

INSPECTION REPORT

Cowley Hill First School
Borehamwood

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 117099

Headteacher: Mrs L Williams

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Cole
3369

Dates of inspection: 18 – 21 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707417

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	-	First
Type of control:	-	County
Age range of pupils:	-	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	-	Mixed
School address:	-	Winstre Road Borehamwood Hertfordshire WD6 5DP
Telephone number:	-	0181 9532218
Fax number:	-	0181 2360174
Appropriate authority:	-	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	-	Mrs J Spriggs
Date of previous inspection:	-	19 – 22 February 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M H Cole Registered Inspector	Science Geography Music	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Efficiency of the school
Mrs C Standing Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs T Edwards	English Information communication technology	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing The language base Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
Mrs J Forward	Religious education Art Design and technology Areas of learning for children under five Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Curriculum and assessment
Mrs M Watson	Mathematics History Physical education	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Accommodation and learning resources

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Limited
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN
Tel: 01278 795022

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MAIN FINDINGS

Pupils generally are judged to start at the school with attainment below the national average, especially in language and number skills.

What the school does well

- The headteacher gives very good leadership to a well-managed and efficient school.
- Pupils show positive attitudes, behave well, make co-operative relationships and develop well personally. Good discipline is very effectively promoted.
- A good curriculum is accompanied by effective assessment of pupil progress and target setting. National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented well.
- Children under five make good progress helped by a very good curriculum and good teaching.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them make good progress.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- Good arrangements exist for pupils' support, guidance and welfare.
- The school has a good partnership with parents and community.
- The school has very good resources of trained and effective support staff.

Where the school has weaknesses

The standard of pupils' writing across the curriculum is too low. Not enough time or attention is devoted to teaching writing through a structured programme. Teachers do not expect a high enough standard in pupils' writing or in the presentation of their work generally.

The school has many strengths. These outweigh the one area of weakness, although the weakness is a very important one. The school is aware of this weakness and has begun to tackle it.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory improvement. It has maintained the many strengths recognised at the previous inspection and made some significant improvements. Standards in mathematics and reading, helped by good implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, have shown some improvement. There has been valuable further development in curriculum planning and the use of assessment of pupils to provide targets. The overall quality of teaching has been maintained. There has been recent improvement in relations with parents. Following the previous inspection, the school devised good action plans for tackling key issues for action identified by inspectors. The school has tackled weaknesses in reading and geography with some success but unsatisfactory standards in writing and presentation are continuing weaknesses. With recent improvements in monitoring, in assessment and in target setting, the capacity for further improvement is good.

Standards in subjects

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

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

Key:

Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Attainment of pupils aged seven was well below the national average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing. National comparisons are adversely affected by the school's high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This is taken into account in the comparisons made with similar schools where results are average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Inspectors' judgements based on a wider range of up-to-date evidence are that pupils' speaking and listening skills are average, while reading is a little below and writing well below, the national standard. Standards in mathematics, science, information communication technology and religious education are judged to be average.

At age nine, when pupils leave the school, their attainment is judged to be below the national standard in English, mainly because writing is a weakness. Their attainment is in line with the national standard in mathematics, science, information communication technology and religious education.

Progress for pupils in all other subjects is satisfactory. Both children under five and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	n/a	Satisfactory	Good
Information communication technology	n/a	Good	Good
Religious education	n/a	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Of individual lessons observed during the inspection, 56 per cent showed good teaching and a few of these lessons were of very good quality. Ninety-seven per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better. Teaching of children under five in the Nursery and Reception class is always at least good and sometimes very 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 in lessons and at other times.
Attendance	Satisfactory.
Ethos*	Good. It is an orderly school, relaxed but purposeful, where all make respectful and co-operative relationships and strive to do their best.
Leadership and management	Very good leadership by the headteacher and effective processes in all areas of management.
Curriculum	Good. Broad and balanced, and well planned. Supported by good means for assessing pupils' progress.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision, especially by support staff, leading to good progress. Provision by the 'language base' is of high quality.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good provision for spiritual, moral and social development; satisfactory for cultural development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall but with very good resources of trained and effective support staff and good accommodation.
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	What some parents are not happy about
I. Their children enjoy coming to school and the availability of breakfast at school. II. They like the ethos of the school and the stability it provides. III. They feel the school promotes good behaviour and positive values. IV. They feel encouraged to get involved and can approach teachers freely. V. Pupils are encouraged to get involved in more than daily lessons.	VI. Some parents want more information VII. Some parents are concerned about the VIII. Some parents are concerned about the

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. There is justifiable concern about standards in writing and the presentation of work. Information for parents and homework have

been improving and are judged at least satisfactory.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

- The school must raise standards in writing.
 - More time and attention should be paid to writing throughout the curriculum;
 - The school should move ahead quickly with its programme of systematic writing development to complement the work being done in the 'literacy hour' lessons;
 - Teachers must have higher expectations of the standard of writing both in literacy lessons and across the curriculum (paragraphs: 102, 103, 106, 107).
- The standard of presentation in all of the work pupils undertake must be raised (paragraph: 102).

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

- The central library should be developed and organised so that pupils may understand how to find books and learn the retrieval skills necessary as part of their work in English (paragraphs: 74, 109);
- Reading records should be more diagnostic in the way they describe what the pupil does well and which skills still need to be developed (paragraph: 106);
- The levels of teachers' knowledge and confidence in music and geography should be raised (paragraphs: 154, 164, 165);
- More rigorous assessment of risks to pupils' safety should be developed (paragraph: 56);
- The school must publish all information for parents which is statutorily required (paragraphs: 58, 67).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Cowley Hill First School educates 215 boys and girls aged four to nine years drawn mainly from a compact residential area of Borehamwood. It is broadly average in size. An additional sixty-three children attend a Nursery class on a half-time basis. All of these children, together with five in the Reception class, were under five at the time of inspection. Children are admitted to the Nursery in September or January each year as they approach their fourth birthdays. Pupils mostly transfer to local middle schools at the end of Year 4 when they are nine years old. Boys significantly outnumber girls: there are four boys for every three girls.

2. The area served by the school is one of below average social and economic circumstances by national standards. This is seen, for example, in the kinds of employment parents have and the fact that relatively few have higher educational qualifications. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, though, is about average.
3. Overall, pupils are judged to enter the school with attainment which is below the national average level, especially in their language and number skills. This view is supported by the school's own testing of attainment.
4. The school has an unusually high proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (40 per cent at the time of inspection). This includes eleven pupils with statements of special needs (again, a very high proportion). Most of these pupils, who are drawn from a wide geographical area, attend to take advantage of the school's 'language base' which is a specialist provision of staff and resources. These pupils join in the normal school timetable for the great majority of the time, aided by extra staff support, being withdrawn only for occasional intensive speech therapy.
5. There is a very small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Twelve pupils speak English as an additional language and receive some assistance from weekly visits by specialist staff.
6. Two factors combine to affect adversely comparisons between the school's overall results in national tests and national averages: (i) the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, especially those with statements, and (ii) the over-representation of boys when the national pattern is for girls to make better progress at school than boys.
7. The school has a set of published aims, the first of which is 'to provide quality in all areas of school life'. Others refer to:
 - fulfilment of each child's full potential;
 - developing self-discipline, self-reliance, responsibility and respect;
 - developing enthusiasm and encouraging enquiring and imaginative minds through a broad and balanced curriculum.
1. Present priorities in school development planning are to achieve targets for raised standards through the successful consolidation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and through continued development of assessment to provide short-term targets for pupil progress.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	29	26	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	17	20	24
	Girls	19	19	22
	Total	36 (32)	39 (30)	46 (36)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	67 (65)	72 (62)	84 (75)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	17	25	19
	Girls	20	21	20
	Total	37 (37)	46(37)	39 (43)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	67 (77)	84 (77)	71 (90)
	National	n/a	n/a	n/a

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.4
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	2
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	7
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

Children under five

2. Children joining the school's Nursery class are judged to do so with attainment which is below the national average, especially in their language and number skills. During their time in the Nursery, children make good progress and in all aspects of their learning they are judged by the time they reach their fifth birthdays to have reached average standards.

Key Stage 1

3. In the summer of 1999 pupils aged seven at the end of Key Stage 1 took standard National Curriculum tests (SATs) in reading, writing and mathematics. Their results were well below the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Compared with similar schools, and making allowance for special factors like the high proportion of special needs amongst pupils in the school, results were average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Girls do better than boys, mainly in reading and writing. Taking results for the last three years, the average National Curriculum levels achieved by girls at the school in reading, writing and mathematics have been only a little lower than the average levels achieved by girls nationally.
4. Comparing test results in 1999 with those for previous years, and taking account of fluctuations in numbers of pupils with special needs, standards have risen a little in writing. In reading, there has been a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils (29 per cent) exceeding the expected level of attainment within the National Curriculum (by reaching Level 3). The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of attainment in mathematics has also improved.
5. Inspectors' judgements are based on a wider range of evidence than past test results. Inspection evidence includes examination of pupils' written work over the past year as well as observation of pupils' performance during lessons and discussions with them. Judgements in English include evidence of pupils' speaking and listening skills which were not subject to national testing but which are judged to be of average standard by inspectors. Judgements on writing are based on evidence of all written work across the curriculum. Reading is judged to be a little below, but writing well below, the expected standard. Overall, inspectors judge English attainment, therefore, to be below the national standard. In mathematics and science, attainments are judged to be in line with the national standard, reflecting recent improvements in the curriculum and teaching.
6. In information technology, standards also meet the expectations set by the National Curriculum while in religious education pupils reach the level of attainment set by the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.
7. In all of these subjects, the overall progress now being made by pupils as they proceed through the key stage is satisfactory. Gains in knowledge, understanding and skills are made at the rate expected. In English and mathematics the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and more recent adjustments to the implementation of

these strategies, have improved progress to its present satisfactory level, except in the case of writing where progress remains unsatisfactory. Improvements in the teaching of investigative work in recent months have brought progress in science to a satisfactory level.

8. Pupils also make satisfactory progress in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Their work is of the standard expected for their ages.

Key Stage 2

9. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, the mid-point of Key Stage 2 in the National Curriculum. Inspectors judge their attainment in English at this point to be below the level expected. Speaking and listening skills are average, but reading is below, and writing well below, the level expected. In mathematics and science, attainments are in line with the expected levels. These judgements are based on examination of written work over the past year, observations of lessons and discussions with pupils, and they are supported by results of the school's own internal testing. In information technology and religious education, pupils reach the levels of attainment expected of their age.
10. In all subjects of the curriculum, pupils are now making satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. Again, the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and more recent improvements, such as adjustments to the organisation of ability sets in English and mathematics, have improved progress to the present satisfactory level. Progress in writing within English is the only exception, remaining unsatisfactory.
11. Following a period of generally static standards, there is evidence that standards throughout the school are beginning to improve, with Key Stage 1 results in mathematics and for more able readers in this year's national tests as the first signs of this trend.
12. At both key stages, pupils throughout the school with special educational needs generally make good progress towards the individual targets set for them. Pupils from the language base with statements of special needs also make steady progress towards their specific goals. Sound progress is made by pupils for whom English is an additional language.
13. There is no reliable significant evidence that there is a difference in attainment or progress between pupils from different social or ethnic groups. Girls, though, progress faster than boys, mainly in English, in line with the national pattern. The school is addressing this, and it manages the significant over-representation of boys in some classes well.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

14. Pupils' relationships and personal development are strengths of the school and make a good contribution to their progress. The positive findings at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained and the school has succeeded in maintaining the good behaviour of the pupils.
15. Children who are under five respond well to the adults who work with them and have enthusiastic attitudes to their work. They behave well and increasingly co-operate with each other. They are sensible when choosing and using equipment and are helpful with the tidying up at the end of sessions.
16. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes towards learning are good, including those of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional

language. They concentrate well and show keen interest in what they are doing. Even when not directly supervised within small groups, most pupils carry on working as seen in many numeracy and literacy lessons. They usually listen carefully to teachers and other pupils and persevere with tasks. In a few lessons, pupils' attention wanes and they become restless where the pace of the lesson is too slow or where the tasks are not appropriate to their needs. Pupils' capacity for personal study is shown effectively, for example in science and geography when they complete experiments or use resources for research. Pupils with special educational needs generally behave satisfactorily in lessons. Strategies to support pupils with behaviour difficulties are generally effective.

17. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good and contribute well to the quality of work in the majority of lessons. Pupils get on well and help one another in the playground and classroom, for example helping to give out drinks. Other pupils, in a Year 4 history lesson, carefully shared various articles from the Tudor period to find information from them about life in the past. Pupils wait for others and take turns. They show respect for the views of others, as seen in a Year 4 religious education lesson when pupils listened carefully to a Moslem child sharing how she and her family take part in various festivals and celebrations. They are helpful and supportive of pupils with special educational needs. There is a high degree of friendship and harmony between pupils from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which enriches the school community.
18. Pupils behave well in the classroom, at play and during lunch-times. They move around the school in an orderly way. They are open, courteous and particularly welcoming to visitors. They show respect for property, for example taking care to put equipment away when they have finished with it. They talk to each other sensibly about their work. No bullying was seen during the inspection and the school has secure procedures to record and deal with any aggressive behaviour that may take place. The school deals appropriately and consistently with unacceptable behaviour. One pupil was excluded temporarily in the previous school year but is no longer at the school.
19. The pupils' personal development is good. The aims and ethos of the school contribute very effectively to their sense of community and respect for others. Pupils listen with respect to the values and ideas expressed by others, as seen, for example, in physical education lessons where self-evaluation and the sensitive evaluation of the work of others are well developed. They take responsibility both within the classroom and around the school with the different tasks that need to be done. The school has improved the range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and the school's increased trust is rewarded by the pupils' committed, enthusiastic attitudes towards these duties.
20. Pupils' positive attitudes, behaviour and personal development make a strong contribution to the progress they make in their learning and to the positive ethos of the school.

Attendance

21. Attendance is satisfactory, broadly in line with the national average, but lower than in the previous report. Authorised absence was higher than the national average last year but is lower so far in the present year. Unauthorised absence, though, continues to be well above the national figures for 1997/8. Registration is carried out quickly and efficiently but there is a high incidence of lateness, partly due to the change in school start time from the beginning of the term. This is well handled and there is little disruption of classes. Overall, the satisfactory level of attendance has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

22. The overall quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory. Just over half of individual lessons observed during the inspection showed good teaching and a few of these lessons were of very good quality. Except for a tiny percentage, all other lessons were satisfactory. The quality of teaching noted at the school's last inspection has been maintained and there are rather fewer unsatisfactory lessons than reported previously.
23. Teaching of children under five in the Nursery and Reception class is always at least good and sometimes very good. Teachers' planning here shows a very good understanding of what should be learnt and how. Expectations of the progress pupils can make are high.
24. Teaching at both Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory but with rather more good lessons taking place at the second key stage. Teachers generally show good knowledge, especially at Key Stage 2, of the subjects they are teaching, although some teachers show some uncertainty in music and geography. This knowledge, and the school's generally clear and detailed planning of the curriculum, help teachers to plan lessons well on most occasions. Well-designed tasks are matched to clear intentions for pupils' progress and to different levels of pupils' previous attainment. Teachers' sound checking of pupil progress allows them to know individuals well and plan work for them which promotes further progress. Almost all lessons within the school's effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies show good planning, with clear objectives, focused tasks and a lively pace. A few lessons in other subjects, though, do not set out with a clear enough definition of the exact knowledge, understanding or skills pupils are to learn. This leads to occasional lack of focus in what teachers say, insufficient emphasis on or repetition of key points or uncertainty when pupils are working on their own about what is expected.
25. In the great majority of lessons, teachers explain clearly and they use questions well to draw out and reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding, and to check the progress they are making. In some of the best lessons, good questioning and management of class discussion is a strength. This is seen particularly in some investigative science lessons at Key Stage 2 where pupils are challenged and helped to develop their understanding by being given good opportunities and encouragement to make predictions or explain what they have observed during experiments.
26. Teachers generally show appropriate expectations of how pupils should work and behave but a general shortcoming of lessons across the curriculum, especially at Key Stage 1, is that teachers do not demand a high enough standard in pupils' writing or in the presentation of any work they do. Nor do they take incidental opportunities to teach writing skills in a systematic way. These are the main reasons for the below average standard of writing in the school.
27. A strength of the teaching of almost all lessons, and especially at Key Stage 2, is the management of pupils. This includes skilful handling of pupils who have special needs in relation to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Teachers apply the school's policy for managing behaviour consistently and effectively to create co-operative relationships between teachers and pupils and amongst pupils themselves. Rewards are effectively used to highlight the behaviour expected and confrontation is avoided. The result is orderly

lessons which proceed at a sound pace with minimal intervention by teachers. Good pupil attitudes are encouraged by the interesting way in which the work is often presented to pupils, particularly in investigative work in science and in practical work in art, in design and technology and in information communication technology.

28. Teaching makes good use of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning at home. This begins with children taking books home from the Nursery and increases in range and extent as pupils move through the school. A good variety of tasks is set and they are followed up well afterwards, making a good contribution to pupils' progress. Parents generally are appreciative of the homework arrangements which have been improving.

The curriculum and assessment

29. The curriculum fully reflects the aims of the school. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, receive a broad and balanced curriculum. An appropriate amount of time is spent on each subject with an emphasis on English and mathematics. For children under five, the school has appropriate aims and a relevant policy and curriculum which helps children achieve the outcomes officially defined as desirable for the age group.
30. Religious education follows the locally agreed syllabus and collective worship meets the statutory requirements. The spiritual development of pupils is well fostered through religious education and the creative arts.
31. The requirements for numeracy and literacy are being well addressed and meet the needs of all pupils, as are the statutory requirements for personal and social education. Pupils are prepared to move on to the next stage of their education. There is an appropriate policy for equal opportunities, which is satisfactorily addressed. Pupils throughout the school and Nursery have access to all the curriculum activities. This includes pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs.
32. Pupils within each year group are effectively organised into 'sets' according to ability for English and mathematics to provide teaching specific to their needs in these subjects.
33. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils on the special needs register. At the last inspection, the school was seen to have a strong commitment to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs have access to a broad and balanced curriculum; this is being maintained. The individual education plans for pupils, including those with statements, identify clear targets and strategies which teachers can follow. These plans are regularly reviewed and monitored by the special needs co-ordinator, teachers and specialist support staff where appropriate.
34. Good policies and schemes of work, some supported by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines, enable staff to plan good coverage for all subjects. The format of planning is consistent across the school and ensures systematic coverage of the National Curriculum throughout the school. Medium-term plans follow a school topic programme that provides a good structure across the curriculum for ensuring pupils receive a comprehensive programme of work which takes them smoothly through the succession of steps in their learning. Planning builds well on what pupils already know and can do, with lessons planned to meet the needs and age of the pupils. However, in a few lessons, the learning objectives are not in sufficient detail for effective learning. Teachers collaborate closely on planning which is well monitored by the curriculum co-ordinators to ensure the systematic coverage of subjects.

35. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which enrich the curriculum; these include sport, art, music and information technology. Pupils visit places of interest and there is a residential trip for Year 4 pupils. These provide good support for the curriculum and contribute to the school links with the community.
36. The school policy and procedures for assessment provides good guidance. Good procedures are in place when children enter the school in the Nursery and the Reception class. Assessment is well integrated into lesson planning and, with the weekly evaluation sheets, teacher records and the results of standardised tests, teachers are able to plan effectively both for individual pupils and class activities.
37. Assessment information is shared with pupils through good procedures for marking and target setting which supports pupils in their learning. This is shared with parents in the detailed annual reports, the mid-year pupil target sheets and during parental consultations. Record folders of work samples provide evidence for pupils and parents of the pupil's progress. Portfolios of work representing agreed achievement at different levels are kept for agreeing standards and the teacher assessment of work in English and mathematics.
38. There are good procedures in place for analysing assessment. Information is effectively used to support organisation of pupil ability sets for learning in English and mathematics and for checking achievement against targets. Monitoring of assessment procedures and results by the governing body is in its early stages.
39. As at the last inspection, curricular and assessment provision is judged to have a good impact on the quality of learning. Improvement is seen in the analysis of assessment data and its effective use in monitoring trends, differences in performance of girls and boys and in the performance of year groups. Effective use of this information for setting targets has been a positive step forward.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

40. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their cultural development. Pupils, including children under five, respond well in each of these areas. The good provision noted at the last inspection has been at least maintained and in some respects improved.
41. Spiritual development is effectively promoted in the school's approach to collective worship and within the curriculum. Collective worship is conducted well when pupils collect together in the central hall and when teachers take it with their own classes. The use of lit candles as a focal point gives the occasion a different and special atmosphere which enriches the opportunities for prayer and quiet reflection. The themes chosen allow pupils to enjoy the major festivals and to explore and develop their ideas on issues of right and wrong. They enable pupils to reflect on the lives of different people who have helped others, such as Florence Nightingale. In class lessons, pupils sometimes respond to what they see with awe and wonder. This was very evident when the Nursery children were observing the squirrels and when Year 3 pupils studied the effect of magnets in science.
42. The school's arrangements for moral development are good. The school's code of behaviour and the clear expectations of all the staff carefully instil moral values. Good conduct and work are recognised and celebrated. This was seen when pupils from all age groups showed or had described, in assembly, their particular achievements – to the evident pleasure of the rest of the school. There is a focus on the positive and praise for

those who have done well, but also an emphasis on doing the right thing and being responsible. In all age groups, pupils respond well to these expectations.

43. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils of all ages respond positively to other people. They are in a secure environment and know that they are liked and respected. In younger classes, they learn the social conventions of taking turns, both when sharing equipment and in class discussions. In older classes, pupils are encouraged to disagree or challenge a view in discussion. Pupils work comfortably together. They are set a good example in this by the teachers and classroom assistants who also work well together. Children in the youngest classes are effectively encouraged to be friendly to visitors and in all age groups pupils respond well to expectations to greet visitors politely, answer questions and hold doors open for adults. A good range of opportunities is provided for pupils to take responsibility by helping around the school.
44. The broad curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' cultural development. They enjoy a variety of experiences in art, history and particularly religious education where an extensive collection of artefacts and a range of visits made to places of worship, such as the local synagogue, enriches pupils' knowledge of other cultures. Pupils have enjoyed good opportunities for dressing up in Tudor clothes and have also studied different styles of art and art techniques. The 'literacy hour' introduces pupils to some of the works of well-known authors, but pupils' knowledge is somewhat restricted by the lack of a well-developed central library where they can browse and select for themselves.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

45. The school shows great concern for all aspects of pupils' welfare and guidance and has good policies and procedures to support them personally and in their learning. These provisions apply to all pupils, including those with special physical and educational needs and those attending the language base. This has a significant impact on their readiness to learn and their personal development. Good use is made of external agencies which provide appropriate support to the school, particularly for pupils with statements of special educational needs. Good arrangements are made for the induction of new pupils into the Nursery.
46. The school has good procedures for monitoring progress and the personal development of pupils. Since the previous report, pupils have been encouraged to take more responsibility and use their initiative, and each pupil now adds their own comments on their progress to their annual school report. The system of team points for good work has promoted a sense of responsibility and pupils are proud to record their successes on the classroom chart. The introduction of target sheets is helping to focus pupils and parents on making academic and personal improvements, and the Wednesday afternoon 'surgeries' encourage parents to keep in close touch with pupils' progress. Well-planned visits not only broaden the curriculum provision, but also provide opportunities for personal development and independence, often on the first time away from home without parents.
47. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour effectively. As outlined in the previous report, there are clear policies and procedures which are followed consistently. Support staff are well used to help those pupils with special needs who need support to improve their behaviour and minimise class disruption. The effectiveness of these procedures is shown in the purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and the pupils' demeanour.

48. Policies and procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are good. Although these are applied thoroughly and the local education welfare officer speaks at meetings for new parents, there are still high levels of unauthorised absence. Registers are monitored weekly in addition to class teachers' follow-up, and pupils are made aware that their lateness is unacceptable. These procedures have a significant impact in maintaining the overall level of attendance at above the national average.
49. The school has clear and well-understood child protection policies and procedures, with a named individual responsible, and these procedures are effectively applied. The school promotes the health and safety of pupils well, with clear policies and careful attention to all aspects of pupils' welfare. The buildings are carefully maintained and the governors assist in the assessment of risks. Procedures for risk assessment are not, however, sufficiently systematic or rigorous. As stated in the previous report, there are good procedures and facilities for all aspects of first aid and medical assistance, as well as provision for pupils with special needs. The Breakfast Club allows parents and pupils to enjoy a nutritious meal in a friendly setting, and the lunch menu is fresh, well balanced and well presented.

Partnership with parents and the community

50. The school has a good partnership with parents and with the wider community, with a significant impact on pupils' learning and on the school's financial resources. As reported previously, the school works hard to show that it is easily accessible to parents and that they wish parents to be fully involved in all aspects of school life.
51. Parents' questionnaire responses show that they feel they are well informed; this develops involvement in pupils' learning. They receive good and regular information, including well-placed noticeboards and good briefings on curriculum matters such as the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Individual letters are sent to parents for example about minor accidents and attendance matters, but priority is given to regular personal contact and open access to school staff. Parents appreciate the detailed school reports and the inclusion of targets for future improvement. Appropriate provision is made to translate information for parents where needed. A weakness of the school's prospectus is the omission of required absence figures and comparison of results with national statistics.
52. The school continues to promote sound involvement of parents in pupils' learning, which makes a good impact in particular on reading. In school, pupils respond with enthusiasm to reading for parents and grandparents, as well as their 'reading buddies'. Parents of pupils with special needs are suitably involved in the drafting of their individual education plans and in following-up their progress. A number of parents are members of the governing body and there is a Friends' Association which is particularly active in fund-raising for the school. Parental contacts have also substantially enhanced the number of computers in the school. Parents are encouraged to help in the classrooms, with early contact from children's arrival in the Nursery. Football matches after school are well supported by parents and friends who also give assistance on visits. Some parents are reluctant to co-operate in keeping the school informed of the reasons for pupils' absence.
53. The life of the school is enriched through good links with the community, both in broadening the pupils' education and in raising valuable funds. These funds support school activities and extend resources with a clear impact on learning. The good arrangements for transfer to middle schools have continued through the current re-organisation of education in the county. Links with external agencies are extensive and well used. The school presents itself professionally through the Quality Skills Award

gained in 1997 and the Investor in People award the following year. Various organisations have provided practical help such as the design of the Island play project, financial help in donating Carnival prize monies and classroom help through the Reading Buddy scheme. Pupils are held spellbound by the paper sculptures of a senior Rotarian. They raised funds for the National Children's Home through the recent sponsored quiz sheets and the Harvest coffee morning for Macmillan nurses.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

54. The headteacher gives very good leadership to the school. She has a clear sense of how the school needs to develop to raise standards, is pursuing improvement with vigour and skill, and gives personal expression to the school's good ethos. She is given very good support by other senior staff and sound support from governors. All staff share the headteacher's commitment to careful evaluation of the school's performance and to agreeing ways to improve practices. In the short time since her appointment (just over one year ago), the headteacher has brought staff, governors and parents more closely together in sharing ideas about improving the quality of education and support provided for pupils.
55. Since the previous school inspection, in 1996, the school has made satisfactory improvement. In addition to a new headteacher, many newly-qualified teachers (two-thirds of the present staff) have also been appointed. Secure school policies, systems and planning, together with good support from the headteacher and other colleagues, have helped the many new teachers appointed in recent years to contribute well to the school's effectiveness. As a result, the school has maintained the many strengths recognised at the previous inspection. It has also made some significant improvements. Standards in mathematics and reading, and in geography at Key Stage 2, have improved. There has been valuable further development in curriculum planning and assessment of pupils. The overall quality of teaching has been maintained. Teachers' knowledge in science has improved and pupils receive better help to develop investigation skills. There has been a recent improvement in relations with parents, some of whom have noticed and welcomed improvements instituted by the new headteacher. Following the previous inspection, the school devised good action plans for tackling key issues for action identified by inspectors. These included relevant training, although several present staff have been appointed since this took place. The school has tackled weaknesses in reading and geography with some success but unsatisfactory standards in writing and presentation are continuing weaknesses. The school has recognised this and begun to adopt some remedial measures but these have yet to prove effective.
56. One of many significant improvements recently promoted by the headteacher has been in the extent and quality of the school's processes for checking on the quality of the teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum. Direct observations of the teaching of lessons, especially in lessons within the new National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, are carried out by the headteacher, and sometimes by subject co-ordinators. At the same time, the school has improved its processes for assessing pupils' progress. Together, these developments have begun to help the school identify ways to improve the teaching and curriculum. Teachers and support staff are helped where necessary with advice and opportunities for further training. Changes in the organisation of pupil sets for English and mathematics, the teaching of comprehension in English, and the clearer definition of the objectives and targets for pupils' learning are examples of improvements that have followed from successful monitoring of the teaching and curriculum.
57. An important strength of the school is the highly consistent way the school works. This makes the school effective in achieving its aims and expressing its values clearly. The school's first stated aim, 'to provide quality in all areas of school life' is achieved well in almost every respect. Agreed and clearly-defined policies for all aspects of school life mean that all staff and pupils know exactly what is expected and the school functions

smoothly. Policies concerning teaching of the curriculum are generally clear, detailed and implemented consistently. This is true of the good way the school has implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. A very good example of consistency is the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour, which all staff use well. The effectiveness of this is seen in the good standards of behaviour and relationships. The only significant exception to the school's consistent and systematic approach to its work is in the teaching of writing, which is not sufficiently systematic.

58. Planning of the development of the school is good. Raising standards by reaching long-term targets for improvement is the central focus. Planning takes account of national priorities in literacy and numeracy and is also based on a good evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Presently, the school is building on its established strength in planning the curriculum by focusing more firmly on measuring pupils' progress accurately and using the findings to provide short-term targets for improvements in pupils' attainment.
59. The school has a good ethos of positive attitudes, good behaviour and co-operative relationships. There is mutual respect between all members of the school community and a concern to provide equal opportunities, for example by caring thoroughly for pupils' special needs. Staff and pupils show commitment to achievement. A happy but purposeful atmosphere pervades the school and Nursery, providing a very good environment for pupils' learning and personal development.
60. School governors are supportive of it and concerned to help it improve. They have a sound awareness of the work of the school and the standards it achieves. They are responding well to the full encouragement of the new headteacher to join more fully in evaluating the school's progress and agreeing ways to meet targets for future improvement. They co-operate with the headteacher in ensuring the school meets statutory requirements, with the exception of the need to report some information to parents in the prospectus and in the governors' annual report.
61. The school complies with the official Code of Practice governing provision for pupils with special educational needs. This provision is well managed. The governor for special educational needs is actively involved in the school and discusses provision and pupil progress with the special needs co-ordinator.
62. The positive features of the management of the school apply equally to the management of the provision for children under five. Here, too, there is good planning and assessment and a good ethos.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

63. The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified teachers to teach the National Curriculum and to teach pupils in this age range. Staff who support teachers as classroom assistants are very well qualified, having received extensive training for this work. Teachers and support staff who work with pupils who have special educational needs or pupils who speak English as an additional language, are also appropriately trained and qualified. There is good teamwork in the school with teachers, support staff and specialists working well together, very much to the benefit of the pupils' progress. Staff receive in-service training designed to meet the needs of the school, as identified in the school improvement plan, and their own needs following appraisal. There is a sound induction programme for experienced teachers joining the school and for newly-qualified teachers who receive appropriate support, both within the school and through the local

education authority, in-service training and documentary guidance.

64. The quality of the accommodation is good and gives positive support to teaching and learning. Classrooms and shared areas are spacious, light and well furnished. The school's work is further enhanced by specialist rooms for subjects such as food technology and information technology, as well as for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. The large hall offers numerous opportunities for assemblies, physical education and public performances. The library is centrally situated and easily accessible. The staff enrich the school by organising attractive displays of pupils' work and posters and books that engage pupils' interest. The site supervisor and his staff work hard to ensure that the building is well maintained and cleaned to a high standard. Steps make the accommodation unsuitable for pupils with reduced mobility.
65. The accommodation in the Nursery is spacious, with interesting areas and displays which promote learning well. The large outside play area for children under five has a good range of fixed equipment that does much to build confidence and a sense of adventure.
66. The school's grounds provide good facilities for a range of purposes, including physical education, science and environmental studies. The school has been involved in a range of successful initiatives to develop the grounds further as a rich resource for learning.
67. The resources available to pupils and children under five are satisfactory overall, in quality and in quantity. They are readily accessible and are systematically stored. The school has remedied resource shortages identified in the previous inspection report, for example in geography. Resources for information technology, science and religious education are good. However, the library has shortages in the broad range of children's and young people's literature and reference books, including those that promote much positive understanding of cultural traditions from around the world. Provision and quality of resources for special educational needs is good.

The efficiency of the school

68. The school's procedures for financial planning are sound. The school development plan identifies carefully where school improvements need to be made, determines priorities and defines the necessary actions. Cost implications are identified and alternative detailed scenarios considered as a way of deciding which courses of action will prove most cost-effective in improving the school. Governors join in these discussions and approve major expenditure. Prudence in past financial planning is evident in the way the school is effectively resourced with staff and equipment, books and other aids to learning. Governors and senior staff are aware and concerned to see that pupils' education and standards are best served by financial decisions although they have not yet devised systematic means for measuring the cost-effectiveness of past decisions.
69. The school's generally good level of resources, most apparent in the number of support staff, is put to very effective use. The well-organised nature of the school and the effective collaborative planning amongst all staff means that the time and talents of staff are put to very full use. The accommodation is also well used, except for the library which is under-used and does not promote pupils' research skills, particularly in understanding cataloguing systems. Funds allocated for support of pupils with English as an additional language and for pupils with special educational needs are effectively managed and well used.
70. The school's systems of financial control are good and benefit from close collaboration

with specialist staff of the local education authority. A recent audit was overwhelmingly positive in its assessment of the school's procedures and the few recommendations for improvement have been implemented. The school secretary effectively oversees methodical approaches to school administration which help to create an orderly, business-like environment.

71. Taking account of the progress pupils make academically and socially, of the quality of education provided, and of the level of available funds, the school is judged to provide good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

72. The very good provision for children under five is a strength of the school.
73. Sixty-one children attend the Nursery part-time and twenty-seven children attend the Reception class full-time. At the time of the inspection, all children were under five except five children in the Reception class. There is a qualified early years teacher in the Nursery and the Reception class. The children are also well supported by two experienced nursery nurses in the Nursery and an assistant in the Reception class who has a relevant professional qualification.
74. Children enter school with varying levels of attainment. However, from the entry assessment, the attainment of most children is low in language, mathematics and their approaches to learning. They make good progress through the Nursery and Reception class, especially in language and number skills. By the time they are five, most children, including those children with special educational needs, satisfactorily attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes for their age in all areas of experience.

Personal and social education

75. All children enjoy school and have good relationships with each other and the staff. They all have a good attitude to learning, behave well and concentrate on their tasks. Appropriate opportunities are given for children to take responsibility and develop independence. They return registers to the office, they tidy and clear away resources and manage their own personal needs. They work well together in groups, and sensibly share creative materials, books and outdoor play equipment. They initiate ideas for play, take turns and listen to others during group discussions.

Language and literacy

76. The attainment of children at the age of five, including those with special educational needs, is in line with the expectation of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Children talk well and are confident in talking to an adult and within a group of children. They report on their class activities and share their home experiences with others. Children recognise their own name and most know the name and some sounds of the alphabet. Many children recognise common words in print, are building a sight vocabulary and understand basic book skills. Most children are able to copy words correctly, know about capital letters and some are writing simple words unaided.
77. The quality of teaching is good in literacy and promotes good progress. All staff use good questioning skills to develop the children's language and extend their vocabulary. They

have a good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it to young children. The national strategy for a 'literacy hour' is implemented well in the Reception class and is adapted and used well in the Nursery. Staff make effective use of storybooks, discussion and review time to develop the children's skills in speaking and listening. Many good opportunities are given for children to talk about their activities and experiences.

Mathematics

78. By the age of five, attainment is in line for that expected for this age group. Many good opportunities are provided for children to count, recognise, sequence and understand numbers to ten. Children experience a broad range of mathematical experiences in role-play, cooking and shopping activities, in using construction kits, sand and water play and in the use of simple computer games. Children know and understand some specific mathematical vocabulary – less, more than, add, take away – and the language of measures and shape. They use these in appropriate context.
79. The quality of teaching of mathematics is good. Planning is detailed and good use is made of a wide range of activities and resources. Constant reinforcement of basic skills helps the children make good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Children gain a sound understanding of the world about them. Their attainment at age five is satisfactory and in line with the Desirable Learning Outcomes for the age group. They make satisfactory progress throughout the Nursery and the Reception class. Children know how to record the weather and talk about the seasons and its effects such as the colours in nature. They understand how to use the computer mouse and most children can find the letters on the keyboard. Many children talk about their families and refer to time past when speaking about their grandparents and older people. They understand the purpose of a simple plan and map and can find their own model house on a display plan of the school locality. This progress reflects good teaching. The staff give clear explanations and use good questioning techniques. Activities are well prepared and provide stimulating and challenging practical experiences.

Creative development

81. Children's attainment is in line with expectation of the Desirable Learning Outcomes and they make sound progress. Some Reception children make and play their own instruments and can shake and beat rhythms. They can describe the texture of objects and are beginning to recognise patterns in natural and manmade objects. The older children talk knowledgeably about the senses they use as they explore things in a 'feely bag' game. Children enjoy singing in a group and join in traditional action songs and nursery rhymes with enthusiasm. Children participate keenly in many types of dramatic play and there are many opportunities for them to dress up in character costumes in the role-play areas in the Nursery and the Reception class. They explore many ways of painting and craft activities, including modelling with clay and produce work of sound quality. There are colourful displays of the children's artwork in the Nursery and the Reception class.
82. The quality of teaching is good. A wide range of well-planned activities ensures the development of children's skills and understanding in art and music. There are interesting areas for exploration of musical instruments and various art activities in each classroom.

Physical development

83. The attainment of children is above that expected for children of their age and they make good progress. Children understand how to control their bodies and move effectively to music. They use space well when exercising in a group, listen sensibly and respond well to instructions whilst working in the hall. Children are developing confidence and skills in fine motor control by handling small tools in an extensive range of activities: scissors, paint and glue brushes and clay tools.
84. The quality of teaching is good. Lesson plans address appropriately the requirements of the Desirable Learning Outcomes and the local authority guidelines. Teachers have high expectations and children are well managed and organised for physical activities. Support staff are effectively used to support children on apparatus in the hall lessons, and in the outside play area when there is use of the wheeled vehicles and large play apparatus.
85. The Nursery and Reception staffs collaborate very well in detailed planning of the areas of experiences for learning for the children under five. They all have a good knowledge of the needs of young children and work well together as an early years team. The quality of teaching is good overall and provides relevant and challenging activities that stimulate the children's thinking and learning. Teaching and support staffs set high expectations and are very good role models for the children. The management of the children is good. The resources are thoroughly prepared, well organised and effectively used to support all activities.
86. Teaching makes good use of the very good accommodation which provides a colourful, stimulating learning environment that is very well organised. The Nursery and the Reception classes are spacious and include areas for quiet activities, creative tasks and sufficient space for whole-class teaching. There is a secure, well-maintained outside play space for both classes. These provide many very good opportunities for imaginative play and physical development.
87. Procedures for assessment are very good. Ongoing assessment is very thorough and used effectively to target individual learning and for future planning. All staff keep very good records of each child's attainment and progress and use these well to identify children's needs.
88. Considerable progress is seen in all areas of provision for children under five since the last inspection.

CORE SUBJECTS

English

89. Pupils' performance in the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in 1999 was well below the national average in reading and below average in writing. The school's results have been adversely affected by the very high level of special educational needs amongst pupils, most of whom need support with language and literacy. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, and allowing for the school's high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils' performance was average in reading and writing.
90. The evidence of pupils' school work at Key Stage 1 shows that attainment in English is

below national expectations, overall, but with some pupils attaining higher than average standards, particularly in reading. Improvements in reading have largely been brought about through the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy.

91. The attainment of pupils by Year 4 is below expectations in English, overall, but again with some pupils doing better than expected for their age. Speaking and listening skills are in line with expectations. Reading standards are mostly below expectations but with some pupils reading at the expected standard for their age. Standards in writing are, however, still well below what would be expected for Year 4 pupils.
92. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average and sometimes better at the end of Key Stage 1 and also by Year 4, though listening skills are better developed than speaking skills in most classes. In both key stages, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to one another. When engaged in role-play, particularly in Key Stage 1, pupils talk together eagerly. In some older classes, they make thoughtful contributions to class discussions, clarifying and refining their ideas and expressing their views in a well-reasoned way. Throughout the school, pupils listen carefully in lessons and readily answer questions put to them. They are attentive in assemblies and enjoy listening to other children describing the work they have been doing.
93. At the end of Key Stage 1, the higher attaining pupils read fluently. In the year group, overall, standards are not far below what would be expected for this age; though most pupils with special educational needs do not attain these standards. Pupils' regular work in phonics and word blending helps as they attempt to read unfamiliar words. Reading books are carefully graded so that teachers easily select appropriate texts. Colourful reference books add to the richness of pupils' reading experiences and the more able readers confidently attempt books which challenge them. However, pupils are not learning how to use a library, as the central school library is not organised well enough for them to do so. Pupils spoken to say they mostly like stories. In class 'literacy hour' lessons, the 'Big Books' which pupils read with the teacher include information texts. Pupils are heard to read regularly and home-school records show that this support continues at home.
94. By Year 4, pupils identified by teachers as being more able or average readers read books at a level appropriate for their age but many pupils do not and, for the year group overall, reading standards are still below what would be expected. Pupils show understanding of the main points of stories and most can say which are their favourite characters. Few pupils questioned could explain how they would locate reference books in the school library, though some have a sound understanding of the purpose of indexes and contents tables. They do not use the library to engage in their own personal research, though they can extract information from CDs on the computer.
95. Pupils' attainment in writing is the weakest aspect of English and, for the majority, standards are well below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and still well below by Year 4. In both age groups, a minority of pupils present their work neatly and clearly, but handwriting is mostly ill-formed and work poorly presented. Pupils recognise the different purposes for writing and make lists such as an inventory of what is in the PE bag, write up a science experiment on how to keep things cool or re-tell well known stories such as The Ten Commandments. They successfully attempt short written exercises, sometimes filling in missing words to show their understanding of the sense of the sentence. Pupils study words as part of the 'literacy hour', and most can successfully identify adjectives and verbs, 'question words' and plurals. By Year 2, some pupils are beginning to write short stories or accounts of what they have been doing and, in the process, have enough confidence to write invented spellings using their increasing

knowledge of phonics. With the more able writers, this aspect of their work is sound. Most pupils, however, produce only a short piece of work and use a restricted vocabulary, with too many words wrongly spelled.

96. The most able writers by Year 4 make interesting choices of vocabulary in their writing, for example 'We're having a roar of a time', but most pupils do not sustain and develop ideas in interesting ways. Pupils generally have a satisfactory understanding of basic grammar. Through their work in literacy lessons, they are aware of, and use, the structures of standard English. There is little evidence, however, of pupils planning their written work and correcting it in a second draft. Pupils know that a story has to have a beginning, a middle and an end, but rarely write stories which hold the reader's attention by setting the scene, introducing characters, action, complication and resolution. They write in different forms for different subjects such as the correct format for writing up a science experiment, but few examples are evident. There is far too little extended writing which pupils have reconsidered, improved and, when necessary, re-shaped to ensure clarity for the reader. Pupils rarely engage in writing from personal research and too little use is made of the library for this important aspect of Key Stage 2 work.
97. Baseline assessment shows that most pupils enter school with attainment in early language skills below the average. The progress they then make is satisfactory in most aspects of English except writing. Pupils listen with greater attention, widen their vocabulary and increase the range of texts they can read. Pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language make good progress as they move through the school. They are well supported to make effective progress. Class teachers plan work which meets their needs and class teaching assistants make a very good contribution to their learning in lessons. Staff from the school's language base and specialist staff from the ethnic minority achievement service give valuable support to individual pupils, working as part of a group in the classroom or on a one-to-one basis. Teachers generally make good use of their ongoing assessments of pupils' achievements as they plan and select activities which match well with the objectives for the lesson. This contributes to pupils' progress.
98. Pupils enjoy their work in language and literacy. They are ready to learn, do their best and can organise themselves to complete a task. They settle quickly in the literacy lessons and readily engage with the activities prepared for them. They are well motivated by the interesting lessons, readily answer questions, apply themselves to their work and behave well.
99. The lessons observed were of the 'literacy hour', which occupies a substantial part of the school's morning work. The quality of teaching observed in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 was mostly good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers' planning of the literacy hour is thorough. The activities chosen make sure that pupils have opportunities to succeed and to enjoy the lesson as well as being matched to clear learning objectives. Teachers expect that their pupils will understand and achieve, although sometimes expectations are insufficiently high, particularly in handwriting and presentation of work. Teachers, through careful questioning, make pupils think in detail about the work they are doing. Pupils are well managed and resources to help their work are always well chosen. Day-to-day assessment is used appropriately to plan the next stage in pupils' learning. Marking, however, does not always show pupils clearly what has been done well and what needs to be improved. Reading records also do not show clearly the skills which still need to be developed.
100. Planning and teaching of subjects other than English provide too few opportunities for

pupils to practise and consolidate their writing skills. Indeed, teachers' low expectations of pupils' writing beyond English lessons hinders pupils' progress in this vital skill.

101. The co-ordinator, one of the senior management team, gives good leadership to the subject. A substantial amount of in-service training across the English curriculum has been provided as part of the action plan following the previous OFSTED inspection. All staff have received specific training in the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy, including those newly-appointed. The literacy hour has been well prepared with an interesting and effective programme of work for pupils to follow. However, it is not sufficiently catering for an improvement in writing standards and the school is working on a programme of work specifically for this. Data from standard assessments are studied and there is careful monitoring of the progress of pupils. At present, this monitoring focuses mainly on pupils with special educational needs, but it is the school's intention to extend this to study the progress of the higher attaining pupils.
102. Resources are a good aid to the teaching and learning. The central library is, however, not well organised and pupils are not, therefore, learning the retrieval skills necessary as part of their work in English.

Mathematics

103. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the great majority of pupils gained the expected National Curriculum level of attainment (Level 2) and a small proportion exceeded expectations (by reaching Level 3). However, the average level of attainment achieved by pupils was still well below the national average. Nevertheless, results represented a clear improvement in pupils' attainment since the previous year. This is the result of carefully planned and focused teaching of mathematics skills and knowledge based on the National Numeracy Project. The school's involvement with the Numeracy Project has led smoothly into the Numeracy Strategy and is enabling pupils to make better progress in lessons than previously. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are continuing to rise steadily, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Observations of pupils' attainment during the inspection lead to the judgement that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are now attaining a standard broadly similar to the national standard. There is evidence of slightly higher overall attainment among girls. Improvement has also been taking place at Key Stage 2 and pupils are judged now to leave the school at the end of Year 4 with attainment which is also similar to that expected nationally.
104. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use mental arithmetic to recall addition and subtraction facts to 30, using a range of methods to check their answers including number lines, number squares and their fingers. They double and halve numbers and recognise patterns and relationships between their answers. Some higher attaining pupils manipulate numbers to 100 with confidence and accuracy. Although many write numbers correctly, a significant number do not and reversals are common. Pupils measure using a range of standard and non-standard measures and identify different two- and three-dimensional shapes. They are familiar with coins and know how to make up various sums from a restricted range.
105. By the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, pupils are confident and accurate in a range of mental calculations to 100, and sometimes above. They know the properties of triangles and identify lines of symmetry. They identify the differences between regular and irregular shapes and recognise patterns in numbers, making rules for their calculations and testing them out.
106. There are examples of pupils developing their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects. In Year 2, pupils write sentences to translate mathematics facts and interpret data from bar charts about favourite foods in written form. In general, opportunities to link and develop mathematics with other subjects are used well by teachers and support staff.
107. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make sound progress both in lessons and over time. In Years 3 and 4, progress is good. Pupils throughout the school are making particularly good progress with their skills in mental calculations in the numeracy lessons. Teachers encourage and help pupils in their learning by emphasising how answers are arrived at, and expect pupils to be able to explain their working out. When teaching is good, the careful matching of challenging tasks within the ability groups enables pupils to make good progress, building on their existing knowledge and understanding. The use of accurate terminology by teachers ensures that mathematical vocabulary becomes meaningful to pupils and that they gain confidence in using new terms for themselves. However, not all higher attaining pupils are provided with sufficiently challenging work, while average and lower attaining pupils make sound progress with work that is appropriately matched to their needs. Lower attaining pupils in Year 4 make very good progress in lessons as a result of high quality teaching. Pupils with special needs and those learning English as an additional language

- make sound progress in lessons as a result of the high quality support they receive from members of the sensitive and very able team of support staff.
108. Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are satisfactory. Most settle well to tasks and concentrate on their work. Many are enthusiastic and eager to answer questions, particularly using the number 'paddles' in mental arithmetic sessions. While some take a pride in their work, pupils' skills in the presentation of their work are underdeveloped. Most are attentive and behave well in lessons, but restlessness in some lessons can disrupt the concentration of others. Pupils usually listen with respect when others are explaining their mathematical thinking. They share and take care of equipment.
 109. The quality of teaching is sound overall, with examples of good teaching in each key stage. Teachers' management of pupils is satisfactory. They use praise to encourage pupils and circulate around the classroom giving support and advice. Most lessons are managed at a suitable pace, with appropriate challenge for pupils, although in some groups the most able pupils are not always given sufficiently demanding tasks. The good liaison between teachers and support staff ensures that time is well used in supporting pupils with particular learning needs. Teachers use resources well, many of which are newly-acquired for the numeracy hour. Teachers' planning shows that they have developed a secure understanding of the Numeracy Strategy and are implementing it well. In a few lessons, teachers' planning does not sufficiently identify the key skills and knowledge that they intend pupils to learn. When teaching is at its best, teachers use a logical and methodical approach to explain concepts, and then consolidate new learning with well-matched activities. Lessons always conclude with a useful whole-class discussion and summary of what pupils have learnt. The use of homework is a regular feature of many lessons and extends pupils' learning. Standards in teaching in mathematics have improved markedly since the last inspection, and this is a major factor in the improvement of pupils' attainment and their improved progress.
 110. The school is successfully implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and now uses this as a basis for its mathematical scheme of work. This gives the curriculum a good framework for developing pupils' skills and understanding steadily and systematically, from Year 1 onwards. The significant emphasis on mental arithmetic is sharpening pupils' calculation skills. The school has developed manageable and informative assessment procedures that inform teachers' planning. There are few opportunities for the co-ordinator systematically to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.

Science

111. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is judged to be in line with the national standard and the progress they are now making is satisfactory. The proportions of pupils meeting or exceeding the expected levels of attainment defined by the National Curriculum are similar to those found in the average primary school. Teachers' own formal assessments suggested standards were above the national average in 1998 but showed a significant fall in 1999. The school accepts that these assessments, taking place during a period of significant staffing changes, may have been inaccurate. Examination of pupils' past and more recent written work, and discussions with pupils, reflect attention the school has paid to improving pupils' work on investigations which has improved progress. Progress within most of the individual lessons seen during the inspection was good. A gradual improvement in standards has been taking place.
112. Satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 includes gains in understanding from an early age that science involves finding out through careful investigation, observation, measurement and recording. Progress is made when pupils test the properties of different materials in

providing heat insulation or when they observe the effects of heating and cooling on different materials such as chocolate, and when they record the effects of light on plant growth from seeds.

113. By the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, most show attainment within the Key Stage 2 curriculum well up to the level expected for their age. This reflects the satisfactory progress generally made. Year 3 pupils progress soundly in understanding the effects of magnets, distinguishing 'attract' from 'repel' and knowing which materials are and which are not attracted to magnets. More able pupils name those metals which are attracted and those, like aluminium, which are not. Pupils conduct careful experiments of the strengths of different magnets and interpret the data they record correctly. Good progress is made in understanding the principles of fair testing. When pupils are asked to check the methods they use, they recognise that many variables affecting the outcome of a test may have to be considered. Year 4 pupils show a sound level of knowledge and understanding, for example of simple electrical circuits. They can spot and explain the faults in circuits that do not work and sometimes express themselves with appropriate technical vocabulary, for example 'conductors' and 'insulators'. They measure and observe effects of experiments carefully and record them, though the extent and quality of writing in this situation does not do justice to pupils' knowledge.
114. Pupils' progress is supported by their positive attitudes. A high level of interest is often shown in the work and pupils listen well to teachers. They concentrate well, especially on practical tasks. Pupils enjoy carrying out their own investigations and find excitement in it, for example when succeeding in making their electrical circuit light a bulb, or when their prediction of the behaviour of two magnets in bowls floating on water proves correct. They are inquisitive and like to be able to display their findings and their knowledge, for example, by answering teachers' questions in class. They are also inquisitive and some show initiative in making their own suggestions, asking their own questions and predicting how experiments might turn out. Pupils co-operate well with teachers and their practical work shows very good co-operation with each other.
115. The positive attitudes of pupils and the sound progress made reflect the overall good quality of the teaching, especially at Key Stage 2. The teaching is often interesting and stimulating, particularly when pupils are encouraged to investigate for themselves through carrying out tests. Most lessons show high expectations of pupils' ability to learn. Pupils are generally well managed and lessons are well organised. They are lively, purposeful events conducted at a good pace.
116. Planning is usually good with appropriate tasks provided for pupils which reflect their previous levels of attainment. The intended learning is defined precisely and followed through in clearly focused explanation, questioning and activities. This reflects good, collaborative long-term planning of the curriculum and teachers' good understanding of the subject. Questioning in some lessons seen during the inspection was particularly successful in drawing out pupils' own predictions, explanations and interpretations in relation to experiments. This not only reinforced pupils' scientific understanding effectively but also made a good contribution to development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Writing skills, in contrast, are not supported by the work in science which rarely asks pupils to write at any length and shows low expectations of quality.
117. Good monitoring of the teaching and curriculum has successfully identified and tackled needs for improvement such as that for more investigative work. The weakness in the teaching of this area identified at the last inspection has, on the basis of the lessons seen, been well answered and is helping to raise standards.

Information communication technology

118. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations both at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils reach Year 4.
119. A well-planned programme of work provides for information communication technology to be taught both in separate lessons and as part of work in other subjects.
120. At Key Stage 1, in particular, pupils make good use of audio tapes when they listen to stories, sometimes using headsets so as not to disturb others. Pupils also have experience of recording on audiotape, instead of writing. In learning about computers, the younger pupils become familiar with the keyboard as they type words. They make pictures with colour, developing mouse control and their ability to select colours. They use graphics programs to build up a picture and learn how to use repeating patterns. In a geography lesson, pupils programmed the Roamer to move around objects and post a letter. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils use the mouse with accuracy and are familiar with the keyboard and confident in its use. By Year 4, these skills have been extended. Pupils log on to the internet and send and receive e-mail. They understand how to put together pictures and text and are beginning to learn about data-handling through decision trees.
121. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, are making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. This is because they receive good support from teachers and classroom assistants. The youngest Key Stage 1 pupils gain confidence in the use of the mouse to manipulate programs and control actions on the screen, as when they 'Dress the Teddy' or colour pictures. In Year 1, and as they move up the school, they gain experience in word processing, formatting a text with attention to font, size, use of capitals and return. Older pupils know how to load and access files. Some search competently through CD-Roms and know how to locate the information they need. Some write directly on to the screen and print their work. In both key stages, pupils have knowledge of the use of computers to simulate reality but have less knowledge of how information communication technology can be used to measure. At present, there is a strong emphasis on the communicating information aspect of computer work, but the planned programme of work for the year covers all aspects. Progress is much helped by the very good resources for the teaching of the subject.
122. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They enjoy their work with audiotapes, cameras and computers. They work quietly in the classroom alone or with a partner. They discuss with each other what is happening on screen and help each other with directions or screen commands. They behave well and most take turns fairly. In the technology suite, pupils eagerly receive instruction, load and work on a range of programs.
123. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are receiving good in-service training and are developing confidence with the curriculum. Their work is well planned and they have sufficient knowledge to teach pupils new skills as they move through the school. In direct teaching, they recall work done previously and consolidate pupils' previous knowledge before extending it. Teachers assess pupils' progress systematically by reference to the lesson's learning objectives, teachers noting those pupils who have achieved them and those who have not. They then use this information to set targets for pupils. Good use is made of classroom assistants, some of whom take a group for related work when there are too many pupils for the number of computers. Teachers generally make good use of pupils with home knowledge of computers when pairing them with other pupils. They

organise pupils well for the learning of skills.

Religious education

124. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4 is in line with that expected in the local agreed syllabus for pupils at this age. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their understanding of Christianity and are developing a sound knowledge about some aspects of other beliefs: Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. The previous inspection found that religious education had a high profile in the school. It is still an integral part of school life.
125. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know many stories from the Bible, are aware of where and how Jesus lived and the main Christian festivals. They participate in school activities to celebrate Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival.
126. At the end of Year 4, pupils talk with knowledge and understanding about the similarity and differences between religions they have studied. They compare the Christian Ten Commandments with the Islamic Five Pillars of Wisdom. They know some of the rules and customs associated with these religions and are sensitive to the beliefs and values held by others. They are developing respect for religious and moral values of others as well as understanding their own values, particularly with regard to behaviour and their attitude to others.
127. Across the school pupils show a caring attitude to others, their community and the environment. They visit local places of worship and talk well about some artefacts they drew. Visitors from the community, and pupils, share their ideas and beliefs. These opportunities make a valuable contribution to the subject and develop pupils' awareness of multicultural and social issues. In collective worship, pupils actively experience being part of a caring community through the sharing and celebration of each other's achievements. During collective worship opportunities to participate in reflection, prayer, thanks and hymn singing promote pupils' spiritual development soundly.
128. Throughout the school pupils enjoy religious education and they actively engage in discussions. Where discussion is good, pupils speak with knowledge and understanding. In Year 2, pupils talk well about why some people are special and famous such as Florence Nightingale.
129. The teaching is generally satisfactory and staff have a sound knowledge of the subject. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in this subject, as found at the last inspection. Planning is appropriate and to the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. There is a clear policy in line with the agreed syllabus that meets statutory requirements. Where teaching is good, teachers use questions that allow pupils to develop their own views and ideas, set high expectations of all pupils and lessons have a good pace. Good resources are well used, with appropriate use of artefacts and visits to places of worship. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment is through the weekly evaluation of lessons. A planned pupil self-evaluation sheet to be introduced shortly is a promising development. Many lesson activities and collective worship contribute strongly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the pupils. A small display in each classroom of a candle, Bible and some other religious objects provides a valuable space for reflection and focus. This display is sensitively integrated into classroom activities.

OTHER SUBJECTS AND THE WORK OF THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE BASE

Art

130. Few lessons in art were observed. Additional evidence was gained from scrutiny of pupils' work and displays, photographs, teachers' plans and discussions.
131. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Their work is of the quality expected for pupils of their ages.
132. Satisfactory progress is seen when Year 1 pupils actively explore pattern and shape in natural and manmade objects and investigate texture in rubbings. Year 2 pupils create exciting patterns in the style of Kandinsky, exploring line, colour and tone through working in a variety of media including computer art. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know how to mix colour from primary colours and use paint for a range of techniques such as printing, finger painting and model making. They use a range of tools and paintbrushes well and understand which are suitable for their art activities. They work with a range of papers and recycled materials to produce realistic three-dimensional displays and models, as individuals and in groups, as seen in the displays about the lighthouse keeper. Pupils use collage skills well in support of curriculum activities such as the model black cat that is intended to sit on the cushion pupils designed.
133. By the end of Year 4, pupils are working in a variety of media, with increasing detail and understanding of the use of colour. They use their sketchbooks as they explore how to achieve shades and tones to represent feelings with reference to the work of famous artists such as Breugel. They understand and use art techniques to enhance their knowledge of other subjects such as the colour drawing of Tudor characters and William Morris prints, tile printing in the style of Holbein and line drawing as seen in original illustrations for the Dickens' story of 'Oliver Twist'. They explore the properties of clay and are able to have objects fired in the school kiln.
134. At both key stages, pupils' skills in pencil drawing, drawing perspective and picture composition is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator is recently in this post and is already discussing with staff ways of improving the standard of pupils' skills in drawing. There are also limited opportunities for pupils to investigate the work of artists from other cultures, except as they explore aspects of religious education.
135. Throughout the school, the pupils are enthusiastic and proud of their work in the colourful well-presented displays which enhance the learning environment. Behaviour in the lessons seen was satisfactory.
136. Although few lessons were seen, teaching is evidently satisfactory. The planning is relevant to the age and interest of the pupils and often linked to the class termly theme. The staff is secure in their subject knowledge, art resources are used effectively and lesson organisation is appropriate for the tasks. Across the school, pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and information technology are developing through art activities. There are opportunities for extending specific vocabulary such as texture, tone and shade, in the observation of shape and comparative size and in creating computer graphics. Visitors, an author who leads creative class activities and a paper sculptor who works with the pupils, enrich the curriculum.

Design and technology

137. Lessons were only observed in one year group at Key Stage 2. Additional evidence was gained from scrutiny of pupils' work and displays, photographs, teachers' plans and discussions.
138. Pupils at both key stages progress satisfactorily, producing work of the standard expected for their ages. This is similar to the judgement at the last inspection.
139. Progress is seen across the school as pupils gain knowledge in making models with various moving parts. They develop knowledge through using construction kits of increasing complexity and learn how to work safely with wood and different sorts of paper and card. For example, pupils' progress from making simple models with recycled materials and three-dimensional shapes to large models that show how a house is insulated.
140. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know about the process of design. They understand that a plan requires information about materials that they are going to use and how to make the object. Some pupils think about their designs and suggest how to make improvements, as seen in the making of a plant carrier with wheels. They experience a wide range of practical activities and explore how to use various materials for construction using skills of cutting, gluing, fixing and folding. They participate in many food and baking activities.
141. By the end of Year 4, pupils apply their skills and understanding of the design process to create models that support their enquiry into other subjects. They build model Tudor houses using their skills and knowledge of different ways of joining materials and making 'wattle and daub' for the walls. Pupils record their design process, evaluate their work and the suitability of the materials they use. However, the areas of knowledge and understanding about products and the investigation of their design function and effectiveness are underdeveloped.
142. Across the school pupils use their knowledge of numeracy and skills in other subjects for design and making, as with the display about the lighthouse keeper at Key Stage 1.
143. Teaching in the few lessons seen was satisfactory. Planning for the teaching is sound and shows a secure knowledge of the subject. At both key stages, much of the work in design and technology is appropriately linked with the class topics. Teaching makes good use of a sound provision of resources to support the work.

Geography

144. The school teaches geography in blocks of time at different points in the school year. Only two lessons in geography could be observed during the inspection, one at each key stage. Judgements are based on these, on evidence of past written work, on teachers' plans and records and on discussions with pupils.
145. Pupils are judged to make satisfactory progress in geography at both key stages, producing work of the level expected for their age. This represents an improvement at Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection of the school, when progress was judged unsatisfactory. The youngest pupils make sound progress in awareness of their immediate geographical surroundings. They can accurately describe routes they have taken around the school, referring to key features of the buildings and its surroundings. In

time, they progress to making simple maps and plans of their surroundings on which most of them can trace accurately the location of different features and the routes between them. In Key Stage 2, pupils progress soundly in recognising some of the key geographical features that makes places different from each other, both at home and abroad. They also develop some understanding of the way these factors are inter-related, knowing, for example, that weather, crops, buildings, wildlife and the jobs people do are all linked.

146. Pupils responded soundly to the two lessons observed, with some in one lesson enthusiastic to demonstrate their skills in interpreting maps. In another lesson, some pupils, given an open-ended research task, lacked experience in such a situation and, being unclear how to proceed, made slow progress for part of the lesson. Behaviour in these lessons was, though, generally good.
147. Both lessons seen showed teaching of satisfactory quality overall but, in one case, showed some lack of knowledge and therefore confidence in teaching the subject. Examination of pupils' past work shows that while valuable practical work, for example exploring the local environment, and some useful discussion and role-play activity occurs, too little written work of substance is undertaken. This represents a missed opportunity to consolidate pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding at the same time as their writing skills. Long-term planning for the teaching as a whole is otherwise sound and has benefited from staff training in response to weaknesses indicated at the previous inspection.

History

148. It is clear that improvements have been made to the way in which history is taught since the last inspection. It is now more practical and based on first-hand experience than previously. This has resulted in pupils now making satisfactory progress, particularly in developing their history skills. Their work is of a quality comparable with that expected for their age.
149. In history, sound progress is made as a result of the first-hand experiences enjoyed by the pupils through visits to places such as the Florence Nightingale Museum and Knebworth House. These are then followed up in school, often with opportunities for handling a range of articles from the period. Good presentation of knowledge, effective questioning and use of good resources by teachers has helped pupils to achieve a good understanding of the events surrounding World War Two, and its effects on evacuees, and also of key events in the Tudor period. The youngest pupils are able to distinguish between houses of different ages, and describe their key features. They are able to find information from photographs, pictures and portraits making sensible deductions that they are able to explain.
150. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are satisfactory. Most work with interest and fascination. They enjoy learning new facts, concentrate and behave well in class. They share resources well and handle objects with care.
151. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of good teaching within each key stage. Teaching is meaningful to pupils and pays good attention to first-hand experiences, particularly through visits and handling good quality resources. The curriculum is carefully planned, offering an interesting range of learning for pupils. The scheme of work gives good guidance to teachers in planning their lessons. Most lesson plans properly identify the key skills, knowledge and understanding that they intend pupils

to gain. However, the use of history to develop and reinforce pupils' literacy skills is underdeveloped. In the best lessons, teachers use questions successfully to develop pupils' thinking and reasoning, for example when looking at photographs to decide on how old a building is. Teachers manage their pupils soundly and have good relationships with them. They have appropriate expectations of their pupils and the pace of learning is satisfactory.

152. An adequate range of good quality resources, carefully chosen visits and interesting follow-up work all enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.

Music

153. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in music at both key stages. The knowledge, understanding and skills they demonstrate are as expected for their age. There is some significant variation between lessons, however, reflecting the fact that some teachers have uncertain knowledge and confidence in teaching this subject, a situation the school recognises and is addressing.
154. From their earliest days in the school the youngest pupils make sound progress in their awareness of rhythm which they show, for example, in ability to join in clapping rhythms accurately or to copy patterns set by the teacher. In time, they progress, too, in listening to, and appreciating, the different qualities of sounds instruments produce: short and long, loud and quiet, rough and smooth. They can use this knowledge to identify correctly instruments they hear being played but cannot see. Later, pupils come to know the correct names of many percussion instruments and the materials they are made from, and they can make thoughtful selections of instruments to represent different sorts of sounds. Pupils play percussion instruments with a good measure of care and control. Aware of the different effects of loud and soft sounds, pupils singing in assembly remember to sing the chorus of a song quietly to create a good effect.
155. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 progress soundly in mastering more complex rhythms and in sustaining a clapped rhythm in a group while another group sings. Some are able to suggest their own more intricate rhythms to accompany the singing of a familiar song. More able pupils are able to sustain their own part with reasonable accuracy during class singing of a three-part round. Singing is generally, though, the least successful aspect of pupils' musical progress. A significant minority at all ages do not sing in tune and there is some reluctance to join in.
156. A small proportion of older pupils are making good progress in learning conventional musical notation and in instrumental technique, either through the after-school recorder club or through lessons in brass or woodwind instruments from visiting specialist teachers.
157. Pupils' attitudes to, and behaviour in, lessons are satisfactory overall but vary considerably in response to the quality of the teaching. Where teaching is confident and at a lively pace pupils respond keenly; otherwise they are co-operative but unenthusiastic. Overall, teaching is of satisfactory quality at both key stages. Some teaching (not observed during the inspection) is undertaken by a visiting specialist teacher who teaches each year group fortnightly and leads planning of the work, including that for lessons taught in alternate weeks by class teachers. The quality of the delivery of these class lessons reflects the variable confidence and knowledge of the teachers. Planning for each term's lessons is sound in general terms but, as documented, is not sufficiently detailed to guide teachers unsure of the subject. In the best lessons, as illustrated in a Year 4 lesson, there are high expectations, good questioning and a lively pace. In the least satisfactory

lessons, the expectations are lower and the pace is sometimes slow so that pupils begin to lose interest. Singing in school assemblies represents a missed opportunity to build on pupils' progress. A good many do not join in the singing because they are unfamiliar with the songs and cannot read the words projected rather unclearly on the screen.

158. Changes in staffing have adversely affected the spread of musical expertise within the school with the result that the subject is no longer a strength of the school as it was at the previous school inspection. The school has recognised this and employment of the visiting specialist teacher for the present school year is intended to support improvement by both direct impact on pupils and through development of class teachers' knowledge and confidence. It is not yet clear that these new arrangements are likely to meet the needs fully.

Physical education

159. Overall, pupils make sound progress in all the elements of physical education showing levels of attainment expected for their age. Swimming is taught as part of the curriculum in Year 4 and this prepares them well to achieve the appropriate standards by the time they are eleven. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make sound progress in lessons throughout the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on the body and are developing skills in self-evaluation to improve their performances in all year groups.
160. In Key Stage 1, pupils gain confidence and improve their co-ordination and imagination in dance and gymnastic lessons. They use space well in the warm-up period at the beginning of lessons. They balance effectively on different parts of the body and use suitable terms to describe what they are doing. Their knowledge of safety procedures and the use of space are well developed by regular reinforcement from teachers. In Year 1 pupils link a variety of movements, for example as they dance to interpret 'Snowflakes' by Tomita. In games lessons, Year 2 pupils improve their passing skills in small group activities. Energetic exercise is a feature of most lessons, enabling pupils to improve their stamina.
161. Pupils in Year 4 improve and refine their swimming action by regular practice. In games Years 3 and 4, they practice techniques, working to improve their skills, thus increasing the pace of passing in team situations. Pupils in Year 4 are extending their understanding of the Tudors by learning the dance style of the period, and improvising movements of their own. This link between history and dance brings both subjects to life and makes learning particularly appropriate and relevant. Pupils sustain physical activities well and develop strength and stamina as they progress through the school.
162. Pupils have positive attitudes in physical education lessons. They enjoy their lessons and are keen to participate in physical activity. Their behaviour is generally good. Pupils listen carefully and follow their teachers' instructions. Relationships between pupils in group work are good, with very constructive levels of collaboration being observed.
163. The teaching of physical education is sound and sometimes good. Lesson planning is secure and the best shows clear objectives for pupils' improvement. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is satisfactory and recent improvements in their confidence to teach dance imaginatively are particularly encouraging. Teachers manage pupils effectively and focus their enthusiasm with challenging activities. Lesson time is used soundly to promote physical activity and meaningful discussion. Equipment is used effectively to stimulate and support pupils in the acquisition of skills. However, too few teachers set a good example to pupils by changing for lesson. Staff appropriately ensure that items such as watches and jewellery are removed, to minimise the risk of injury to

pupils. Pupils are safely dressed when participating in physical activities but hygiene is not well promoted when, as in most lessons, significant numbers of pupils do not have a change of clothing for energetic exercise.

164. During the inspection, in nearly every lesson observed, there were significant numbers of pupils without an appropriate change of clothing.
165. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities for pupils of all ages, which nurtures a team spirit and sense of pride and achievement in belonging to school teams.

The work of the speech and language base

166. The speech and language base provides very good support for up to ten pupils who have statements of special educational needs in language and speech disorders. It has five staff: the teacher in charge, two support assistants and two speech and language therapists. Work is carried out most often in classrooms, but sometimes a pupil is withdrawn to the base for particular work. Pupils work on a one-to-one basis and in groups. The teacher in charge works in very effective partnership with class teachers, jointly planning language work for the pupils with statements. Time is planned into the week for both the teacher in charge and the speech and language therapists to discuss with class teachers the progress and continuing needs of individual pupils. When it is sought, they give good advice based on their own specialist knowledge.
167. Very good links with parents are a vital part of this particular team's work, as pupils make best progress when there can be some practice of activities at home as well as school. The pupils are transported to the school so parents are not seen daily but arrangements are made for them to meet with speech and language staff two or three times a term to consider their children's progress. Links with specialists are also deftly organised, with the teacher in charge ensuring that visits have been made in time for the review of pupils' statements to take place.
168. There are very good links with class work. When teachers plan topic work for their class, the teacher in charge sees the planning, notes any particular vocabulary which will need to be taught and ensures that pupils have every opportunity to learn these words beforehand so that they are best placed to enjoy and learn about the subject being studied. Resources are sufficient in the base, with staff making many of their own. Regular assessments of pupils' progress are made and are well used to guide the teaching. Records are comprehensive, well maintained and available to all staff who work with the pupils. All are aware of the week's target for particular individuals and contribute comments about progress, which may be noted in class or on the playground. This is very good practice.
169. Pupils' work is well matched to their needs and because of this, and the good relationships forged, they work hard, especially during their one-to-one sessions. This is a speech and language base of high quality. The adults who work from it discharge their wide range of responsibilities very well. The pupils are all making good long-term progress. The base is an undoubted asset to the school and to the many professional visitors who come to see good practice.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- The inspection was carried out by a team of 5 inspectors over 4 days.
- During the period of the inspection, 71 lessons or part lessons were observed, adding up to a total of just over 57 hours.
- Inspectors attended school assemblies and registration periods in all year groups.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined for each class for the current and previous academic year.
- A comprehensive range of school documentation including the school development plan, teachers' records, all curriculum planning documents, the records kept on pupils, sample reports sent to parents and the school register were inspected.
- In each class, inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read. Pupils were examined in their mathematical knowledge.
- Tracking of progress of pupils with special educational needs.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, governors, pupils, parents and administrative assistant.
- A parents' meeting held prior to the inspection was attended by 15 parents, at which they expressed their views about the work of the school.
- The responses to the 83 questionnaires completed by parents were taken into account during the inspection.
- The budget figures and the most recent audit report were examined.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y4	215	11	86	40
Nursery	31.5	0	3	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y4)

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

10
21.5

Education support staff (YR - Y4)

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked each week	211

Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31.5

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	75

Average class size:	23.9
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Financial data

Financial year:	1998
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	£
Total Income	537,592
Total Expenditure	502,994
Expenditure per pupil	1,988
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,058
Balance carried forward to next year	56,656

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

250

Number of questionnaires returned:

83

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	37	56	7	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	44	50	4	1	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	19	60	17	3	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	31	58	2	7	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	35	52	10	4	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	25	63	7	5	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	33	52	13	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	30	52	11	5	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	33	55	11	1	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	37	56	7	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	55	43	0	1	1