Holy Family fled to Egypt. They make sound links with previous work in history on Ancient Egypt and with their knowledge and understanding of art when they observed a picture by Isaac Fahous of the flight into Egypt. Pupils in Year 5 know that Advent is a period of waiting for Christmas and they increase their understanding of this festival in Year 6 when they gain further knowledge about the lighting of an Advent candle and the symbolism of some decorations on a Christmas tree. They have sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and two contrasting religions, Judaism and Islam, shown by the comparisons of prayer in the three faiths written by pupils in Year 6. Across the school, pupils' written work is enhanced by their good oral and literacy skills and they use information technology effectively for word processing in their writing. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons due to the teaching, which is generally good. The consistently good teaching has not yet had enough time to have an impact across the key stages.

1. Across the school, pupils' response to their lessons is good and sometimes very good. They are interested, enthusiastic, sustain concentration and behave well, sometimes as in Year 1, very well. They listen attentively to their teachers and to contributions from other pupils. The provision in the subject makes valuable contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, as seen in the many opportunities pupils are given to empathise with characters in stories such as the robber's victim in the good Samaritan, and the prodigal son. There are many opportunities for discussion on topics such as personal feelings when waiting a long time for something in Year 5 and on forgiveness in the Reception class. The reflection and discussion in Year 3 on the birth of Jesus showed that pupils are confident to articulate their own beliefs and other pupils respect their views. The visits to local churches and work on other faiths contribute positively to their cultural development. Pupils help each other when someone has a problem, as seen when a pupil in Year 2 was trying to write about special food at a wedding ceremony. He told his group that he had never been to a wedding so was unsure about the topic. His colleagues began to share their experiences and helped him to gain enough information to complete his work.

113. The quality of teaching is good with one example of very good teaching. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and have consistently high expectations of pupils' performance. Lesson planning is consistently good and includes specific learning intentions with tasks that are matched appropriately to pupils' prior attainment. In Year 2 the teacher shared these objectives with pupils and checked that they had been learned at the end of the session. Work in religious education is often well linked to other subjects; in Year 1, the discussion on the Christmas story was linked to a literacy hour, in Year 4 to pupils' appreciation of art. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because they are well supported in their activities by learning support assistants in Key Stage 1 and the teacher in Key Stage 2. Teachers manage pupils well as they base their discipline on their good relationships with pupils. They often have good strategies for managing pupils and gaining their attention, such as the use of a noise code in Year 1 and a ringing bell for missing words in Year 3. Their use of time and resources is good; in Year 6 the very brisk pace and rapid questioning were a strong feature of the very good teaching. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is good and in one lesson in Year 1, homework was used well to reinforce the work undertaken in the lesson.

1. The co-ordinator provides good leadership to colleagues and there is good guidance in the new scheme of work based on the revised Agreed Syllabus. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is planned effectively to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress across the school. Procedures for assessment are very good and teachers make good use of the information from their assessments to plan future lessons. The co-ordinator has begun to collect examples of work for a portfolio and to match these against the attainment targets of the revised syllabus to assist colleagues in assessing pupils' work. She gives effective support to colleagues and monitors teachers' planning, standards of pupils' attainment and last term her predecessor monitored teaching. The co-ordinator's yearly planner and her regular discussions with the head teacher on her progress with the subject's development,

ensure that the targets set in the school's development plan are met.

115. Since the previous inspection, there has been significant progress in the development of the subject. Standards of attainment have been maintained, however, pupils' response to the subject and the quality of teaching have improved from sound to good. The high attainers are now sufficiently challenged and the planning and assessment of the subject are greatly improved because the headteacher supports the co-ordinator and enables her to give stronger curricular leadership in the subject.

114. **Art**

116. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Evidence from the display around the school, from pupils' previous work, the art portfolio, from pupils' sketch books and talking to pupils shows that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both key stages as knowledge, understanding and skills are developed progressively. In current work in Key Stage 1, pupils in the Reception class have made self-portraits in the style of Matisse. They have also used paint to mix shades of colour, such as green, and have used this paint to make pictures to illustrate a story, 'But Martin'. Pupils in year 1 make observational drawings of plants and objects and make patterns when printing. Work of high quality was seen in a book of sunflowers where pupils in year 1 had studied Van Gogh's sunflowers and had made pictures of sunflower heads from a collage of seeds and other materials. They made good observational paintings of teddy bears and they also used clay to make three-dimensional models and use tools competently to add texture to the bear's fur. Pupils in Year 2 continue to develop their skills in using techniques with various media and apply these skills in paintings of still life in the style of Cezanne. Work by pupils in Key Stage 2 increases in the sophistication of the skills they use. Sketches become more detailed and media are used in different ways to create texture and tones in compositions, such as the landscape paintings in the style of Vlaminck by pupils in Year 4. There is also good knowledge and understanding of the work of famous artists in the work in Years 5 and 6 based on the designs of William Morris. Pupils in both key stages use information technology to compose pictures, such as the picture in the style of Mondrian in Year 2 and the design in the style of Morris that pupils in Year 5 generated to decorate a T-shirt. Whilst pupils make good progress in learning techniques and applying them in their compositions, they make limited progress in their use of art as a means of expressing a response to emotions and imagination because teachers provide insufficient opportunities to use art in this way.

117. In Key Stage 2, pupils' response to teaching is very good. Pupils greatly enjoy the subject and are very interested in the tasks they are given. They are very well behaved, sustain concentration and persevere to master skills. They take great care in their work and a pride in the finished composition. They work collaboratively in Year 6 when screen printing and in Year 3 asked each other for advice and constructive criticism when trying to master the techniques of using watercolours. They pay great attention to using tools safely and correctly due to the insistence of the classroom assistants. Art makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

1. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers and their assistants have good knowledge and understanding of art, effective management of pupils based on good relationships and they teach skills and techniques proficiently. The good teachers' planning identifies clear learning objectives, and criteria for assessment that are used by the classroom assistants when they assess pupils' work. Teachers and their assistants have high expectations and insist on high standards and correct techniques. While lessons proceed at a brisk pace there is sufficient time for pupils to take care and a pride in their work. In Year 4 and Year 6, the classroom assistants gave good support to individual pupils in their skilful questioning which encouraged pupils to evaluate their own work critically and to modify it to improve the composition.

2. The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers both Programmes of Study in the National Curriculum. However, it lacks creativity because of the limited opportunities for pupils' response to their emotions and imagination. Assessment of art is good; it is consistent in quality across the school and gives sufficient information on pupils' strengths and weaknesses in relation to the objectives in teachers' planning. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. There is a clear scheme of work for the subject across the school, which ensures progression. She monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work and manages a budget to develop the subject.

120. There has been significant improvement in art since the previous inspection. Standards have been maintained in Key Stage 1 and have improved where previously there was substantial underachievement in Key Stage 2. The curricular map is in place to ensure progression and there are very good procedures for assessment. The high quality observational drawing is extended into work with other media. Teaching is now good in Key Stage 2 in comparison with the unsatisfactory judgement in the last report. Sufficient time is allocated to art in Key Stage 2 that results in sustained work and has a positive effect on standards.

119. **Design and technology**

121. A few lessons were observed and the evidence was supplemented by scrutiny of teachers' planning, pupils' work and displays, and discussions with pupils. Pupils' progress, including pupils with special educational needs, is good. By the end of Key Stage 1, when designing and making, pupils use their experiences of using materials and techniques to help generate their ideas. Pupils in Year 1 use their imagination to find different ways of making a 'pop up' Christmas card using folds. They explain the problem and how they are going to solve it. In Year 2, pupils in their design books, plan the net of a container to be constructed for some Christmas sweets they will be making. They modify their design in the light of the problem that they encounter. In both lessons pupils show good manipulative skills using scissors, and folding and sticking card.

122. Good progress is continued throughout Key Stage 2 and by Year 6, pupils evaluate their work as it develops, bearing in mind the purposes for which it is intended and illustrate alternatives using sketches and models. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils use their design books effectively. When designing they make step-by-step plans and show increasing accuracy, paying attention to the quality of finish and function. They give a written explanation of their design, modifications and evaluation. Pupils' evaluations often recognise their over ambitious designs. In Year 3, pupils make a 'pop up' booklet using a range of joining techniques to make the moving parts. Pupils in Year 6 use construction apparatus to make moving fairground rides. Examples of previous work include pupils in Year 4 making 'chapatis' and in Years 5 and 6 using their knowledge of collage to design and make a frame for a mirror.

123. Pupils enjoy design and technology, they behave well, work together collaboratively and respect and consider the views of others. They persevere with their designs, solve problems and are pleased to explain how they expect their designs to turn out. They use their design books very well, taking a pride in the presentation of their work.

124. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers plan their work well, have clear learning objectives and are well supported by the school's scheme of work that ensures progression. They ask challenging questions to help pupils think about the practicality of a particular design and are pleased to praise and encourage them. Teachers assess and record pupils' progress effectively.

1. The co-ordinator gives good leadership to the subject, has developed a good scheme of work and is a sound source of advice to teachers. Resources are satisfactory, well organised and there is a sufficient supply of consumable materials to teach the curriculum.

126. There has been significant improvement in the subject. The significant minority of underachievement in Key Stage 2 no longer exists, teaching has improved in both key stages from sound to good in Key Stage 1 and from unsatisfactory to good in Key Stage 2. The curricular map provides progression in the subject and pupils' skills in evaluating their own work and modifying it have been improved.

125. **Geography**

1. A lesson was observed in one class in each key stage during the inspection. These lessons and evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. In the single lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils made satisfactory progress in comparing their own lives in an urban setting with life in a fictional rural setting. They formed opinions of what they would like and dislike about life on a rural island and by the end of the lesson, with guidance from the teacher's questions, most gave sensible reasons for their

opinions. In Year 1, pupils have satisfactory skills in drawing simple maps and in using drawings for features. In Key Stage 2, pupils make more detailed maps of the local area, they undertake fieldwork locally to study land use and make good use of geographical terms. In Year 3 they study their parents' patterns of commuting. Pupils' skills and understanding of maps are also sound. By Year 5, pupils undertake a residential visit to Exmoor and are working within the expected levels for their age. They studied the formation of Cheddar Gorge and the caves with their stalagmites and stalactites; their work shows that they understood how the melting ice in the past formed a fast flowing river that carved a deep gorge through the Mendip hills. They make good use of their literacy skills to support their work, as well as their computer skills, for example, when pupils in Year 6 gather information from the internet about international weather conditions.

2. In the single lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils' response to the teaching is satisfactory. They are interested in the work and contribute knowledge from their own experience about living in an urban setting. They behave satisfactorily but need many prompts from the teacher to concentrate and complete their work. In Key Stage 2, pupils' response was good in the lesson seen. They were interested, concentrated well and worked purposefully. Their behaviour was good and they listened attentively to each other's ideas. Geography makes a positive contribution to pupils' moral development. There are many examples of pupils studying environmental issues, such as recycling in Year 4 to save the world's resources, the effects of pollution on water and in Year 5, the need for national parks in this country to save the habitats for wildlife.

129. The quality of the limited amount of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject, use a good balance of explanation, discussion and activity for pupils and a range of good resources. In Key Stage 2 the teacher manages pupils well, however, in Key Stage 1 the teacher has to use her strategies too often for gaining attention and quiet, as pupils are restless and unable to sustain steady concentration. Planning for geography is good with clear objectives for the lessons and work that is usually well matched to the needs of all pupils. In Year 2, the work lacked extended challenge for those who finished their work first.

1. Since the criticism of the last inspection, the school has a clear policy supported by a good curricular map of the subject across the year groups. Pupils receive a broad, balanced curriculum in which progression is planned well. Pupils receive teaching of geography, alternating with history, regularly each term. Overall the leadership and management of the subject is good; the co-ordinator provides a clear educational direction for geography; she monitors pupils' work, teachers' planning and there are plans in her yearly planner to monitor teaching next term. The resources are satisfactory and are enhanced by visits to places of interest both locally and further afield and include residential visits for older pupils in Key Stage 2.

131. There has been significant improvement in geography since the previous inspection. The significant minority of underachievement in Key Stage 2 is no longer present, the use of information technology has improved, the quality of teaching has improved in Key Stage 2 and the good planning of the subject ensures suitable progression in skills, knowledge and understanding for pupils.

130. **History**

132. A single lesson was observed in each key stage during the inspection. These lessons and evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. In Key Stage 1, pupils recognise the distinction between past and present, seen when pupils in Year 1 made comparisons of a Victorian iron with a modern one and when they had compared old and new features of the village of Lindfield. They make sound progress in chronology and the use of historical evidence and they know about some famous people from British history, such as Florence Nightingale. In Key Stage 2, pupils also make satisfactory progress in chronology and have good knowledge and understanding of historical periods, such as life in the time of the Ancient Egyptians and Victorians. They make good use of historical evidence to investigate the past and to suggest how artefacts may have been used. They ask relevant questions and use historical terms confidently; pupils in Year 5 distinguish between primary and secondary evidence and use information from visitors who lived at the time, to research life in the 1950s and 1960s. They also use evidence from artefacts and visits to places such as Preston Manor to compare household appliances and specifications for jobs, such as a housekeeper, in 1899 with 1999. Pupils make good use of information technology for research. They use CD-ROMs and the internet competently

to find information on life in the period that they are studying. For example, pupils in Year 6 used a search engine to find out the price of a pair of shoes in 1948. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their historical knowledge, understanding and skills due to the good individual support that they receive from the teacher, teaching assistants and parent helpers.

133. In the lessons seen in both key stages, pupils respond positively to their work in history. They have good attitudes to the subject, show great interest and are willing to contribute ideas, yet learn from their mistakes. In Year 1 they settle to the writing task well and sustain concentration due to the teacher's effective organisation and the good match of tasks to pupils' abilities. They have good relationships with each other and are keen to help when one of them is having a difficulty. In Year 5, pupils listened attentively to visitors and were courteous to them when asking questions. The overlong session meant that at times they were restless. History contributes positively to pupils' social development and an awareness of their own cultural heritage promotes pupils' personal development.
134. The quality of the limited amount of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The teacher's expectations are high in Year 1 and are shown by the challenging tasks that are set for pupils. Across the school, planning is good, objectives are clear and activities are well matched to pupils' differing prior attainment. Good questioning skills in Year 1 are used to draw out deductions from historical evidence and to assess pupils' attainment and progress. In Year 5 the lack of critical comment from the teacher on how pupils asked their questions and the lack of reminders about how to take notes detracted from the progress pupils made in learning the objectives of the lesson. Teachers use history effectively to practise and improve pupils' literacy that includes the development of reading, writing and research skills. In Year 5, one of the learning objectives was to develop the skills of taking notes. Teachers brief their teaching assistants and parent helpers well to ensure their time is used very effectively in lessons.
1. There is a clear policy supported by a good curricular map of the subject across the year groups. The curriculum is broad and balanced and planning for progression across the school, based on the map, is good. The procedures for assessment are consistent across the school and are very good. For example, after the unit of work on Florence Nightingale in Year 2, the teacher completed an assessment grid for each pupil, using criteria related to the work covered, such as the pupil's ability to select information from a picture. This information is used well when teachers plan the next historical topic. The co-ordinator gives a good lead in the subject, she monitors pupils' work and teachers' planning, she manages a budget for resources and there are plans in her yearly planner to monitor teaching next term. Resources are adequate and are enhanced by contributions from visitors and visits to places of interest, such as the British Museum and Fishbourne Roman Palace.
136. There has been some improvement in history since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment have been maintained, the good planning of the subject ensures suitable progression in skills, knowledge and understanding for pupils and the very good procedures for assessment enable teachers to build on work that has gone before.
135. **Music**
137. Across the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in all aspects of music. Some pupils, particularly the more able recorder players, those in the school choir and those who have peripatetic tuition on the trumpet and viola make good progress. No class teaching was timetabled during the inspection, the focus this half-term being on singing and the teaching of recorders to groups of Key Stage 2 pupils. However, in the planning, all elements of the subject are covered. The strength of the subject is in pupils' performance rather than in their composition, which leads to an imbalance in the curriculum because it lacks creativity due to the limited opportunities for pupils to respond imaginatively to their emotions and feelings.
138. Pupils sing well, and in whole-school singing practice even the youngest sing songs from memory. In the choir pupils work hard to perfect their singing and are confident to ask questions when they are not quite sure. In a mixed age, second ability, recorder group, pupils identify notes in a scale and play a simple Christmas tune using all seven notes. They keep in time with three beats to a bar. In science in Year 5, pupils make their own musical instruments to investigate pitch. Some pupils fill seven bottles with different amounts of water and arrange them

in a scale. They compare the difference in the notes when blowing over the bottle and striking the bottle with a beater.

139. Evidence of composition in the previous half-term showed progression through the school. Pupils in Year 1 compose with percussion instruments, inventing their own symbols to represent the sounds of their instruments. Pupils in Year 2 compose rhythms. Their topic is food so they listen to the rhythms of food words. Pupils in Year 5 learn to sing 'Fish Scales' in two parts. They compose their own music based on four beats to the bar. In Year 6, pupils compose their own machine music with percussion instruments.
140. Music provides a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction for many pupils. They listen attentively and make interesting comments on the music they hear. They enjoy musical events such as musicians from the local secondary school visiting the school and performing. Music, particularly singing, makes a significant contribution to the life of the school and pupils' cultural development.
141. Although no class music was observed, teachers' planning and assessment of pupils' progress is a good feature of the teaching. Two parents make a strong contribution to music in the school by leading the Key Stage 2 singing and running the after school choir. The scheme of work for music is due to be reviewed next term to incorporate the new national guidance. Resources for music are adequate to teach the subject.

142. The standards reported in the last inspection have been sustained.

135. **Physical education**

143. Lessons in gymnastics, games and dance were seen during the week of the inspection. Pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress. Evidence from teachers' planning shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have opportunities to take part in all aspects of the curriculum. However, pupils in Years 1 to 4 swim once a week throughout the year and, as a result, receive an unbalanced programme of physical education. As only these younger children swim, no judgement can be made on the number of pupils who can swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6.
144. In a dance lesson in the Reception class, pupils use space well as they respond to music by acting as sea creatures, while in Year 1, pupils move appropriately as a star, responding to the sound and beat of a triangle struck by the teacher. In gymnastics, pupils in Year 5 show good control of their legs and bodies as they perform a variety of rolls. In a games lesson, pupils in Year 6 practise a range of football skills and understand that the way they strike the ball determines the speed and trajectory of the ball.
145. Pupils enjoy physical education. They listen and respond well to instructions and co-operate in teams and small groups. Behaviour is good and pupils perform confidently to the class when asked and are aware of safety issues. They evaluate their own skills and those of others and understand fair play. Through its emphasis on working together, the subject strengthens the school's provision for pupils' social development.
146. The overall standard of teaching at both key stages is good. Features of good teaching are the planning, organisation and management of pupils. Teachers' knowledge of the subject and expectations of what the pupils can achieve is sound and resources are well matched to the activity. Their use of questioning, for example when looking at an individual's performance contributes to improving standards. The main difference between the satisfactory and good lessons is in the pace of the lesson and the amount of physical activity the pupils undertake. Teachers are always dressed appropriately to teach physical education.
147. The review of the policy for physical education is in the school's development plan for the forthcoming year. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the need to develop the overall planning to aid progression. Teachers assess and record the development of pupils' physical skills effectively. There has been no monitoring of the teaching of the subject. The level of resources is satisfactory overall with some good quality games equipment. The school has a well-equipped hall with fixed apparatus, good hard surfaced areas and spacious playing fields. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities and pupils take part in all local competitions.



148. The standards reported in the last inspection have been sustained.

135. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

135. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

149. The inspection of Blackthorns Primary School was undertaken by a team of four inspectors who, over five days, completed a total of fifteen inspector days in school. 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 over 49 hours was spent on these activities. In addition, interviews were held with the head teacher, teachers, members of the governing body and Parents' and Teachers' Association for 13.5 hours.

Furthermore:

- .27 pupils were heard to read individually and they were questioned on their understanding and knowledge of books in general; many other pupils in each year group were heard to read in the course of lessons, particularly during the literacy hour;
- .
- .samples of pupils' work covering the full ability range were scrutinised in all year groups;
- .
- .a wide range of documents, including policies and the school development plan, was analysed;
- .
- .attendance registers, the records kept on the pupils and teachers' planning documents were analysed;
- .
- .the budget figures were analysed;
- .
- .pupils were observed before the school day started, during play-times and lunch times and after school;
- .
- .before the inspection, 31 parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector to express their views of the school. During the inspection, informal discussions were held with a sample of parents.

**DATA AND INDICATORS**

**Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	182	14	44	11

**Teachers and classes**

**Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	9.25 + 1 in Unit
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	19.68

**Education support staff (YR – Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:	8
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	83
Average class size:	26

**Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/99
	<b>£</b>
Total Income	370,693
Total Expenditure	365,803
Expenditure per pupil	1,866
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,981
Balance carried forward to next year	16,871

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 132

Number of questionnaires returned: 72

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

The school sent a different questionnaire to parents, summarised overleaf.

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly	Moderately	Moderately	Strongly
1.I am happy with the values and attitudes that the school teaches.	60	40	0	0
2.The school sets good standards of behaviour.	60	38	1	0
3.The school works well to ensure attendance.	70	30	0	0
4.The school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	86	14	0	0
5.I am made to feel welcome in the school.	66	34	0	0
6.I am content with the range of subjects taught.	57	41	1	0
7.The school provides satisfactorily for pupils with special needs	56	38	7	0
8.I am satisfied with my child's standard of work.	51	44	4	0
9.I am well informed about the work that my child is doing.	54	42	3	1
10.My child receives proper help and guidance from the school.	47	52	2	0
11.I am satisfied with the work that my child is given to do at home.	50	41	7	1
12.My child is happy in school.	76	19	4	0
•I am satisfied with my child's standard of work.	64	32	4	0
•I am well informed about the work that my child is doing.	71	21	4	4
•My child receives proper help and guidance from the school.	68	32	0	0
•I am satisfied with the work that my child is given to do at home.	70	19	7	4
•My child is happy in school.	75	25	0	0

Note: Percentages may not always total exactly 100 due to 'rounding' to the nearest whole number

#### 17. **Other issues raised by parents**

Eighteen parents made further comments on the reverse of the questionnaire form. Most of the opinions expressed are reflected in the questionnaire responses summarised above. Four parents expressed their concerns that pupils who attained more highly were not challenged sufficiently in their work. During the meeting with parents before the inspection, there were some concerns about standards in mathematics, particularly for pupils in Year 6 and of volatile behaviour by a minority of boys in Year 6.

#### **Response of the team during inspection.**

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors found that pupils who attain more highly are challenged sufficiently in their work and that there was no evidence during the inspection of any volatile behaviour by a minority of boys in Year 6. Inspectors share parents' concern that some standards in mathematics, particularly in mental calculation in Years 5 and 6, are weak.