

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WHITFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL  
AND ASPEN UNIT  
DOVER**

LEA area: Kent

Unique Reference Number: 118459

Headteacher: Mr D C Waller

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Reporting inspector: R E G Cross  
15917

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> November to 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707479

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Whitfield CP School
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mr G Stevens
Date of previous inspection:	February 1996

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Mrs D Lott, Lay Inspector		Equality of opportunity, Attendance, Support, guidance and pupils' welfare, Partnership with parents and the community
Rev. Tony Fiddian-Green	Science, Religious education	Special educational needs, Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the Aspen Unit
Mrs H Ring	English, Design and technology, music	Children aged under five, Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Mrs J Worden	Mathematics, Information technology, Art	Curriculum and assessment, Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The pupils in the main school attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2 and those in the Aspen Unit attain good standards for their previous attainment due largely to the good quality of the teaching which they receive.
- The school's provision for information technology is very good and pupils attain above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. They use the internet with great confidence to find information about specific topics.
- The Aspen Unit makes very good provision for its pupils who make very good progress.
- Provision for the pupils' social development is excellent. The successful inclusion of pupils from the Aspen Unit into the main school is an outstanding feature of this provision.
- The Headteacher provides thoughtful and good quality leadership and management which gives the school a successful commitment to high attainment. He is very well supported by the governors, the deputy headteacher and head of the Aspen Unit.
- The school's management and use of its resources are very good.
- The quality of relationships, personal development and extra curricular provision are very good; the pupils are well behaved and they have a good attitude to their work.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 3 is not as rapid as it is in the rest of the school due to variations in the quality of teaching.
- II. The role of subject co-ordinators is not fully developed in either the school or the Aspen Unit, particularly in terms of monitoring the quality of teaching and the standards attained by the pupils.
- III. The school development plan has some weaknesses, for example, the criteria for judging how successfully developments are implemented are not always sufficiently evaluative.
- IV. Curricular provision for the physical development of children aged under five in the main school has shortcomings largely related to the lack of wheeled toys and agility apparatus in a fenced area.

**The weaknesses are heavily outweighed by the strengths but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school**

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

The school has made a good improvement since its last OFSTED inspection that produced five key issues for action. Since that inspection, the length of the teaching week for juniors has been extended and now meets the recommended time and there has been good development of curricular policies, schemes of work and assessment procedures. The quality of teaching has improved. At the time of the last inspection, one lesson in six was unsatisfactory whereas, during this inspection about one lesson in 14 was unsatisfactory and more than one lesson in three was at least very good. Since the last inspection, a satisfactory improvement in monitoring the curriculum has occurred but this is still not rigorous enough in terms of its focus on the effect which the quality of teaching has on the standards attained by the pupils. In addition to addressing the key issues identified by its last OFSTED inspection, the school has increased the range of purposes for which the pupils write, improved their access to investigative work, developed their mathematical vocabulary particularly at Key Stage 2, ensured that the range of activities for children aged under five suits and develops their concentration and monitored equality of opportunity in mathematics and numeracy. Since the last inspection, the school has raised standards in a number of subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 including English, mathematics and science. Planning in the Aspen Unit has improved and now includes all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education, suitably modified. The use of assessment information has shown a very good improvement and very careful records are kept. The school's provision for the pupils to develop an understanding of multi cultural issues is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection, the school development plan has not improved enough and, in some instances, the work provided for more able pupils is still not sufficiently challenging. The school has a very good capacity to continue to improve.

• **Standards in subjects**

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

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

This table shows that, compared with all schools the standards achieved by the pupils are average in English, mathematics and science. The results of pupils in the Aspen Unit are included in this judgement. Compared with similar schools, standards are well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. The findings of the inspection are in line with this analysis and judge standards to be above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are also above average in design and technology, information technology, history and music and they are average in all other subjects including religious education where standards are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. Analysis of the data for the period 1996, 1997 and 1998 shows that the attainment of boys is close to the national average in English, mathematics and science whilst that of girls is above the national average. It also shows a rising trend in attainment over this period.

The findings of the inspection are that standards at Key Stage 1 are above average in music and average in all other subjects.

Children aged under five make good progress and attain above average standards in language and



literacy and personal and social education by the time that they are five years old. These children attain average standards in all other aspects of their education.

Pupils with special educational needs in the main school make good progress and attain good standards for their previous attainment. Pupils in the Aspen Unit make very good progress.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Good	Satisfactory	Very Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science	N/A	Good	Good
Information technology	N/A	Good	Very Good
Religious education	N/A	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Good

Overall, the quality of teaching in the school is good. During the inspection, teaching was excellent in three per cent of the lessons, very good in 34 per cent, good in 35 per cent, satisfactory in 20 per cent and unsatisfactory in seven per cent. The quality of teaching for children aged under five and pupils with special educational needs in the main school is good. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching promotes, overall, good progress in the pupils' learning. However, shortcomings in some of the teaching in Year 1, and particularly Year 3, where the work pupils receive is not always hard enough for them, mean that the progress the pupils make is not as rapid in these years as it is in the rest of the school. In Years 2 and 6, the quality of teaching is at least very good in 50 per cent of lessons and promotes very good progress. The quality of teaching in the Aspen Unit is very good and assists very good progress in the pupils' learning.

*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. The pupils have good levels of self discipline, apply themselves to their work well and show respect for the efforts of others. When teachers have appropriate control, the pupils' behaviour is very good. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is in line with the national average and unauthorised absence is well below average.
Ethos*	Good. The pupils have good attitudes to learning and the quality of relationships is very good. This underpins the school's successful commitment to high attainment.
Leadership and management	Good. The school has a clear educational direction and its aims are well implemented. This promotes good standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The head of the Aspen Unit gives strong leadership and guidance. The role of subject co-ordinators is not fully developed; there are some weaknesses in development planning and there are some omissions in the statutory information for parents.
Curriculum	Good. Curricular provision is broad, balanced and relevant and promotes good progress. Assessment procedures are good but assessment information is not always used rapidly enough to plan the pupils' future work. For example, analysis of data carried out in the

Pupils with special educational needs	summer term is not yet influencing teachers' planning Curricular provision and assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs is good in the school and very good in the Aspen Unit. The inclusion of pupils into mainstream classes is highly successful.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. Provision for the pupils' social development is excellent particularly in the inclusion of pupils from the Aspen Unit. Cultural development is good although pupils are insufficiently prepared for living in a multicultural society.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources in the main school are adequate overall and support the implementation of the curriculum adequately. Arrangements for the professional development of staff in the school are good but arrangements for the appraisal of staff do not meet statutory requirements. Resources in information technology are very good. Children aged under five in the main school do not have a specific enclosed outside play area and there are no wheeled toys or agility apparatus for these pupils. Staffing and learning resources in the Aspen Unit are very good as is its provision for staff development and this supports the very good progress which the pupils in the unit make very well.
Value for money	Good

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

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### **The parents' views of the school**

#### **What most parents like about the school**

- V. Their children like school.
- VI. The school is approachable.
- VII. The attitudes and values which the school promotes.
- VIII. The behaviour of the children.
- IX. The part they are encouraged to play in the life of the school.
- X. The standards attained by their children.
- XI. The range of extracurricular and other out of school activities provided.

#### **What some parents are not happy about**

- XII. The information they receive about what make.
- XIII. The lack of consistency with which

The findings of the inspection support the positive views of the parents. They also find that the school makes appropriate provision for homework and that it provides the parents with ample information about what their children are taught and the progress which they make.

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### **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

The governors, Headteacher and staff should address the following matters in writing the action plan, in order to raise standards and improve the provision the school makes still further.

**1. Raise the rate of pupils' progress in Years 1 and 3 to that in other parts of the school by:**  
Providing training in classroom management particularly in the control and discipline of pupils;

XIV. Making sure that teachers' planning always contains clear and appropriate learning objectives for pupils of all levels of attainment particularly the more able;

XV. Ensuring that the marking of pupils' work is regular and is carried out in such a way that they

know what they have to do to improve;

XVI. Being certain that subjects which are taught as part of a topic are taught in sufficient depth;

XVII. Making sure that the pace and challenge of learning are always brisk but appropriate.

(Paragraphs 16, 32, 34, 49, 73, 117, 118, 136, 137, 141, 146, 152, 158)

**2. Further develop the role of subject co-ordinators in the school and the Aspen Unit through:**

XVIII. Providing training in classroom monitoring and ensuring that the standards attained by the pupils and the quality of teaching, particularly that of temporary staff, are monitored regularly through direct classroom observation in all subjects using agreed criteria;

XIX. Being sure that co-ordinators are fully aware of all the analysis of assessment information undertaken by the school and that they put this information to use without undue delay;

XX. Reconsidering the distribution of management roles and ensuring that co-ordinators have an even workload.

(Paragraphs 49, 66, 67, 127, 137, 142, 147, 153, 159, 170)

**3. Improving the quality of the school development plan, as already decided, by:**

XXI. Reviewing the process by which it is produced as detailed in the present plan ;

XXII. Covering a longer period;

XXIII. Prioritising the developments to be undertaken;

XXIV. Making the criteria for judging its success more evaluative;

XXV. Linking detailed action plans to major priorities;

XXVI. Making the plan more central to the school's educational direction. (Paragraphs 69, 67)

**4. Widening curricular provision for children aged under five as contained in the school development plan through:** (Paragraphs 40, 82, 90)

XXVII. providing a fenced outdoor area for these children to use;

XXVIII. providing sufficient wheeled toys and agility apparatus for them.

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

XXIX. Develop the pupils' understanding of the multi cultural nature of British society. (Paragraphs 53, 67)

XXX. Make sure that statutory requirements for the appraisal of teachers are fully met. (Paragraphs 69, 73)

XXXI. Ensure that the statutory information for parents contains all of the required details. (Paragraphs 69, 72)

XXXII. Assess the reasons for the differences in attainment between boys and girls in the aspects of the end of key stage tests listed in the attainment and progress section of this report.

(Paragraphs 7, 12, 69)

- **INTRODUCTION**
- **Characteristics of the school**

Whitfield Primary School and Aspen Unit occupies a spacious and attractive site overlooking the English Channel on the outskirts of Dover. The school was built in 1967 to serve the needs of the then rapidly expanding community of Whitfield. Most of the pupils live in Whitfield although some, particularly those in the Aspen Unit, come from the surrounding area. The area served by the school is mixed in terms of socio-economic circumstances. There is a well-established area of mainly owner occupied housing in Whitfield but increasing numbers of pupils now come from the recent High Weald Housing Association development at what was once military family accommodation. There have been significant changes in the social profile of the school since its previous OFSTED inspection. The Aspen Unit educates pupils with severe learning difficulties. It currently supports 40 pupils. The unit is an integral part of the school and its overall management is the responsibility of the headteacher although a teacher is designated as head of unit for its day-to-day management.

1. There are 378 pupils on roll, 107 of whom are identified as having special educational needs. Forty-two pupils, 35 of whom are in the Aspen Unit, have statements of special educational need. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational need is above the national average and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is well above the level of the national average. Two of the pupils come from homes where English is not the first language which is a very low proportion compared with most schools. Three pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds which is below the national average. About 16 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals which is broadly the national average. The school has almost the same number of girls and boys on roll. Children aged under five are normally admitted to the school in September and they initially attend on a part-time basis. At the time of the inspection, the school had 38 children aged under five on roll. The ability level of the children on entry to the main school is broadly average overall but it is well below average on entry to the Aspen Unit.

2. The school's aims include maintaining a caring community, maximising each child's potential, encouraging positive attitudes, helping children to achieve, striving for equality of opportunity and enhancing working relationships with parents and the wider community. The Aspen Unit shares these aims but also has as a fundamental principle the integration of children in the main school whenever possible. The school development plan covers the period autumn 1999 to summer 2001. It embraces the curriculum, management, buildings and site and maintenance. The plan shows targets, tasks, those responsible, resources, success criteria and timescales. Priorities for development include consolidating the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, developing the further use of information technology and completing the work on the landscaped playground. The Aspen Unit's development planning covers two years. It is similar in format to that of the main school although it also includes a business plan. Priorities for development in the Aspen Unit include developing the role of co-ordinators, updating the assessment policy and completing a comprehensive target list for the years 1999 to 2002.

#### 4. Key indicators

##### Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	98/99	28	23	51

4. National Curriculum		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
<b>Test/Task Results</b>				
Number of pupils	Boys	20	21	22
At NC Level 2 or Above	Girls	17	18	14
	Total	37	39	36
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	73(69)	76 (75)	71 (57)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	21	20	23
At NC Level 2 or Above	Girls	17	13	16
	Total	38	33	39
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	75(78)	65(84)	76(88)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

**Attainment at Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	98/99	32	29	62

4. National Curriculum Test		English	Mathematics	Science
<b>Results</b>				
Number of pupils	Boys	22	24	29
At NC Level 4 or Above	Girls	20	18	22
	Total	42	42	51
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	68(65)	68(59)	82(75)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	24	24	27
At NC Level 4 or Above	Girls	21	21	22
	Total	45	45	49
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	73(72)	73(70)	79(80)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

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

4.

### Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
Through absence for the latest complete Reporting year: 1997/98	Authorised	School/Aspen Unit	4.8/13.4
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School/Aspen Unit	0.2/0
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

4.

### Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during The previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

4.

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	37
	Satisfactory or better	93
	Less than satisfactory	7

4. **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

4. **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

4. **Attainment and progress**

3. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for Whitfield school and Aspen Unit in 1999 shows that compared with all schools, standards were average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics.

4. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 tests in English was below the national average and, in mathematics and science, it was at the level of the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was well above the national average in English and above the national average in mathematics and science.

5. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999, including the Aspen Unit, are compared with those reached by the school in 1996, 1997 and 1998, they show an improving trend in standards. The combined data for 1996, 1997 and 1998 show that the attainment of boys is close to the national average for the period in English, mathematics and science whilst that of girls is above the national average.

6. The findings of the inspection are that, in the main school, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2 which is in line with the analysis of the data which relate to similar schools in the end of key stage tests and assessments for 1999. Standards are above the level of the national expectation in information technology, literacy and numeracy and above average for the pupils' ages in design and technology, history and music. Standards are average for the pupils' ages in geography, art and physical education (including swimming) and in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education. These findings represent an improvement in standards in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information technology, history and music, and similar standards in all other subjects, compared with the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection.

7. In English, by the age of 11, the pupils clearly and confidently describe events and give opinions, for example, on what it was like to be a child in Victorian times. They obtain, understand and summarise information from a range of sources, including the internet, and use words imaginatively and with precision in a varied range of writing. In mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are starting to form general statements based on what they have found out, calculate fractions and percentages of quantities mentally, draw and measure angles to the nearest degree and construct and interpret simple line graphs. They use information technology effectively to display mathematical information. By the age of 11, in science, the pupils use suitable equipment to measure and record the rate of heart beats before and after exercise, they undertake research into habitats and feeding, for example, of seals, they understand that they need a hardening agent to mix with resin powder to make a hard material, and that this process cannot be reversed, and they have successfully used a photo-electric cell to record some of their findings during a visit to a sports centre. In information technology, the pupils word-process their work, for example, that concerning Halloween in English, and combine text and graphics to make it interesting for other people to read and, in religious education, they are beginning to understand some of the deeper implications of religion, for example, the element of commitment in baptism.

8. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 1 tests for Whitfield school and Aspen Unit for 1999 shows that, in reading, writing and mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was well below the national average. The percentage attaining Level 3 and above in reading and writing was at the level of the national average and, in mathematics, it was well above the national average.

9. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards are below average in writing and mathematics and well below average in reading. When the average of this data is compared with similar schools, standards are average in reading and mathematics

and above average in writing.

10. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results for the school and the unit in reading, writing and mathematics for 1999 are compared with 1996, 1997 and 1998, they show a downward trend in standards. Taking the three years 1996, 1997 and 1998 together, the performance of girls is below the national average whilst that of boys is average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. In the 1999 end of key stage assessments by teachers in science, standards were well below average at Level 2 and above and average at Level 3 and above.

11. The findings of the inspection are that, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are on course to be at the level of the national expectation in English, mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, and science. These findings are broadly in line with the school's 1999 end of key stage test results in English but represent an improvement in mathematics and science which is due to the fact that a different cohort of pupils are involved and to the curricular developments implemented by the school in these subjects. In information technology, standards are at the level of the national expectation and in religious education they are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. In music, standards are above average for the ages of the pupils and in all other subjects, they are average for their ages. Compared with the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection, the current findings represent improved standards in design and technology and music and similar standards in all other subjects.

12. In English, by the age of seven, the pupils usually listen carefully and make suitable responses. Most read simple passages accurately and express opinions about major events in the stories they read and a significant number read texts easily and fluently. In their writing, pupils choose apt and interesting vocabulary, spell common words correctly and their use of sentences is grammatically correct. By the end of Key Stage 1, in mathematics, pupils discuss their work using mathematical language, choose appropriate methods for dealing with addition and subtraction problems and are beginning to understand multiplication. They use standard measures, for example, a metre stick, to compare height and length and to find out if things are greater or smaller than a metre and sort objects, such as three dimensional shapes, by classifying them in different ways. By the age of seven, in science, pupils conduct simple experiments such as testing varieties of paper successfully. They know that plants need light and warmth to grow, are aware of some of the properties of different materials and understand how a basic electrical circuit works. In information technology, the pupils can control a floor robot, for example, by programming it to move forward and to land on even numbers on a 100 square grid. In religious education, the pupils know Bible stories and stories from other faiths such as Rama and Sita in Hinduism.

13. The attainment of children aged under five is broadly average when they enter the school. The children make good progress and attain above average standards in language and literacy and personal and social education by the time that they are five years old and reach the expected standard in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Children are confident and establish positive relationships with children, teaching staff and other adults who work with them. They handle books with care and engage adults in sharing them. Most of them know that print gives meaning and, when they cannot recognise words on the pages, they tell the story from the pictures. Children count and match objects up to ten with accuracy and a few work out how many are left if one object is added or taken away. In the Aspen Unit, children describe and recognise changes, which take place in the autumn. In both the school and the unit, teachers focus on helping the children to learn days of the week and months of the year and to talk about events which happen in their lives and to special days such as birthdays. Children cut, join and stick and handle tools well. They join in actions with a sense of rhythm when they clap a steady beat, copy body patterns and use instruments. The children in the school do not have daily access to agility equipment or wheeled toys in a designated play area. Development and control of balance and co-ordination are, therefore, more limited. Children in the unit have access to areas that are specifically intended to extend their muscular co-ordination. They also have a secure area outside and have a good range of wheeled vehicles.

14. The pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1. Good progress is made in mathematics, numeracy, literacy, science, information technology and music, and progress is satisfactory in English,



design and technology, history, geography, art, physical education and religious education. Nineteen lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 and progress was very good in six of these, good in six, satisfactory in six and unsatisfactory in one. When broken down into year groups, the overall figures for the key stage show that progress is much faster in Year 2 than it is in Year 1. In Year 2, progress is always at least satisfactory and it is at least very good in half of the lessons. In Year 1, progress is unsatisfactory in one lesson in seven and very good in one lesson in seven. These variations in progress are directly attributable to differences in the quality of teaching between the year groups. Overall, at Key Stage 2, progress is good. At Key Stage 2, progress is very good in English and information technology, good in literacy, numeracy, mathematics, science, design and technology, history, art, music and physical education and satisfactory in geography and religious education. At Key Stage 2, 44 lessons were observed during the inspection. Of these lessons, progress was very good in 13, good in 16, satisfactory in ten and unsatisfactory in five. There are important variations in the rate of progress in that in Year 6, progress is very good in half of the lessons whereas, in part of Year 3, progress is unsatisfactory in two lessons out of every five. These variations in progress are directly related to variations in the quality of teaching.

15. Satisfactory progress is demonstrated in English at Key Stage 1 as pupils in Year 1 initially pick out and identify words in their reading and then begin to predict what will happen in stories such as "The Three Billy Goats Gruff". In Year 2, the pupils show understanding of the contents pages in books and begin to understand poetry. In Key Stage 2, very good progress is indicated as pupils in Years 3 and 4 recognise different parts of speech and realise some of the differences between prose and play scripts. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils can follow instructional writing, for example, recipes and understand how this type of writing is structured. They undertake research and produce summaries of the information which they find out. In mathematics, good progress is shown as, in Year 1, the pupils compare objects by direct comparison; in Year 2, they use hand spans and metre sticks to measure length; in Year 3, they classify three dimensional shapes by reference to the number of faces, edges and vertices they have; in Year 4, the pupils estimate to the nearest half centimetre; in Year 5, they measure area in square centimetres and, in Year 6, they measure volume in cubic centimetres and construct accurate two dimensional shapes. Progress at Key Stage 1 in science is satisfactory. For example, in one lesson observed, the pupils increased their knowledge of the properties of materials when they handled and investigated the properties of paper, card and tissue. Progress at Key Stage 2 is good because teachers at this key stage generally have high expectations of the pupils and present them with work which challenges and extends them. Further exemplification of attainment and progress is given in the subject sections of this report.

16. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, make good progress and attain good standards for their previous attainment. They make good progress towards their targets and are well supported by learning support assistants. Teachers provide suitable work which is planned to take account of their needs.

17. Pupils enter the Aspen Unit with well below average standards of attainment. They make very good progress and attain very good standards for their previous attainment according to their own individual and specific needs. Reading is addressed by using several different schemes. In general, staff have added pictures or signs for Key Stage 1 pupils, and they are able to follow the reading using these. In Key Stage 2, reading is good, and is modelled on the literacy hour, using big books, picture clues and individual words. Pupils successfully work with numbers, counting and recognising those written on the board. For example, they count the number of pupils present at registration, and sing counting songs. Older pupils successfully sorted objects into those that could be picked up by a magnet, and those that could not. They made accurate predictions, carried out the tests with the teacher's help, and recorded their findings on a worksheet. In general, pupils make very good progress towards their own targets. They are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants who work to individual plans. These plans contain both subject, and social and behavioural targets. Careful records of pupils' progress are kept, and it is clear that over time, pupils are well motivated and encouraged. Often, the most noticeable advances are in apparently small things, such as putting on a coat or identifying and writing a number. However, all staff in the unit successfully build upon these improvements, and this enables pupils to improve across a wide range of activities. In many cases, these must be re-visited frequently in order to achieve success.

18.The school has set challenging targets to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy and is making good progress towards achieving these targets. The inspection found no significant variations in the progress of boys and girls, pupils from ethnic minorities or those from different backgrounds.

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

19.The pupils have good attitudes to their work and this is an improvement on the previous inspection when the quality of their learning was judged to be sound, and often good, in over three-quarters of the lessons seen. There were shortcomings in important areas in the remaining lessons which related to pupils' ability to investigate, record and apply their knowledge appropriately. The findings of this inspection are that personal development is now very good. Many opportunities exist for pupils to develop their capacity for personal study, take the initiative and show responsibility. For example, older pupils help to run the library and have the responsibility of taking care of musical instruments and helping with the smooth running of assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to carry out research both in the library and with the use of information technology. They do this with eagerness and perseverance.

20.During the previous inspection, a minority of the older boys did not meet teachers' expectations regarding concentration on their work. This was not a pattern seen during this inspection. Good behaviour was seen in the vast majority of lessons and was closely related to the management skills of the teachers. Any incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with calmly and effectively and pupils invariably respond positively except in those lessons where teachers had weak control. These judgements are also in accord with parents' views. No pupils have been excluded from the school in the past year.

21.Staff work hard and calmly to encourage positive features and the quality of relationships between them and their pupils, and between pupils themselves, is very good. Pupils show high levels of enjoyment and involvement in their learning. They work willingly and productively, with interest and enthusiasm. These features are particularly evident during literacy lessons. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 learned about the ways in which factual information may be presented in books and fact sheets and how to extract the relevant parts. The involvement of the pupils who had carried out research on a wide range of instructional leaflets and information was very good when the teacher analysed the various texts with them.

22.Most pupils work hard and productively. They respond well to challenging tasks, join discussions readily and listen well to their teachers. During 'circle time' and discussions, pupils make willing contributions and display a readiness to consider the views of others. They reveal a growing insight and respect for their own culture, traditions and beliefs and give recognition to the beliefs and values of others.

23.Pupils are open and courteous to visitors. They respond politely and eagerly to questions about their work. Movement around the school is orderly and lunchtime is a pleasant occasion. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to try their best by having their achievements acknowledged in a special book and teachers look for chances to reward pupils of all capabilities who make a good effort. When pupils from the Aspen Unit are integrated into the school, staff and pupils are welcoming and supportive. During lessons and playtimes pupils play cheerfully together. They share resources sensibly, support and help each other, and work well in small groups or independently. They show care and respect for the environment of the school and take a pride in the presentation of their work.

24.Children who are aged under five show good attitudes and listen and concentrate very well for their ages. They are made to feel happy and secure in school and have the confidence to take messages and registers to the office. All are establishing effective relationships with other children and their teachers and they demonstrate this by their willingness to join in activities, take turns and play without needing constant intervention from an adult. Their behaviour is very good and they are learning about living in a community. For example, they know that they shouldn't call out when someone else is speaking and that it is right to share equipment fairly. When they have to clear away, they show initiative in sweeping up the sand and picking up constructional equipment which has become scattered.

25.Pupils who have special educational needs show a good level of interest in their work and are well integrated into the lessons. They behave well and concentrate on their work. They work well in groups and share ideas and equipment.

26.Pupils in the Aspen Unit are keen to learn, and they delight in their activities. They enjoy planning

the day, and work well at the tasks set up by teachers. Often pupils are awe-struck by some of their findings, and their pleasure is plain to see. For example, in the magnet work in Key Stage 2, pupils were very pleased to be able to pick up the can with a magnet. They wanted to repeat the experiment often. With the very good support they receive, pupils are able to concentrate well. This is no small measure due to the skills of the teachers and assistants in devising activities that keep their interest and attention.

28.

### **Attendance**

27.As in the last inspection, attendance is overall satisfactory. In the school, it averages 95 per cent which is broadly in line with the national average and unauthorised absence at 0.2 per cent is well below the national average. In the Aspen Unit, attendance is just under 87 per cent but there is no unauthorised absence. Seven pupils have taken more than the permitted annual number of days for holiday so far this term but the extra days are marked as unauthorised absence. Normally, only a few pupils are late for the morning registration but the nearby major roadworks are increasing this number at present. A few pupils are referred to the education welfare officer to improve their attendance. In the Aspen Unit, there is a staggered time of arrival which is accommodated very well by a flexible programme of work. Pupils' attendance and punctuality have a positive effect on standards of attainment.

## 29. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### 29. **Teaching**

28.Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Ninety-one lessons were observed during the inspection. In three of the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was excellent; in 31, it was very good; in 32, it was good; in 19, it was satisfactory and in six, it was unsatisfactory. These findings represent an improvement when compared with those of the school's last OFSTED inspection which found teaching to be unsatisfactory in around one lesson in every six. The key issue for action arising from the school's last inspection has been well addressed in that, in most lessons, the work given to the pupils challenges them. However, there are exceptions to this notably in Years 1 and 3 when work given to the pupils, particularly the higher attainers, is too easy for them.

29.The quality of teaching for children aged under five is good in all areas of the curriculum. Ten lessons were observed for these children: one was excellent, one was very good, five were good and three were satisfactory. The teachers' knowledge of the six areas of learning, children's maturity and their individual stages of development are well understood. There are clear expectations of what children should be able to do and how they need to be challenged. Teachers' planning identifies relevant learning outcomes, resources are carefully considered, methods and organisation are well suited to the different experiences provided and, where children work in groups and pairs, interaction takes place regularly. Activities include those that have been arranged by the teacher and others which are freely chosen by the children. Some of the latter are not always sufficiently planned or structured by the teacher in order to support children fully in their learning of the early skills of mathematics and language. When children are playing freely and would require some support, staff are sometimes involved with hearing individuals reading. Management and discipline are very good and there is an excellent rapport with children both in the school and in the Aspen unit. A team teaching approach is very productive in order to help the children with severe learning difficulties. In all their dealings with young children, staff exhibit a friendly, but firm, manner and provide a secure foundation.

30.At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. At this key stage, 19 lessons were seen during the inspection: one was excellent, six were very good, five were good, six were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. There are significant differences in the quality of teaching between Years 1 and 2. In Year 2, the teaching is always at least satisfactory and, in half of the lessons, it is at least very good. In Year 1, teaching is satisfactory in four out of seven lessons, good or very good in two lessons in seven and unsatisfactory in one lesson in seven. The major shortcomings in the teaching in Year 1 are a slow pace to the learning, a failure to teach subjects which are part of a topic approach in enough

depth and a lack of difficulty in the work given to the pupils, all of which slow down their rate of progress. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good in mathematics, numeracy, literacy, science, information technology and music and satisfactory in all other subjects.

31. An art lesson, during which pupils were taught about the work of Matisse, exemplified the strengths of the teaching at Key Stage 1. The lesson was very well planned and prepared and the resources were ready so that a prompt start was made. The teacher had a warm, calm and positive approach that created excellent relationships. A very clear explanation of primary colours was given and the pupils were taught how to hold a brush and how to paint within lines. This work had a very good effect on their control and co-ordination. The tasks undertaken in groups were well organised and both pupils and learning support assistants received good instructions and help from the teacher who kept a careful watch on the standard of the work produced.

32. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good. At this key stage, 44 lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching was excellent in one, very good in 12, good in 16, satisfactory in 10 and unsatisfactory in five. There are significant differences in the quality of teaching in Year 3 and the rest of the key stage although weaknesses are also apparent in Year 6 when the pupils are not taught by their full-time teacher. However, in part of Year 3, two lessons out of every five are unsatisfactory whereas, in Year 6, half of the lessons are very good although one in six is unsatisfactory. The major weaknesses in teaching are inadequate control and management of the pupils and the lack of clearly planned and appropriate learning objectives for pupils of all levels of attainment particularly the more able. These are significant training needs for some teachers. In addition, the marking of pupils' work is not always regular or carried out in such a way that they know what they have to do to improve and lessons do not have a brisk and appropriate pace and challenge. The lack of pace and challenge in some lessons in some parts of the school were also noted by the school's previous inspection. The quality of teaching is very good in English, literacy and information technology. It is good in mathematics, numeracy, science, design and technology, history, art, music and physical education and satisfactory in geography and religious education.

33. A National Literacy Strategy lesson in which the pupils compared contrasting texts and styles illustrated the strengths of the teaching at Key Stage 2. The very detailed lesson planning indicated a very thorough understanding of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. The work set in groups was well related to the introduction to the lesson and enabled the pupils to make good progress during the lesson. The objectives of the lesson were well shared with the pupils and were clearly written on the board to help the pupils to understand them. The teacher's questioning was extremely purposeful and continually checked on the pupils' understanding indicating intuitive assessment of their attainment. The resources used were excellent; there was an emphasis on improving the pupils' speaking and listening skills and the teacher had high expectations of their behaviour and attainment.

34. The quality of the teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout the school is good. The school's strategy of teaching these aspects of the curriculum to groups of pupils with similar levels of attainment works well. Both numeracy and literacy are well applied in other areas of the curriculum which allows pupils to develop and apply these skills. Compared with the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection, the pupils now undertake a much wider range of writing including personal accounts and writing factually about deserts. In numeracy sessions, mental strategies are well developed as pupils explain how they have worked out their answers and are given ideas of other ways to approach these calculations by the teacher. In history, the application of numeracy is seen, for example, in the varied forms of time lines that pupils produce.

35. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs in the main school is good and promotes good progress. Teachers understand the requirements of pupils who have special educational needs well, and they provide suitable work for them. Learning support assistants and teachers work very well together both in planning the work and in evaluation after lessons. Teachers encourage pupils with special educational needs well, and praise their work frequently. They offer them good, challenging work, and this motivates pupils who have special educational needs well.

36. The quality of teaching in the Aspen Unit is very good and the pupils make very good progress.

Eighteen lessons were observed in the Unit. Twelve were very good and six were good. Teachers have an excellent knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs and strengths. They provide very well for them and set a good pace and challenge which are appropriate. Teachers plan very well, and are expert in managing the pupils. Patience is very evident, but also a large measure of dedication. Teachers and learning support assistants work very well together, resulting in very good provision for the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and encourage them to try hard.

### **38. The curriculum and assessment**

37. Overall, the school provides a good quality curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to the pupils' needs and their abilities. All subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social education are included, and statutory requirements are met in the subjects where they apply. Religious education complies with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The provision for personal and social education is satisfactory, although there is not policy or scheme of work for this area of the school's work. There is appropriate development during 'circle' time, assemblies and within the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Moral development, for example, is encouraged by teaching pupils to know right from wrong and by negotiating appropriate rules with them. The study of ancient cultures, such as the Egyptians, and modern ones in varied localities supports pupils' cultural development well. Topics on the Victorians, and nursery rhymes and fairy tales in Key Stage 1 enable pupils to understand more about their own cultural heritage but preparation for living in today's multicultural society is insufficiently focused. Social development is excellent and opportunities for involvement with pupils in the special unit enhance this aspect of their learning. Pupils from the main school are pro-active in the way they offer help and wait to play with them at break times. The teaching of French or German in the upper school makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement, as does homework. A formal timetable for the upper juniors ensures that it is well organised. Reading is promoted throughout the school and, in addition, tasks may be set for homework on an informal basis in other year groups.

38. The curricular provision for children, who are aged under five in the school, is good. It is very good for children in the Aspen Unit. Planning is clear and is appropriate for all. It has a consistent format and, where appropriate, it focuses on the six areas of learning as specified in the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Children in the unit follow the 'Crossing the Bridge' documentation which has been devised by specialists. Medium term planning often covers a topic, which encompasses the areas of learning and provides good first-hand experiences. Planning is broken down into workable programmes and was detailed during the inspection week. Teachers meet together to share their expertise and the present theme, which is helping the children to learn all about themselves, is developed in both Reception classes but at appropriate levels according to the capabilities of the children. More challenging work in language and literacy and in mathematics is planned for the higher attainers, several of whom are already working on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The provision for the physical development of children aged under five in the school is not satisfactory as there are no suitable specifically designated outside areas adjoining classrooms where that children may have access to agility apparatus and wheeled vehicles and toys on a daily basis.

39. Key issues, identified at the last inspection, have been dealt with effectively. The length of the teaching time for junior pupils has been increased and all subjects, except for personal and social education, have policies and schemes of work. The emphasis on practical, creative and investigative work across the curriculum has increased. Practical work takes place in subjects such as design and technology, mathematics and science. In art, music and information technology, creative work is developing well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are using the Internet effectively to develop their topic work for presentation. They search for relevant data and combine pictures, text, sound and colour together harmoniously. Good opportunities are also provided for investigative work in information technology, science and in Years 5 and 6, in mathematics.

40. The school's provision for teaching literacy and numeracy is good. Both strategies have been well implemented with dedicated daily lessons throughout the school, relevant allocations of time, effective planning systems and setting arrangements in Key Stage 2. There are opportunities for extended writing and a range of purposes for writing is developed through other subjects. Historical stories such as Guy Fawkes, are recounted and instructional writing (for recipes and operating electrical equipment) is

cultivated in design and technology. Pupils in the lower school write accounts of sports matches, which they have derived from interviews when acting as journalists. Lessons for numeracy involve interactive oral work, led by teachers, with an emphasis on mental calculation. Strategies such as doubling and halving are taught and pupils are encouraged to explain their own methods. Mathematics is effectively used in other areas of the curriculum. For example, time lines in history, the use of scale and co-ordinates in geography, accurate measurement in practical work and, in science, collecting and interpreting information displayed in graphs.

41. Assessment procedures for children aged under five are good in the school and very good in the unit. Baseline assessments, which are tests to indicate strengths and areas of development for very young children, are carried out shortly after entry to the school. The information from these is detailed and specific. Outcomes are carefully recorded and are well used to plan the next stages of the children's work. Targets are set and the criteria for judging if these are successful are well defined. There is a wide range of records, which document pupils' progress and record individual achievement. Ongoing records on personal and social development are also carefully kept. Learning support assistants are effectively involved in the assessment of children and their observations provide very helpful information.

42. The school has worked hard to develop policies and schemes of work identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection. Most policies are awaiting updates in the forthcoming year but, overall, are satisfactory during the interim period. The policy for information technology is good whereas the art policy has several omissions. Schemes of work provide relevant learning objectives and tasks that increase in difficulty over time. Many of the school's schemes are appropriately supplemented by guidance from national frameworks. Personal and social education lacks a policy and scheme of work to guide teachers' planning and aid monitoring. The school's system for curricular planning is well organised and underpinned by the school's 'teaching and learning' policy. Long term plans demonstrate where refinements have been made in the past. Topic headings are given for each term in Key Stage 1, and aspects of science, religious education, geography and history are itemised half-termly, on a two-year rolling programme, in Key Stage 2. This effectively deals with the curricular provision for classes that have two age groups. However, the current scheme of work for art does not ensure that work is not repeated when pupils move to the next class. Medium term planning is clear and all teachers consistently use specified planning formats. For example, the national frameworks are used in literacy and numeracy as well as weekly planners. The quality of lesson plans varies and does not always provide appropriate learning objectives for all levels of attainment.

43. The provision for extra-curricular activities, including sport, is very good. For example, visitors have included the school nurse and the police to support the programme for sex education and the misuse of drugs. Educational visits to the Victoria and Albert museum to study the Japanese collection, and residential trips to Ripple Down House and Legoland enhance curricular provision and pupils' social development. School productions have included the origins of 'Silent Night' by the infants and 'Blue Suede' by the juniors. Class 3 has worked with a theatre group. The choir and orchestra have entertained local residential homes, shoppers in Canterbury and the Dover Association for the Blind. During the inspection, several of the well-attended school clubs were taking place, both in the lunch-time and after school, for example, recorder groups, the book club, choir, the school band and a Year 6 first aid club. Many staff, including learning support assistants, are involved. Sporting activities are well supported by pupils and parents. There was a very good turn out for a friendly football match with a local school. Other sports clubs include netball and rugby, and in the summer, cricket, rounders and swimming. Afternoons of 'potted sports' take place and, where possible, pupils from the unit join in, although the unit also holds its own sports day. The school also participates in inter-school competitions, local football events, inter-house football and netball matches, and various tournaments. A recent success was last year when they were runners up in a netball competition.

44. Pupils who have special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. This includes any after school or lunchtime clubs and activities. Pupils who have special educational needs have good individual education plans, and these provide suitable targets, which are reviewed termly, or earlier if appropriate. Assessment of pupils who have special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator involves teachers, parents and support assistants in initial identification procedures. There are appropriate tests carried out as pupils with special educational needs move through the school, in order

to establish their level of progress. Good records of these tests are kept and, at reviews, everyone concerned is fully informed of how pupils have progressed.

45. The Aspen Unit provides a broad curriculum and sets appropriate targets for attainment which are securely based upon the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. It is suitably modified to match the individual needs of the pupils. The inclusion of several pupils into mainstream classes is highly successful. Pupils from the unit are very well integrated and received by others. They take a full and active part in the lessons, and are supported very well by learning support assistants. Procedures for assessment are very good. Full records are kept and pupils' progress is noted at very frequent intervals. The policy documents about assessment are of a high quality. Assessment fully informs teachers' planning. Annual and more frequent reviews are a strong feature of the unit.

46. Overall, the school's approach to assessment is good. Particular strengths include the very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2. There is a clear timetable of the various assessments made throughout the year and a comprehensive range of formal tests, in the core subjects, is used in addition to the end of key stage national testing arrangements. Tests are analysed at individual, group and cohort levels and pupils' results are kept on school spreadsheets to track their achievements over time. Information from standardised tests is used effectively to place pupils in ability sets for teaching mathematics and English. The school's assessment policy is not fully up-to-date, but it reflects the current approach to planning and assessment and the staff handbook contains essential guidance which is clear and helpful. Records for core subjects are manageable and useful but a consistent approach for accurately recording pupils' achievement and monitoring their progress in other subjects is not in place. Annual reports are good and meet legal requirements. They are informative, celebrate strengths and identify future learning targets.

47. The use of assessment to inform curricular planning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. It is particularly good in classes at or near the end of both key stages but there are weaknesses in classes containing pupils in Years 1 and 3. Strengths include the personal targets which teachers set for individual pupils in English and mathematics. These are clearly displayed in their folders or books. Pupils' work is monitored in year groups, on a termly basis, for English and mathematics. Samples are checked against National Curriculum levels and nationally produced examples for consistency. Monitoring across key stages has mainly focused on literacy. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there were few planned opportunities to evaluate pupils' work. Booster groups have taken place for targeted Year 6 pupils and revision schedules were introduced in preparation for the summer term assessments. Shortcomings include marking and the speedy use of assessment. The marking policy does not contain guidance for marking mathematics, which leads to varied approaches. In addition, some work is not marked and, where it is, teachers' comments do not always clearly inform pupils how to improve their work. Tests undertaken last term have not been fully analysed and there is only limited involvement of class teachers and subject co-ordinators. This prevents them having a clear, up-to-date, overview of the strengths and weaknesses of their class and the subject areas for which they are responsible. Likewise, at the start of the autumn term, teachers do not have the necessary data to inform the planning for their new class. This time lag is unsatisfactory as the curricular provision cannot be accurately evaluated and modified at class and year group levels.

#### 49. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

48. Overall, the school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils including those with special educational needs. The provision for the spiritual, moral and cultural elements is good, and for social development, it is excellent. The school has a family ethos, which extends to all aspects of its work. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Adults in the school provide good role models for pupils whom they treat with respect and often good humour. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in all the lessons, activities, responsibilities, and experiences available. Pupils' spiritual awareness is fostered well by the planned programme of collective worship, which allows them time for some reflection, and often, a prayer. During the inspection, pupils in several classes were being taught about Advent, and its message of preparation, and they often applied this idea to their everyday lives, thinking how they prepare for special events. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the natural world, and there is an impressive display about the earth's form, volcanoes and rocks, which serves to emphasise the complexity of the structure around us.

Pupils are being encouraged to consider the millennium in many of its facets, and they are building a time line round the hall depicting civilisations over the last two thousand years. They are given opportunities to empathise with other people, such as when Year 4 considered rejoicing and remembering, and thought how it might feel not to have a birthday.

49. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is good, as noted in the last inspection report. There are clear expectations of good standards of behaviour, and acceptable conduct is re-inforced frequently by teachers. Pupils and teachers together discuss classroom rules, and these are altered, if necessary, by general agreement. The ensuing rules are displayed in the classroom. There is a constructive system of rewards and sanctions which underpins the rules for behaviour, and the emphasis is firmly positive and rewarding. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, at levels appropriate to their ages, and understand the need to respect the rights and property of others. Tolerance and understanding feature well in the school's provision for moral development. This is demonstrated very clearly in the school's welcoming acceptance of fellow pupils from the unit, when they join in classes or assemblies. Pupils have the chance to apply some of their thinking and learning in this aspect to their everyday lives. For example, when pupils in Year 3 thought about the three most important rules at their homes.

50. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together in class, in pairs or groups. They share equipment and ideas, and learn to take responsibility for their work. Social development is promoted through membership of any of the large number of activities available outside school time. Various sports are offered such as football, netball, and mini rugby. Other activities include summer drama club, modern languages clubs, music, and, annually, there is a school production of a play or musical, or sketches. Pupils visiting the church, or clergy coming to talk to them in school, fosters links with the local community. The school choir sings carols locally, and some of the pupils from the Aspen Unit went out during the inspection week to sing carols with their own group of schools. Pupils, including those in the Aspen Unit, have the chance to join in residential visits. Mainstream pupils went on an adventure holiday and the local press promotes the school well in the community.

51. The good cultural provision for pupils includes music in the form of the choir, the band, and recorders. They often perform in assemblies. Pupils study the work of artists such as Matisse, and make their own pictures after the style of the artist. They are taken to visit museums and galleries such as the local transport museum, or the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. There are theatre visits and sometimes a theatrical company visits the school. Pupils have visits to a farm, to a Tudor life museum, and to local beaches. In religious education, pupils have the opportunity to study the festivals and celebrations of other religions such as the festival of Divali. However, there are no planned opportunities for multicultural experiences in order to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society. For example, the music, food and dress of an ethnic group, or visiting speakers to talk about the life and customs of a particular people.

52. The provision for promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children aged under five is good. They attend acts of worship with the rest of the school and learn to reflect on issues, sing hymns and share in the celebrations of others. In classrooms, they learn about right and wrong and



realise that when they tell stories, sometimes these are true and sometimes they are made up. They hear stories which give them a message, for example, how to be kind to one's friends, how to help people who feel lonely and how everyone has something to offer to others. The story of the Rainbow Fish formed a basis for discussion along these lines in addition to enabling the children to engage in art activities. Social development is promoted effectively when children play together and choose their own activities. There are limitations with regard to the outside play area but good opportunities arise in lessons for children to learn to share and take turns. Cultural development is satisfactory and simple ideas about their own heritage are introduced to them gradually. They learn about the routines of the day, look at local buildings to gain a sense of history and hear stories, many of which provide a rich source of traditional influence.

#### **54. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

53. The school continues to provide a safe, caring and supportive learning environment for all pupils. There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and staff know pupils well as individuals. A comprehensive programme enables new pupils to settle well. The house system provides a framework for identity and competition. Pupils in the main school who have special educational needs are well supported both by teachers and learning support assistants. These arrangements allow pupils to join in all classroom activities well, and follow the guidelines set out in their individual education plans.

54. Pupils from the Aspen Unit are integrated very well and some have regular days where they attend their local school. The support and guidance offered in the Aspen Unit are excellent, and impacts very well on pupils' achievements and progress. Teachers and learning support assistants know their pupils very well and enable them to have access to their work. They do not do the work for them, but offer help, encouragement and appropriate strategies so that the pupils can try for themselves. They offer multi-sensory help whenever possible, such as letting a pupil trace a raised letter with his hands so that he can join in with all the others in recognising the word.

55. Pupils' personal and social development is supported by a variety of topics which are considered both separately and integrated into subjects of the curriculum. These include sex, drugs and aspects of citizenship with valuable input from the school nurse, the police and the fire service. Year 6 pupils also attend the district multi-agency event organised by the emergency services. There is, however, no scheme of work to ensure that all aspects are sufficiently and cohesively covered and that pupils' work is monitored. Pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school by using the homework contact book in the same way, visits, discussions and close links between teachers and subject departments.

56. Induction procedures for children aged under five are good. The arrangements for children in the Aspen Unit are very good. The support, guidance and welfare of pupils are of a high standard. Information which is gained from parents before their child's entry to the school is carefully used to meet the needs of individuals especially where these involve specific health matters. Additional information is added, as and when necessary, to build up a full picture of each individual. Support assistants also help children to settle into school and children in the Reception classes have their own dinner ladies who keep a special eye on them. Children in the school have their own patio area but no specific enclosed area so that they can have a separate place to play in at playtimes. Outside agencies are alerted wherever there is a need and good links exist with hospitals and specialists in the case of children with profound difficulties.

57. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. A wide range of tests are administered which are better in English, mathematics and science than in the other subjects where there is a lack of a consistent approach. Similarly, the higher attaining pupils are better monitored and supported in the core subjects than in the other subjects. The monitoring of the welfare and personal development of the children aged under five is good. In other years, there is no whole-school format to monitor pupils' personal development and there are no annually updated records. The school monitors and promotes good attendance well but does not pursue absences that are not notified to them until the end of each week. Days taken for holidays during term time over the permitted number are marked as unauthorised and careful records are kept of the reasons for authorised absence. A close eye is kept on pupils' punctuality. The education welfare officer gives helpful support to some pupils.

58.The procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour are good. The foundation for this is a comprehensive behaviour policy, with clear rules and expectations which is discussed with pupils and well publicised. The policy does not include the procedures in case of exclusions. The rewards are motivating and the sanctions effective, but, whilst inappropriate behaviour is noted, the point at which it must be recorded is open to interpretation. An understanding of bullying is covered regularly and all cases are investigated and effectively dealt with.

59.The head of the Aspen Unit is the designated person for child protection and keeps all staff up-to-date with the required procedures so that they are confident of what to do. The records are suitably stored at all times. Whilst governors and staff are vigilant about health and safety and cover most aspects, its management does not meet the legal requirements. Except for the storage of hazardous substances, written risk assessments have not been done. The cleaning materials are not securely stored at all times. There are a good number of qualified staff for administering first aid but most is done in unsuitable areas due to the location of the adequately equipped medical room and not all incidents are recorded. The attention to fire safety and the recording of fire drills lacks sufficient rigour.

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

60.The school's partnership with parents is good, as was the judgement of the last inspection. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and their children and some help regularly in classes although the school has some difficulty finding parents with time to help. The parent teacher association is very active in organising social events which raise valuable sums to support the school's fabric such as the development of the library and the play areas. It also sends informative newsletters which complement those sent from the school. Class teachers are available at the end of every day to discuss matters on an informal basis and, at the beginning of the academic year, each class teacher sends parents a letter which includes the work that is to be covered during the year and reminds them of the school's policies and procedures. Information evenings about the curriculum, including sex education, are organised and well attended. Parental attendance at the consultation evenings is very good at about 95 per cent. The contact books, which are now issued to all years with a requirement that they are signed by parents in Years 5 and 6, are another useful way that parents can keep abreast of the work that their child is doing and their attainment and progress. Some parents felt that they did not receive sufficient information about what their children are taught and the progress which they make and that the provision of homework was inconsistent. The findings of the inspection do not support these view. There are some good parents' comments in the reading diaries. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's education. They have the opportunity to attend open times for discussions. Teachers and the co-ordinator are available every day after school for parents to talk to. They are invited to attend, and to record their views, at annual reviews. Parents are very supportive and appreciative of the Aspen Unit. They attend annual reviews and open times, and there is good liaison between the unit and the parents. They are kept well informed about their child's education. Parents from the school also support the unit well, and when prospective parents are shown round, the unit is always included. The information to parents in the prospectus and governors' Annual Report to parents has some omissions.

61.With regard to the provision for children who are aged under five, relationships with parents are good. The teacher in the Aspen Unit has set up a home visit system and this is a very good initiative. Information is gathered so that a detailed picture of individual needs can be amassed. All teachers work hard to communicate with parents. They explain the format of the day and the purposes of play to parents when they visit the school. Information is given to them which assists parents in helping children towards achieving both early personal and academic goals.

62.A good range of links with the community and employers support pupils' work well. These include pupils entertaining the elderly and the blind and good links with the church. The school is a regular venue for scout and local governor group meetings. The good links with the playgroups help pupils settle into school well and for their move to secondary school, the considerable subject and pastoral links are very supportive. An example of this is the Pfizer bubbles project where pupils begin the work in Year 6 and continue in Year 7. There are also good links with other primary schools through the consortium. A number of pupils from local secondary schools benefit from work experience in the school.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **64. Leadership and management**

63. The quality of the school's leadership and management is good. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection which described its leadership as 'supportive'. The thoughtful and purposeful leadership of the headteacher gives the school a clear educational direction and a successful commitment to high attainment. The headteacher is very well supported by the governors, the deputy headteacher, the teacher in charge of the Aspen Unit and other members of staff with management responsibilities particularly the members of the senior management team. These factors contribute to the good standards which the pupils attain at the end of Key Stage 2 and the school's commitment to further improvement is indicated by the challenging targets it has set, and is well placed to achieve, for improving attainment in literacy and numeracy. Leadership of the school's special educational needs provision is very good. The co-ordinator has established very good systems for annual reviews and keeps all concerned very well informed. The co-ordinator gives a clear lead and has produced good policy documents. The files contain ample records, which help in establishing what support each pupil is receiving and how progress is recorded. Statutory requirements are met. The unit is very well led. The head of the unit offers strong leadership and guidance. He has a very clear vision for the future planning of the unit and its needs. It is included in the school's development planning. A high level of support and monitoring is given to staff, and the documents and policies are meticulously thought through, and very well presented. The head of the unit gives dedicated and professional leadership, and these qualities are evident in the excellent teamwork displayed by all staff. The ethos of the unit is very good, positive, and supportive of all present.

64. The school's aims which include maintaining a caring community, maximising each child's potential, encouraging positive attitudes, helping children to achieve, striving for equality of opportunity and enhancing working relationships with parents and the wider community are well implemented. The Aspen Unit's fundamental principle of integrating of children into the main school, whenever possible, is very well implemented. The roles of all staff are clearly defined in appropriate job descriptions. However, the management roles are not evenly distributed in the main school and the deputy headteacher and the key stage co-ordinators carry workloads which are too heavy.

65. The school produced a good action plan after its last OFSTED inspection and has made a good improvement since that inspection. In response to the five key issues for action produced by that inspection, the school has ensured that the length of the teaching week for juniors meets the recommended time and has developed good curricular policies, schemes of work and assessment procedures. It has improved the quality of teaching from a baseline where one lesson in six was unsatisfactory to a situation where now, only approximately one lesson in 14 is unsatisfactory and more than one lesson in three is at least very good. A satisfactory improvement in monitoring the curriculum has taken place but it is still not rigorous enough as agreed criteria are not used to monitor regularly the quality of teaching, particularly that of temporary staff, and the standards attained by the pupils. In addition, all co-ordinators are not fully aware of the analysis of assessment information undertaken by the school and cannot, therefore, ensure that it is used to its best effect. Some co-ordinators are insufficiently trained in effective monitoring of the curriculum. Since its last OFSTED inspection, the school has also increased the range of the pupils' writing, improved its provision for investigative work, developed the pupils' mathematical vocabulary particularly at Key Stage 2, enhanced activities for children aged under five to suit and develop their concentration and monitored equality of opportunity in mathematics and numeracy. Additionally, it has raised standards in some subjects, including English, mathematics and science, at the end of Key Stage 2. However, provision for the development of the pupils' understanding of multi cultural issues is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection and, in some instances, higher attaining pupils are still not given work which is difficult enough for them.

66. The governors have a very good overview of the school. They have a well-established committee set up which helps them to manage their role effectively. The governors attend appropriate training, make regular visits to the school, set targets for the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and receive regular information about the curriculum particularly from the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the teacher in charge of the Aspen Unit. They are very clear that the information they receive must be

readily understandable and assist them in their understanding of the school. For example, they have explained fully how they want information about the progress made by the pupils to be presented to them. The governors are very well aware of the major issues facing the school. The governor with responsibility for the National Literacy Strategy attended a three day training course, visited every class whilst the strategy was being taught and reported back to the governors.

67. The pupils receive equality of opportunity although there are differences in the attainment of boys and girls in aspects of the end of key stage national tests which have not been fully analysed by the school. Most statutory requirements are met but the statutory information for parents has some omissions and arrangements for the appraisal of teachers do not fully meet requirements. The school development plan covers the period autumn 1999 to summer 2001 and includes developments in the curriculum, management and buildings. The plan includes targets, tasks, those responsible for developments, resources, criteria against which the plan's success will be judged and timescales. Planned developments include consolidating the National Numeracy Strategy, developing further the use of information technology and completing the work on the landscaped playground areas. The plan makes a satisfactory contribution to the school's strategic direction. However, it is not closely related to the aims of the school, does not involve staff and governors sufficiently in the process of deciding priorities and does not cover a long enough period. In addition, the developments to be undertaken are not prioritised, the criteria for judging its success are not sufficiently evaluative, detailed action plans do not support the implementation of the major priorities and the plan is not sufficiently central to the school's educational direction, for example, it is not presented to the governors in enough detail. The school's last OFSTED inspection noted that the school development plan's criteria for judging its success on improving pupils' standards of achievement are less evident". School development planning has not improved sufficiently since that inspection.

68. The Aspen Unit's development planning covers two years and gives the unit a clear strategic direction. It is similar in format to that of the main school although it also includes a business plan that supplements it in a way that the main school's development plan is not enhanced. Priorities for development in the Aspen Unit include developing the role of co-ordinators, updating the assessment policy and completing a comprehensive target list for the years 1999 to 2002.

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

69. There is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and support staff in the main school. Teachers' roles and subject responsibilities are generally well matched to their qualifications and experience but not all teachers with management responsibilities have an even workload. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and the deputy headteacher each have a class to teach. They have one day per week non-teaching time in which they are able to fulfil their responsibilities. Support staff for pupils who have special educational needs are well deployed. They make a significant contribution towards the school's provision for special educational needs. They are well trained and are involved with teachers and the co-ordinator in writing individual educational plans for pupils. Teachers and support staff work well together both in planning lessons and in their evaluation afterwards.

70. Generally, subject co-ordinators are not fully aware of the analysis of assessment information undertaken by the school and training needs exist to develop their roles. Teachers' support assistants provide valuable help within the classroom, working alongside classroom teachers and aiding pupils as they learn, including those who have special educational needs. Visiting specialists include therapists for speech, music, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Teachers for the hearing and visually impaired visit regularly. Non-teaching staff play an important role in the daily life of the school by assisting in a wide range of tasks.

71. Overall, there are satisfactory arrangements for the professional development of staff. The induction process for newly qualified teachers is good. There is a policy in place that sets out the level of support from the school and from the Local Education Authority's programme. Experienced teachers, new to the school, have support and guidance from the key stage co-ordinators who act as their mentors. Staff development, as a whole, is good and a clear and appropriate policy underpins the process. School and personal needs are addressed within the constraints of school finances and specific needs are identified

through staff development interviews but the statutory requirements for teachers' appraisal are not met. Support staff have regular training and are invited to attend school development days and staff meetings. In addition, they meet fortnightly with the deputy headteacher where they can raise any concerns they might have. There are no significant weaknesses in expertise within the curriculum but the quality of some teachers' planning and their management and control of pupils have shortcomings, which reflect on the rate of pupils' progress in particular classes, in both key stages. Training needs for some teacher exist in the monitoring of the curriculum and classroom management.

72. Overall, the accommodation is adequate to teach the curriculum but it lacks suitable staffing accommodation, space to prepare work and sufficient staff lavatories. The hall, school grounds and library are good but there are shortcomings in the storage space available. A small room for the deputy headteacher is also used as a store for electrical leads, medical purposes and piano lessons. The lack of storage impinges on the teaching space in the deputy headteacher's class and creates clutter outside the headteacher's room, where photocopying paper is stored. The school is mostly tidy even though storage space is poor. Much work has been done to create additional areas to store musical instruments and scientific equipment and topic boxes. Large items, such as lengths of wood for design and technology, are difficult to place and the recessed area in the hall is small for physical education equipment. Staff work hard to ensure that they have the resources they require and in this respect the access to resources is satisfactory overall. The shortfall previously found in scientific apparatus and resources for design and technology has improved. Resources for religious education and the library are good and for information technology they are very good. A successful bid for the National Grid for Learning has enabled the school to extend their network so that there is at least one networked computer in every room. All classes have access to the same range of software and to the Internet. The parent teacher association collected sufficient tokens to receive two new computers from a supermarket. Although spending on resources has been high, the school compares favourably with the national ratio of computers to pupils.

73. Teaching staff for children aged under five are competent, knowledgeable and well prepared to meet the children's needs. Learning support assistants are well qualified and committed to their work. The accommodation for children aged under five is suitable inside but for those in the school, there is no secure, outdoor designated area where children of this age can play. Also, there are no resources for outdoor play such as large wheeled vehicles and agility apparatus. Children in the Aspen Unit have the appropriate designated area and resources.

74. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support assistants in the unit are good. Arrangements for appraisal of teachers and support assistants in the unit are good and often lead to staff development. Accommodation in the unit is unsatisfactory. The head of unit shares a very small office with administrative staff and the assistant secretary has her desk in the staff room. The condition of the buildings, which are temporary constructions, but some over twenty years old, is barely adequate. Resources in the unit are very good and range from general apparatus to very specialised equipment.

#### **76. The efficiency of the school**

75. The school's resources are very well managed. The quality of financial planning is very good and careful projections of how changes in the roll are likely to affect income are used very well to address changes. For example, recent falls in the number of pupils have been carefully monitored and managed in such a way that financial stability and consistency in educational provision have been achieved. The school has made detailed comparisons of spending with that of other schools. The only area of relative weakness is related to shortcomings in the main school's development plan. This plan does not cover a long enough period and the criteria for judging its success are not always evaluative enough to assist the governors in making judgements about how well money has been spent.

76. The school has very good procedures for monitoring its spending. Careful analysis of spending takes place monthly and is fully reported to, and checked by, the governors. Both the school and the Aspen Unit were recently audited by the Local Education Authority and good levels of financial control were reported. Provision of staff training is well related to the staff development interviews carried out by the school and to the needs of the school development plan which ensures good use of the funds allocated for this purpose. The money designated for pupils with special educational needs is well used in the main school and very well used in the Aspen Unit.

77.The Aspen unit provides very well for the pupils and staff are very well deployed, using resources to very good effect. Among the many strengths that the unit offers to its pupils is the programme of inclusion within the mainstream day in both Whitfield and other schools. Teaching and support staff are well used in the school. In the main school, teachers are suitably deployed as class teachers and in appropriate management roles. Their expertise is well used additionally in teaching groups based on the previous attainment of the pupils in literacy and numeracy sessions and, for example, in the teaching of swimming. Management roles are well related to the expertise of the teacher but the co-ordinators' monitoring of the curriculum is not fully developed and some staff, for example, the deputy headteacher, have very heavy workloads. In the Aspen Unit, the team teaching in the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes works very well. The teachers know the pupils well and support them and each other very effectively. Learning support staff are well deployed in the main school so that they are able to give good support, particularly to pupils with special educational needs. The deployment of learning support staff in the Aspen Unit is very good. These staff work closely with the teachers and know the needs of the children in great detail. Their work in supporting the pupils from the Aspen Unit to integrate in main school work is particularly effective. Visiting specialist staff are very well used throughout the school.

78.The administration of the school is very good and supports the implementation of the curriculum fully. The school's accommodation is very well used. Every part of this school is fully used to educate the pupils and no room is wasted. Learning resources are also very well used. This is particularly evident in the case of information technology and in the Aspen Unit where staff used specialised equipment in an exemplary manner to meet fully the needs of the pupils.

79.The pupils enter the school at average levels of attainment and leave it at above average levels. Pupils in the Aspen Unit make very good progress. Provision for the pupils' social development is excellent. The school's management and use of its resources are very good. The quality of relationships, personal development and extra curricular provision are very good. The pupils are well behaved and they have a good attitude to their work. Leadership and management are of good quality overall. Spending per pupil is broadly at the level of the national average in the main school and slightly below average in the Aspen Unit. The school and the Aspen Unit give good value for money. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection which judged value for money to be 'reasonably good'.

## 81. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 81. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

80. At the time of the inspection, nine children were under five in one of the Reception classes and all the children were under five in the other. Children in the school make good progress and are on course to attain, by the time that they are five, standards which exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes with regard to language and literacy and personal and social development. Several children achieve above average standards in mathematics and physical development but most of them attain standards which are in line with what would be expected for their ages in these areas and also in knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. The previous inspection found that standards were 'in line and sometimes above expectations with regard to early reading, writing and counting skills and good in some physical activities'. No specific judgements were given on creative, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and social development. These elements were regarded as under emphasised within the curriculum and the present provision is an improvement.

81. In the Aspen Unit, children who are aged under five make very good progress because of the one-to-one attention they receive and the individual education programmes that are planned for them. Children in both the school and the unit are happy and secure in their surroundings and show good attitudes to most situations. They are very responsive to first hand experiences and listen well when these capture their attention. Individual concentration on tasks is often very well sustained. The quality of teaching in all the areas of learning is good. In mathematics and personal and social development, there are some very good and excellent features. In the Aspen Unit, the teaching is very good in the areas of learning which are appropriate for children with severe learning difficulties. Teachers have a clear understanding of the importance of providing challenge for young children and well-planned activities enable them to extend their personal, academic and physical development. Shortcomings in the provision for outdoor play and the lack of equipment limit the breadth of opportunities for children in the school. In the unit, sensory experiences enable children to explore stimulating sensations and learn to make the appropriate responses. They also have suitable facilities for outdoor play, which enable them to practise and apply muscular control.

82. Curricular provision is very good in the unit and good in the school. Teachers work closely together to plan relevant programmes and include opportunities for children to select play activities and to participate in structured play where learning objectives have generally been clearly defined at the outset. Children in the school take part in the acts of worship and have many opportunities to reflect on the awe and wonder of the world. They develop a strong sense of what is right and wrong, learn to play sociably together and are introduced to elements of their own culture, sometimes through stories or by learning about the celebration of Christmas.

83. Recent documentation addresses the needs of young children in both the school and the unit. Assessment procedures are good in the school and very good in the unit. Shortly after entry to school, baseline assessment takes place. This is detailed and specific and targets are set for every individual. These are appropriate and achievable and help the teachers to plan work accordingly. Further information is kept within the unit which relates to the healthcare of children and their particular requirements and how they respond to the programmes on offer. A consistent approach is applied and good observations occur on a day-to-day basis. The indoor accommodation is adequate for the Reception children but it is unsatisfactory with regard to the outdoor provision. There is no designated fenced area for the children who are under five to use throughout the day and there are no large toys, wheeled vehicles and agility apparatus for outdoor play to enable children to develop muscular control and skills in balance and co-ordination.

#### **Personal and social development**

84. By the time that they are five, children attain above average standards in their personal and social development. They make particularly good progress as a result of the very good quality of teaching. Children are confident and establish positive relationships with one another, teaching staff and other adults who work with them. Even the youngest children work well together as part of group and are willing to share the equipment. Those in the school show good independence when changing for physical

education lessons and when attending to their personal hygiene. Children in both the school and the unit show good attitudes to learning and are happy and secure in their environment. They learn to listen attentively to their teachers and are eager to explore new experiences which are offered to them. When sharing books with an inspector, they were confident enough to ask questions about the purpose of her visit and were keen to show what they could do. Most children settle down quickly to tasks and become fully involved in what they are doing. Children behave very well and know what is expected of them. During a 'circle' time, the youngest children effectively understood the rule of only speaking when they were holding the teddy. They showed unusual maturity for their ages when they gave examples of how to be kind to friends and clearly knew the difference between right and wrong approaches. All children treat school equipment and property well and are often sensible when clearing up. They participate in acts of worship and join in readily when singing hymns and when it is time for reflection.

### **Language and literacy**

85. By the age of five, most children exceed the expected outcomes. The quality of teaching in this area is good and children make rapid progress. Teachers take good account of the baseline assessment information and plan individual targets that identify the children's specific needs. All children listen attentively and there are good opportunities for them to talk about their activities and share their news. Their responses to the teacher's questions show clear gains in vocabulary, their ability to predict outcomes and a growing confidence to speak in front of a group. 'Circle' times also enable children to learn to listen and express an opinion to the rest of the class. Children with special educational needs take a full part in such lessons. Children handle books with care and engage adults in sharing them. Most of them know that print gives meaning and, when they cannot recognise words on the pages, they tell the story from the pictures. Literacy hour sessions enable children to read aloud confidently from big books such as 'Not now, Bernard' where they show evident enjoyment. Most children form letters with good control and several write their names using upper and lower case letters. The older ones identify the names and sounds of letters and make a good attempt at trying to write in an 'emergent' way by putting letters together phonetically. With support, all children write about what they did at the weekend after they have discussed it with an adult, and many reinforce their learning by reading it out to the rest of the class. Most children have an understanding of sentence construction and the use of the full stop. They know to leave a finger space between words when they are writing. Higher attainers spell simple words correctly while lower attainers practise writing the beginning letters of words and compile their work in a book all about sounds. Even the youngest children are starting to write their own stories such as the one based on 'The very hungry caterpillar'. Higher attainers make good progress with reading and writing and the development of their handwriting skills and are already working towards Level 1 in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Lower attainers use picture clues well and improve their control of mark making. All children respond very well to stories, songs, nursery rhymes and poems.

### **Mathematics**

86. Children reach the expected standard as set out in the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time that they are five with a significant number exceeding this standard. They make good progress. The quality of teaching is good but has excellent features because of the clear instructions which are given to pupils, the effective approaches, the strong organisation of activities and the lively and purposeful pace which is maintained. Children count and match objects up to ten with accuracy and a few work out how many are left if one object is added or taken away. Older children confidently count forwards and backwards, read and write numerals to twenty and are familiar with larger numbers that they use in their daily lives, for example, their house number or a number on the bus. Many of them manage to partition sets to make and record simple addition and subtraction sums. Their learning is supported through games, paintings and songs like '1,2,3,4,5, once I caught a fish alive', and 'five currant buns in the baker's shop.' They pick out missing numbers on a 'washing line' of numbers, for example. Young children in the Aspen Unit were seen participating well in such singing games and holding up the correct number when it was their turn. Teachers take every opportunity for incidental reinforcement to extend the children's skills and to develop their mathematical language. Children recognise and name common two and three-dimensional shapes and make repeating patterns with beads. Most use mathematical language confidently to describe shape, size and quantity and displays showing examples of objects which are longer and shorter than a tube help them to practise its usage. Children develop their skills in other



areas such as the recognition of money by pretending to play at shops and by counting equipment in the home corner. In information technology, programmable toys are used to good effect. Children explore sand and water and these provide sound practical opportunities for early concepts connected with capacity, shape and size. At times, however, these are not sufficiently structured to enable children to gain most impact from the experiences.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

87. Attainment in this area is on course to be in line with that expected for children aged five. Children make good progress as a result of good teaching which focuses on the provision of first hand experiences. In the Aspen Unit, children describe and recognise changes, which take place in the autumn. They visit a nearby Abbey and go to the town to look at different shops. In both the school and the unit, teachers focus on helping the children to learn days of the week and months of the year and to talk about events which happen in their lives and refer to special days such as birthdays. They sequence activities of the day and then begin to look at the changes which occur from babyhood to the time that a child begins school. They make comparisons between young and adult animals. The current topic on 'Ourselves' involved children in encountering a wide range of experiences. They notice changes in the weather and learn about routes within the school. The immediate environment involves children in learning about types of houses and the associated vocabulary to describe them. They cut out pictures of household items and learn where they fit in different rooms of the house. In both classes, children have sound knowledge of where they live. Older children show a good awareness of the need for personal hygiene and this is demonstrated to them well during a lesson about health, the spread of disease and the importance of washing hands. They name body parts and learn about growth when they hear a story called 'Haven't you grown, Titch?' Teachers provide good first-hand experiences which involve the children in recognising that they have senses. Most children are skilled when they explore how to join fabric, learn the skill of weaving and build models from bricks, construction equipment and recycled materials. Many children use technology confidently. They write their names on the computer and are adept at using a mouse to pinpoint items on the screen. Even the youngest ones know how to follow programs that incorporate Noddy to help the children to learn early language and number concepts.

### **Physical development**

88. Most children are on course to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five, although some attainment is higher than this. Children cut, join and stick and handle tools well. Throughout the age group, children show considerable skill and dexterity when playing with jigsaws, puzzles and small world equipment. They correctly locate keys on the computer keyboard and satisfactorily operate the controls, often working in pairs. Thick and thin paintbrushes enable the children to develop different techniques and to practise controlling them. They mould sand and playdough and these help them to improve their manipulative skills. During physical education lessons, children move in different directions with increasing control and co-ordination and use a range of small apparatus with confidence. They show a good awareness of space around them and can find a 'magic spot'. They recognise words such as travel, walk, run, jump, hop, bounce and gallop and try hard to move accordingly. In dance and games, they develop their skills, work co-operatively with a partner and make rhythmic responses to music. However, the children in the school do not have daily access to agility equipment or wheeled toys in a designated play area. Development and control of balance and co-ordination are, therefore, more limited in this respect. Children in the unit have access to areas that are specifically designed to extend their muscular co-ordination. They also have an appropriate area outside and have a good range of wheeled vehicles.

### **Creative development**

89. Attainment in creative development is on course to be in line with that expected of children aged five. Children make good progress and the quality of teaching is good. In both classes, children sing well and with enthusiasm. They join in actions with a sense of rhythm when they clap a steady beat, copy body patterns and use instruments. Children learn how to classify musical instruments and refer to a display, which shows their findings. They explore colour by mixing paints and the youngest children focus in on the colour table which shows a collection of purple items to help them to appreciate the shade within a colour. Children learn how to make handprints, produce flowers by printing with their palms and use

sponges for printing. Some of the oldest children make puppets representing monsters, which is linked to the work in the literacy session, and produce robots from junk materials. Opportunities to reinforce learning from other areas are reinforced by creative work. For example, children learn to write their names by painting them, make tactile collage of numbers from one to ten by using household items, such as lentils and pasta, and produce coloured circles, squares and triangles. There are fewer examples of children using painting and drawing materials freely to express ideas from their memory and imagination or to record observations from their experience. Role play in the home corner allows the children the chance to play creatively but these areas in both classrooms are not used to their full potential to engage pupils in imaginative and dramatic play.

## 91. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

### 91. English

90. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for Whitfield school and Aspen Unit for 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, standards were average in English. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in English was below the national average and the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was well above the national average

91. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by the school in 1996, 1997 and 1998, they show an improving trend in standards. The combined data for 1996, 1997 and 1998 show that the attainment of boys is close to the national average for the period in English whilst that of girls is above the national average.

92. The findings of the inspection are that, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils in the school attain standards, including those of literacy, which are above expectations. They talk and listen confidently in a wide range of contexts. Many are able to clearly describe events and offer opinions. For example, they empathise with children in Victorian times and explain their feelings. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a breadth of vocabulary during plenary sessions and frequently give imaginative and thoughtful answers. Pupils of average capability develop their ideas logically and demonstrate a widening choice of words which they also apply to their writing tasks. Lower attainers, show a good understanding of the main points of a story such as 'The tiger, the Brahman and the jackal' and show thoughtful evaluations of how the text can be converted into a play script. Pupils in the Aspen Unit are encouraged to share their thoughts, opinions and experiences with others. In a music lesson, for example, pupils learned the names of the instruments and practised applying them in context when they played a listening game.

93. Standards in reading are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils understand significant ideas, themes, events and characters and show a developing use of inference and deduction. Many show advanced skills when they retrieve and collate information from a variety of sources. Year 6 pupils demonstrated their competence when acting as information detectives. They showed the ability to skim and scan information, make bullet points and summaries and seek further information from the Internet when pursuing specialised research topics. Pupils are interested in books and read with fluency, accuracy and expression. They have firm opinions about their preferences and show maturity when evaluating books such as Tarka the Otter. Higher attainers show advanced skills in demonstrating the ability to analyse material according to its grammatical construction and its meaning. Pupils in the Aspen Unit who are capable of remembering words and picking out sounds show enjoyment when reading a big book with the teacher about a bear in the park, or when they read about the family in the Oxford Reading Tree series. They match words and sounds accurately with support and focus in on frequently used words such as 'and' and 'the'. The books are also prepared with a sign language, which the pupils use, and those at an earlier stage use this meaningfully. They are able to point out principal characters and begin to explain what is happening in the pictures. The good use of resources allows pupils to find the words from the class big books in their own individual versions in order to consolidate their learning.

94. By the end of Key Stage 2, the standards of pupils' writing are above expectations. Pupils produce varied and interesting work for a range of audiences and the depth of written work is very good. Words are used imaginatively and with precision. Spelling is frequently correct in words of both complex and

regular patterns and there is a good attention to punctuation. Carefully planned spelling programmes and strategies enable pupils to develop their knowledge of letter strings and pupils are adept at checking their work with dictionaries. Handwriting is consistently applied to many curricular areas. It is usually joined, clear and fluent and a structured programme ensures that it is systematically taught. Pupils use good sentence construction, show awareness of paragraphs and a thorough knowledge of punctuation, when they write. The higher attainers write extended pieces of work of outstanding quality but all pupils show sensitivity when writing poetry about colours, letters, diaries, character studies, newspaper articles, summaries and instructional writing as would be found with electrical equipment. Higher attaining pupils in the Aspen Unit learn to copy letters and words, and, with support, explain their choice of captions to go with the pictures they draw.

95. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 1 tests for 1999 for Whitfield school and the Aspen Unit shows that, in reading and writing, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was well below the national average. The percentage attaining Level 3 and above in reading and writing was at the level of the national average. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards are below average in writing and well below average in reading. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with those of similar schools, they show that standards are average in reading and above average in writing.

96. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results in reading and writing for 1999 are compared with 1996, 1997 and 1998, they show a downward trend in standards. Taking the three years 1996, 1997 and 1998 together the performance of girls is below the national average whilst that of boys is average.

97. The findings of the inspection are that, by the age of seven, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations in speaking and listening, and in reading. Standards in writing are above average. Most pupils listen carefully and make suitable responses and many higher attainers show confidence when speaking about their own interests. They share their news and recall happy and sad events in their lives. For example, one pupil spoke of dad's birthday and another had to report the death of a hamster. They are keen to give information about contents pages, explain about page numbers and share their enjoyment of rhymes.

98. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils read simple passages of writing with accuracy and express opinions concerning major events in stories. Higher attainers are particularly good at working out difficult words from the meaning in the sentence and show a high degree of maturity when discussing their personal preferences in reading material. A significant proportion of pupils read a range of texts with fluency and expression. Key skills in reading and writing are carefully interwoven and pupils identify how the writing is well structured when they read stories with the teachers. Good use is made of the planning process to identify place, time, characters and the sequence of a story. In a big book called 'You can't park an elephant in a car park', pupils showed skills in picking out examples of speech in the writing, detected the 'nonsense' elements, identified rhymes and focused on words which included 'ar' in them to add to their collection during the week.

99. By the age of seven, pupils begin to produce imaginative, organised, clear writing. Skills in writing are well developed and are above average. The range of writing is extensive and pupils use apt and interesting vocabulary. They produce story sequences about Elmer the elephant, write thank you letters and produce written commands for a programmable robot. Pupils understand the conventions of sentences and recognise punctuation marks. They usually apply these correctly, choose words for variety and interest and spell common words accurately. Spelling strategies are carefully taught to enable pupils to recognise common principles. Punctuation of sentences is accurate and some pupils are aware of paragraphs.

100. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 attaining good levels in language and literacy. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. In Year 1, pupils begin to pick out words such as 'who's' when reading the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff and start to predict what will happen. When writing, the output is sometimes too small and there is often inadequate intervention from teachers to show pupils how to correct the common spelling mistakes which they continue to make. By Year 2, pupils talk about authors and illustrators with assurance and form opinions about the types of poetry, which they like. There is evident progress in improving the accuracy of their work, for example, when they write stories about lazy farmers, give lists of items and analyse story structure. By Years 3 and 4,

pupils are adept at drafting an instruction sheet such as might be produced in order to play a game and higher attainers learn how to take notes when they carry out interviews. Even lower attaining pupils can explain how some words change when 'ing' is added. The particularly high standard of teaching in the higher and lower attaining sets for these year groups has a significant effect on progress. Progress is consistently good in Years 5 and 6. Pupils continue to develop their analytical skills, for example, when considering how advertisements are written and their effects, looking at the construction of sentences and how clauses and phrases have an impact. Good chances exist for pupils to be involved in drama and to use the library. In Key Stage 2, the work is particularly well matched to pupils' needs; teachers have high expectations and set challenging, but achievable targets to which the pupils rise. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2. Those in the Aspen Unit make very good progress because of the close attention that they receive and the particularly high standard of teaching. Throughout the school, where work sheets are used, these are kept in folders and are not well organised, or dated. It is difficult for teachers to assess the progress which pupils make or for pupils to refer back to previous difficulties or learning points.

101. Writing is well used to support recording in other subjects. The use of literacy across the curriculum is good in both key stages. Most teachers provide many good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills. For example, pupils write lists, notes, complete charts, give scientific accounts, write descriptions of events in history, imagine that they are writing a front page newspaper report on Guy Fawkes and consider the plight of the Marie Celeste. When studying the Victorians, they research into famous people of the time and also read about social conditions. The breadth of work enables pupils to devise a dog's passport, write about forms of electricity and what it is like to live in the Alps.

102. Pupils respond well to the experiences offered and behaviour is good. They are receptive to the learning experiences offered especially when the teaching is thoughtful and imaginative. At both key stages, pupils have positive attitudes and show maturity in their capability to persevere with tasks. They relate well to each other and enjoy the responsibility of working in pairs as was seen when pupils in Year 3 and 4 pretended that they were journalists and had to carry out interviews, make notes and consider the main points of their report. Older pupils know how to plan their work and concentrate very well when producing extensive writing. They show a strong sense of purpose when carrying out research and seeking information. All pupils are willing to share their ideas with visitors and with each other. They listen attentively and give support to fellow members of the class when they share their work. The previous inspection found that, although pupils settled down and concentrated on their work, they paid insufficient attention to handwriting and spelling and this spoiled the presentation of their work. A good focus on handwriting, linked to teachers' expectations, has greatly improved the quality of work produced. Some of the work seen at the end of Key Stage 2 was of a very high quality.

103. The quality of teaching is the same as the rate of progress which pupils make. It is very good in Key Stage 2 and is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 although there are examples of good features where expectations are particularly high and the lesson content is full and challenging. At the beginning of Key Stage 1, some of the work is similar to that already being achieved in the Reception classes and indicate that teachers are not always fully aware of what pupils can already do. Similarly, the marking of work is not always rigorous and pupils are not clear about the mistakes which they make. The previous inspection findings were that the quality of teaching was sound in Key Stage 1 and in a significant minority of lessons, it was good. In this inspection, good teaching in Key Stage 1 was seen when pupils read a big book with the teacher about sliding down a rainbow and went on to write a class poem after they had had a discussion. Knowledge was conveyed thoroughly, a good challenge was set for all pupils, no chance was missed to enable pupils to practise their reading skills and there was a comprehensive evaluation of what had been learned. Where teaching is satisfactory in both key stages, there is sometimes a lack of pace and the methods used are not always suitable for the capabilities of the pupils. At Key Stage 2 the previous report indicated that most teaching was sound or better but there was unsatisfactory teaching in a minority of lessons. Shortcomings related to unclear learning outcomes and a failure to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. These have been well addressed and the arrangements to teach pupils groups based on their attainment in Key Stage 2 enable them to work at the appropriate pace. Teachers are now well prepared for the differing needs of pupils. The literacy hour is planned in detail and learning outcomes are clearly defined for whole-class sessions and for the ensuing groups. The greatest strengths of the teaching of the English are the depth at which teachers

teach skills and conventions and the quality of questioning which occurs to assess what pupils have learnt. Thorough marking in Key Stage 2 challenges pupils to correct their work and extend their ideas. Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide stimulating imaginative tasks with good reference to the wide range of capability, both in the school and in the Aspen Unit.

104. The teaching of English meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. In addition to the literacy hour, the timetable includes sessions on extended writing and drama. The National Literacy Strategy has been very successfully implemented and good opportunities are given across the curriculum for pupils to apply their literacy skills. For example, the framework of the National Literacy Strategy provides an effective scheme of work and details how pupils will build on their experiences from day to day. In some instances, the follow up group work does not easily relate to the good introduction and for some of the lower attaining pupils, this leads to some confusion at times. Planning takes place regularly and there is a good format in use throughout the school. Additional policies and schemes provide useful information for the teaching of drama, handwriting and library skills. The setting of pupils in Key Stage 2 by attainment enables the work to be well matched to individual needs and there is an ethos of achievement in all the sets. Lower attainers are very productively challenged and there is time for consolidation and reinforcement of key skills. Skilful teachers teach these sets particularly well.

105. There are two English co-ordinators who have recently assumed the responsibility. The previous co-ordinator has evidently worked hard to implement the strategies which are now in place. Staff have been well supported. Monitoring and evaluation of the literacy hour have been carried out and the school has been effective in improving the English curriculum by broadening the range of creative writing. The school development plan indicates that the school has fully addressed the deficiencies outlined in the previous inspection report. Schemes of work are now in place to cover all aspects of English. Assessment is well used to guide the planning and there are effective procedures in place in order to record progress. The school has rigorously analysed deficiencies in the end of key stage national tests to help pupils to improve. Resources are adequate and there are good resources in use for guided and shared reading and writing. The library is suitably stocked and older pupils successfully take a part in running it. Pupils of all ages enjoy using it both informally and in class lessons. Book corners in classrooms are not extensive and, in some classes, offer only a limited source of reading material. The school acknowledges that this is a resource area which is due for development. Similarly, some of the reading schemes do not offer a breadth of challenge and there are restrictions when pupils are discouraged from moving up to the next band of difficulty although they may well be capable. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils encounter the work of different authors and poets, learn to express their feelings in writing, share their work with others and read about moral issues such as conservation and pollution during their research projects.

## **Mathematics**

106. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for Whitfield school and Aspen Unit for 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, standards were average in mathematics and that, compared with similar schools, standards were above average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in mathematics was at the level of the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was above the national average.

107. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by the school in 1996, 1997 and 1998, they show an improving trend in standards. The combined data for 1996, 1997 and 1998 show that the attainment of boys is close to the national average for the period in mathematics whilst that of girls is above the national average.

108. The findings of the inspection show that, by the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are on course to attain above average standards. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection and reflects the above average standards achieved by the school in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests. Nearly all pupils in Year 6 make good progress, as do pupils with special educational needs in the school and in the Aspen Unit, who attain suitable standards for their abilities. Most pupils, by the age of 11, are developing their own strategies for problem solving (doubling and halving numbers) and can

describe situations mathematically using words such as factor and multiple. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to formulate a general statement when problem solving, based on what they have found out. In work on number, pupils of average attainment can calculate simple fractions and percentages mentally, and higher attaining pupils can deal with more complex situations. They can use pencil and paper methods for long multiplication and division. When drawing two-dimensional shapes, for example, a pentagon, they use a protractor to measure and draw angles to the nearest degree and can construct and interpret simple line graphs. Information technology is used effectively to display graphical information and pupils explain their conclusions.

109. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 1 tests for 1999 for Whitfield school and the Aspen Unit shows that, in mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was well below the national average. The percentage attaining Level 3 and above in mathematics was well above the national average.

110. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards are below average in mathematics. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with those of similar schools, they show that standards are average in mathematics.

111. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results in mathematics for 1999 are compared with 1996, 1997 and 1998, they show a downward trend in standards. Taking the three years 1996, 1997 and 1998 together, the performance of boys and girls is well below the national average.

112. The findings of the inspection show that most pupils are on course to attain standards which are average at the end of Key Stage 1. This judgement is similar to that of the previous inspection and closely reflects the average standards of the school's results in 1999. Most pupils in Year 2 can discuss their own work using mathematical language, for example, the names of two-dimensional shapes. They are able to use the computer to investigate number patterns, when counting on in twos or fives. Pupils choose the appropriate method for dealing with addition and subtraction problems and are beginning to understand multiplication. They measure by using hand-spans and strides and higher attaining pupils use a metre stick. When sorting objects, such as three-dimensional shapes, they are able to classify them in different ways, by taking account of the faces or the number of corners.

113. From average levels of attainment on entering Key Stage 1, pupils mostly make good progress as they move through the school. They are effectively supported by good quality teaching and sometimes, at the end of the key stages, very good teaching. Target setting is well established and there is a good emphasis on mental calculation in lessons. Assessment information is used well to plan the work within lessons and to match it to pupils' individual needs. Good progress can be exemplified by pupils' work in Attainment Target 3 on shape, space and measures. In Year 1, they measure by comparing the length of objects placed side by side and, by Year 2, are beginning to use metric units. Pupils use standard metric units in practical situations in Year 4, and estimate, for example, to the nearest whole or half centimetre. In Year 5, they measure area in square centimetres and in Year 6, they are able to measure volume in cubic centimetres, and angles in degrees. Except where there are weaknesses in teaching, most groups of pupils progress well, including pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress towards their targets, and pupils in the Aspen Unit, who make very good progress for their abilities.

114. Throughout the school, most pupils respond well in mathematics lessons. They show interest in their work and are eager to learn as demonstrated by pupils in Year 4 who were very keen to start a calculator activity. Pupils participate well in question and answer sessions and maintain good levels of concentration throughout lessons. Pupils are developing their capacity for personal study and are beginning to use mental strategies to support their learning. By Year 6, pupils show curiosity when investigating number patterns, questioning their results and then probing further. Standards of behaviour are good and pupils show respect for property by tidying up and putting things away. They co-operate effectively with practical tasks and work well in pairs, discussing and listening to their partner's explanations attentively. They show considerable sensitivity and respect for other people's feelings, for example, to visitors who are disabled and pupils with special educational needs, who require more thinking time before they respond to a question. There was only one occasion when the pupils' response in a lesson was unsatisfactory and this was related to the quality of teaching. Pupils were unsure what to do, with the result that their concentration waned and motivation fell short of that

seen in other classes. In the Aspen Unit, pupils respond well. They show obvious enjoyment in the tasks provided and the majority of the pupils sustain concentration well. Pupils are well behaved and courteous. They demonstrate good relationships with all staff and with each other.

115. The quality of teaching is mostly good. In a small number of lessons, at both key stages there are shortcomings. In the lessons where teaching is good, and sometimes very good, this can be exemplified by the way teachers demonstrate expertise in the aspect and the age group being taught. For example, in Key Stage 1, they provide stimulating and exciting practical work and in Key Stage 2, relate examples to real-life situations that pupils understand. Teachers' planning is good, and provides high but appropriate challenges. Learning objectives are clear, tasks meet the needs of all abilities, including higher attaining pupils and the weekly plans enhance progress. Teaching methods promote good understanding and classroom assistants are used effectively to support groups, including pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are helped to understand a range of mental strategies and plenary sessions enable them to develop their skills and knowledge further. Standards of discipline ensure that all pupils are attentive and spend much of their time working and learning. Day-to-day assessment is good. Teachers assess the level of pupils' understanding and readjust their teaching programmes. The use of individual targets and homework is put to good effect to improve standards. In year groups where homework is not formally set, it is available for those who request it. In lessons where the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers are insufficiently in tune with either the needs of the age group or with pupils' abilities. The challenge can be too high for most pupils, or limiting for higher attaining pupils when the whole class has the same worksheet. Occasionally, formal methods of recording take place too soon and plenary sessions are not used effectively to deal with pupils' misunderstandings. In some classes, standards of discipline can be lax, allowing too much chattering so that pupils do not apply themselves adequately, or over-zealous with the result that progress is confined to waiting for step-by-step instructions.

116. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum but investigative work, although good in Years 5 and 6, is more limited in other year groups. The policy provides clear information for a consistent approach to teaching and an update is planned to take account of new initiatives. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented and the setting arrangements provide an effective approach to meeting the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment. From scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display, it is evident that they use and apply mathematics well in other curricular areas. For example, in geography, different scales and co-ordinates are used and in art, pattern and symmetry are investigated. Shortcomings relate to overuse of worksheets which, in some instances, are not filed in sequential order and work that is not marked. The school's marking policy does not include reference to mathematics thus a consistent approach is not adopted. The assessment programme in place is very good and is clearly aimed at raising standards. It includes standardised testing in addition to the national testing at the end of key stages. Detailed analysis takes place, which is used well to inform setting arrangements and to track progress over time. There are shortcomings in the speed with which some assessment information is used. The time lag is too long between testing and making known the outcome so that curricular provision is accurately focused on pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Pupils' annual reports are informative and identify future learning targets. In the absence of the mathematics co-ordinator, another member of staff is overseeing the subject. Strengths include the focus on monitoring – all teaching has been observed, teachers' planning is checked and pupils' books are scrutinised. This has informed teaching and has led to further work, for example on division and fractions. The subject has very clear leadership. Standards, although different between the two key stages, are improving, effectively guided by very good assessment and relevant curricular provision.

#### 118. **Science**

117. Analysis of the 1999 national end of Key Stage 2 tests for Whitfield school and Aspen Unit shows that, compared with all schools, standards were average in science. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in science.

118. In 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in science was at the level of the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was above the national average.

119. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by the school in 1996, 1997 and 1998, they show an improving trend in standards. The combined data for 1996, 1997 and 1998 show that the attainment of boys is close to the national average for the period in science whilst that of girls is above the national average.

120. The findings of the inspection are that, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards above the level of national expectation. This is an improvement since the last inspection, and is in keeping with the national test results for 1999. By the age of eleven, pupils understand the concept of a fair test, and have improved their investigative skills. For example, pupils have visited a sports centre where they were able to use a range of electronic equipment to test and record their findings, such as heart rates, and speed in sprint tests. In some extended work on seals, they recorded the types of seal, what they eat, habitats, and details of their teeth and fur. Pupils in Year 6 have recorded, on a large chart, the changes they have noted in various materials, such as wax, plastic, glass, and steel. They record what they have found, such as whether it will melt, float, is strong, or translucent. Pupils have conducted experiments to see whether sound will pass through cloth, felt, glass or brick.

121. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 assessments by teachers in science, standards were well below average at Level 2 and above and average at Level 3 and above. The findings of the inspection are that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 attain standards at the level of the national expectation. This is in line with the school's last inspection findings, and is in broad agreement with the end of key stage assessments by teachers in 1999. By the age of seven, pupils are beginning to understand how to undertake a fair test. For example, in Year 2, when testing model cars down a ramp, they understood that both must be just released, not pushed. They are aware of the basic conditions that plants need to survive, and they have observed and written about various textiles and materials, understand a simple electrical circuit and are familiar with its positive and negative terminals.

122. Pupils in both key stages make good progress. At Key Stage 1, they are beginning to be able to predict what will happen in an experiment. From their observations, their knowledge of materials improves, and they are able to describe the properties of various kinds of paper. They are learning what materials are magnetic, and can name the major parts of the human form. At Key Stage 2, pupils are able to follow water through various stages, including condensation and evaporation. They understand about freezing, steam, and vapour, and generally complete work about solids, liquids, and gases successfully. Pupils in Year 6 were seen using the Internet very successfully to gather information about nutrition. Pupils who have special educational needs also make good progress towards their own targets. Progress is good because teachers, especially in the ends of key stage classes, present a high level of challenge, which motivates pupils well.

123. Pupils throughout the school respond well to science. They show interest, and work well with sustained enthusiasm. They display initiative in their work such as the very good level of research on seals, or the use of the website on nutrition. Pupils listen attentively and they are confident in expressing their own ideas and findings. They respect other pupils' views, and they respect their teachers.

124. The quality of teaching is, overall, good. This represents some improvement since the last inspection report, where it was reported to be sound. Lessons in general are well planned, and teachers make good use of the resources available. The visit to the sports centre was particularly good as pupils had many opportunities to learn about, and apply, sports science. Pupils are well managed, and receive clear explanations from most teachers, which indicates good knowledge of the subject and high expectations. In one or two classes, the challenge was not sufficient, although there was very high challenge in other classes. The methods used by teachers match the needs of the curriculum well, and they use the time appropriately. There is good use of assessment information to guide further work. However, although there is a very good form for recording scientific experiments included in the documents, it was not seen in use in any of the work scrutiny or classes observed. The general pace of lessons and the high level of challenge in Years 2 and 6 have a good effect on pupils' attainment and progress.

125. The subject is well managed by an experienced co-ordinator. The curriculum has recently changed to use the nationally approved guidelines for science. This has been well managed, and appropriate resources have been provided for the new schemes of work. There is no time for the co-ordinator to



observe lessons or monitor teaching, but teachers' planning and pupils' work are both monitored. The development plan includes lesson observation for science. Assessment follows the nationally accepted guidelines, but analysis of the national tests is not fully used to target areas for improvement. Good use is made of information technology in science, particularly in Year 6 where pupils very confidently use the Internet as a resource. Science makes a good contribution to numeracy and literacy, when pupils analyse data and record on graphs, and complete extended writing after their research. Overall, there has been improvement since the last inspection in pupils' attainment, in teaching overall, and in resources. The teaching of the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## 127. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### 127. Information technology

126. Most pupils are on course to attain standards which are above the level of the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous OFSTED inspection. By the age of 11, pupils show particular strengths in the way they combine different forms of information technology. They can word-process their work and can combine text and graphics, so that it is well presented and engages other people's interest. This was evident in work on Halloween where pupils had created suitable backgrounds, used different type formats and added silhouettes for impact. Pupils use the Internet effectively to look for information relevant to their topic work. They can organise their work, make improvements to previous examples and present it using various styles. For example, pupils were able to import pictures, such as dolphins, from web sites. They could enlarge and reposition them, cut and paste pictures into text documents, add colourful titles and overlay them with speech bubbles for added interest. Pupils also use computers for design and technology to control events, such as switching lights and buzzers on and off. This requires complex procedures involving long sequences of instructions. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are at the level of the national expectation. Most pupils can communicate in different ways for example, they can use text, tables and pictures. When word-processing their work, they know how to use both upper and lower case letters and can choose different colours for their typing. They are able to draw pictures and can explore information held on the Internet which, with help, they are able to store on disk. Pupils in Year 2 can use a floor robot and can control it, by simple programming, to move forward and land on even numbers on a number grid.

127. Pupils in Key Stage 1, and pupils throughout the school with special educational needs, make good progress. As pupils move into Key Stage 2, their progress improves until, by the end of the key stage, the rate of progress is very good. For example, pupils progress from using a floor robot in Year 2, to using a program with a screen 'turtle' in Year 4. By writing procedures, which can require commands involving turning through angles, they control the 'turtle' on the computer screen to move in a particular way, such as drawing a mathematical shape. In Year 5, pupils combine text and graphics, use the spell checker and add to or amend earlier work. Many pupils in Year 6 show confidence in what they can do and use a wide range of knowledge and skills to refine their work. A pupil in the Aspen Unit clearly understood what he was trying to achieve and made very good progress sorting and matching pictures accurately to complete different jig-saws.

128. Pupils demonstrate a good response at Key Stage 1 and, at Key Stage 2, a very good response. Throughout the school, pupils sustain their concentration. They work together well and collaborate effectively in pairs. Behaviour is consistently good. At Key Stage 2, pupils show considerable interest in their work. They are very eager to demonstrate what they can do and to discuss their work and how it is progressing. Their capacity for personal study is developing very well. They compare the use of information technology with alternative methods, can improve their work without assistance and, in the Aspen Unit, are eager to use free time to continue their work. Pupils form constructive relationships when working together by suggesting ideas. When they are unable to solve problems the first time around, for example, when programming events to control light switches, they continue to show involvement and high levels of perseverance as they tussle to overcome them.

129. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. It is clear that the quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teachers who were observed demonstrated confidence and a clear understanding of the aspect they were teaching. A small number of

teachers have very good expertise. Throughout the school, high but appropriate challenges are set for pupils, including for pupils with special educational needs in the school and in the Aspen Unit, and for pupils of higher attainment. In the lessons that included the use of information technology, teachers' planning, teaching methods and standards of discipline were good. Resources are very well used at the end of both key stages and are mostly used well in the rest of the school. A few teachers miss opportunities to use the computer on a regular basis. Interaction with pupils and intervention in their learning to assess on-going progress are mostly good. It is very good at the end of key stages.

130. The work done by the school to improve this subject area has effectively addressed one of the key issues from the last inspection. A wide range of different aspects is represented and there is a good policy, a clear scheme of work and very good resources in place. The time allocation for the subject is appropriate and additional time is spent using computers in classes where more opportunities are identified. Although the policy recommends the use of records to log assessment information and provides the necessary guidance, they are not used consistently. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development, through paired activities and collaborative learning, and to their cultural development, when using the Internet to seek information. The co-ordinator provides very effective leadership. Plans to develop the subject have been very well implemented and evaluated and future targets and priorities are effectively channelled. A clear oversight is kept of the subject through regular monitoring but this does not ensure that all teachers maintain regular use of information technology in their class. The spirit in which the subject is taught reflects many of the school's aims – maximising each child's potential, encouraging positive attitudes and enhancing working relationships with parents and the wider community. The parent-teacher association has helped the school to obtain sufficient supermarket vouchers to provide more computers and a parent governor is closely involved with oversight of the subject. The subject now meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

132.

### **Religious education**

131. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. By the age of 11, pupils are beginning to add more depth to their understanding, and they are able to make some cross-references to the old and new testaments. For example, in Year 6, when studying the story of the Good Samaritan, pupils referred back to the law of Moses about neighbours. They look in more detail at some familiar stories, and begin to apply some of the ideas to modern, everyday life. When they studied the parable of the lost coin, they went on to talk about things that they would not like to lose, and how they might feel if they did. They have put the new testament into a time chart and added maps of the land in the time of Jesus. When pupils reach the age of seven, they understand and talk about feelings such as happy or sad, and they can describe how they or others might feel. They listen to Bible stories such as Zacchaeus, the four friends, and the stories of Moses. They have heard the story of Rama and Sita and they connect it to the festival of Divali. Pupils have widened their work to include special people who have been influenced by their belief, such as Florence Nightingale studied by Year 2.

132. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They are building up their knowledge of stories and adding some learning about other faiths. They move from simple stories in Key Stage 1 to a deeper examination of their meaning in Key Stage 2. For example, Year 6 wrote about parables, what they are and what they teach. They went on to write about the lost son and how it teaches Christian ideas of love and forgiveness. Pupils understand that sacred writings are a common feature in most religions and are learning that much of the old testament is common to Judaism as well as Christianity.

133. Pupils show respect for other people's views and take a satisfactory level of interest in their work. They largely behave acceptably in lessons, and where they do not, there is insufficient challenge, especially in the written work. Generally, pupils concentrate and persevere with their work satisfactorily.

134. The quality of teaching is, overall, sound. Teachers generally have secure knowledge of the subject, and planning is satisfactory. Teachers' expectations vary, but most are satisfactory. Where they lose some pace, it is usually in the written task offered to pupils. Some higher attaining pupils

were reduced to colouring because they had finished their writing quickly. Control is usually satisfactory, but is less so in one or two classes where pupils became bored with their work. Time and resources are used appropriately and teachers generally start lessons with a story or re-capitulation of previous work, followed by written tasks.

135. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Although teachers discuss the pupils' work with them, there is no consistent way of assessing and recording what pupils know and can do. The curriculum is well planned and is in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. There is no opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching, although planning, and some of the pupils' work are seen. The leadership of the subject is sound, and the schemes of work adequately reflect the Programmes of Study from the Agreed Syllabus. In general, the standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. From the scrutiny of pupils' work, Key Stage 2 has improved and some good presentations were seen in pupils' books, such as the extended writing about what makes a good friend. Resources have also been improved since the last report and they are now good.

### 137. **Art**

136. Only two lessons were observed during the course of the inspection. Evidence was also obtained from discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their work on display, in sketch books and in folders. This shows that standards are average for the pupils' ages at both key stages. By the age of 11, pupils confidently express ideas when recording and are able to use increasing accuracy and attention to detail in their work, experimenting with various materials and techniques. For example, when drawing geometric shapes, they define shape and form using charcoal and chalk. When painting, pupils use their knowledge of colour mixing to record landscapes with a wide range of greens and blues. Scrutiny of work demonstrates that they have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of artists' work, which they can apply to their own. Pupils in Year 2 recognise differences in approaches and methods, and recognise pictures from a collection. They know about the artist Matisse and are able to describe specific features of his work and his use of colour. When investigating and making things, pupils know which are the primary colours and can mix and name the secondary ones. They follow instructions carefully when mixing and carefully paint within guide lines to make colour wheels. Pupils also use information technology in their work. They use the mouse with fine control to draw details and use options effectively to fill in the background or change colour.

137. Progress is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1. Pupils are mostly engaged in suitable activities for their age but, occasionally, tasks do not provide a suitable challenge. In group work, some tasks are too easy or resources are inadequate. For example, when plasticine is brittle and crumbly in texture pupils cannot develop appropriate standards or improve on what they are doing. On other occasions, very good progress is made, effectively supported by direct teaching. This enables pupils to improve their skills and knowledge, and they spend an optimum amount of time on task being challenged and motivated to succeed. Pupils with special educational needs make mostly good progress, including pupils in the Aspen unit, who attain suitable standards for their abilities. In Key Stage 2, progress is mostly good, with work of a consistently high standard. Pupils use increasing accuracy and attention to detail in Year 3 and produce good quality sponge-prints in the style of Mondrian. In Year 4, they identify the Mona Lisa and have a good understanding of the style of Picasso during his cubist period. Pupils know about different styles and use specific vocabulary to describe whether a painting is realistic or abstract. By Year 5, pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of what is required and have the necessary skills to apply them to demanding but achievable tasks. Their progress in the development of colour mixing, from secondary to tertiary colours is very good, and they demonstrate great sensitivity and accuracy in many of their tasks. For example, work in the style of William Morris was sensitive to the Victorian era and good colour mixing produced earthy tones, sage green and blue-mauves, reminiscent of his work.

138. Pupils respond well at both key stages. They are eager and interested in their work. Pupils watch intently when being taught a skill and sustain their concentration, becoming completely engrossed with their tasks. They are well behaved and are keen to explain what they are required to do, sometimes demonstrating skills they are developing. As pupils mature, they willingly give their own opinions, and explain their likes and dislikes. They are enthusiastic about developing their own ideas while also showing interest in other pupils' work.

139. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. There are both strengths and weaknesses. Strengths include very well prepared resources, some lesson plans that are detailed and the use of good examples to help pupils to understand. There is very good interaction with groups by both the teacher and the classroom assistant. Essential skills are taught, such as how to hold a brush, and how to paint within guidelines. This has a good effect on pupils' control and co-ordination. Weaknesses include the lack of an appropriate challenge for more than half the class. Tasks are not adequately focused on the Programmes of Study and lack direction. Control and methods are unsatisfactory. Not all pupils' attention is gained and appropriate codes of behaviour are not maintained. Lesson planning lacks sufficient detail and medium term plans are too brief. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good. Lesson plans are clear and they fit well into the medium term planning. Good, open discussion allows pupils to put forward their own ideas whilst well directed teaching points draws pupils' attention to details. Good control ensures that pupils remain attentive throughout. Demonstrations by teachers aid understanding and a broad range of experiences ensure good skill development. There are good links with mathematics and pupils' cultural development.

140. The policy is out-of-date and lacks many essential elements. In particular, it does not outline how art can make an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development, nor does it include details for assessment and record keeping. The scheme of work is sound and builds progressively for different elements. However, it has shortcomings, as the programme does not make provision for mixed age classes when pupils move on to the next class. A smooth step-by-step progression is not assured at this transitional point. Medium term and short term planning is mostly clear and appropriate but there are some weaknesses in Key Stage 1 as already outlined. The subject has two co-ordinators. They have a clear understanding of the subject and the needs of the school but their monitoring role is under developed. There is some variability in teachers' confidence and their range of knowledge, which is balanced out by staff who have very good expertise.

142.

#### **Design and technology**

141. At Key Stage 2, standards are above average for the age of the pupils. At Key Stage 1, the standards achieved are average for the pupils' ages. These findings represent significant improvements since the last inspection when the achievement seen in both key stages was limited in breadth and standards were below expectations. By the age of 11, pupils design a ski resort village and include an electrical component. They make changes to models as they test them, for example, by adding more 'grip' on cans which are used as wheels for a snowplough. They know how to incorporate moving components by connecting their models to batteries, for example, when they make a model ski lift and create a flashing light. Pupils know how to test outcomes, change procedures and retest products for improvements. They apply finishing techniques well, use a variety of materials, tools and processes safely and show increasing precision and control. Pupils in the Aspen Unit explore materials and how to join them when they construct vehicles and learn to make stained glass window mobiles. By the age of seven, pupils design and make, and apply their experience of using materials, techniques and products to generate ideas. They use models and pictures to develop and communicate their designs. Many are able to select from a range of materials, tools and techniques, explain their choices, manipulate tools safely and assemble and join materials in simple ways. Higher attainers make judgements about the outcomes of their work and begin to make revisions to their models. Year 2 pupils make a street of houses and shops, by using box buildings, design, label and list the materials needed and use construction kits to make moving vehicles.

142. At Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress and, at Key Stage 2, it is good. This is an improvement on the last inspection when progress was limited. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils in the Aspen Unit make good progress. In Year 1, pupils begin by drawing a design for a musical instrument and develop their skills from the Reception class when they cut, stick, roll and fold paper and card. Their progress is good when they apply their skills, experiment with joining different types of materials and learn specific techniques. Pupils continue to build on their knowledge and experience in Year 2 when they use split pins and make pop-up cards. Year 3 pupils develop their expertise well when they design a toy for a baby or a young child, such as a tellytubby, a beanie baby, or a 'flannel fish'. They know how to join fabrics by stitching and produce detailed evaluations of their work. Some cross-curricular work also

engages the pupils in design and technology projects. For example, they produce designs for weather symbols and a Roman temple and make 'Thor's' hammer from clay. Progress is slower in Year 3, however, when there is insufficient direction from the teacher. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils consolidate their skills and begin to consider the appearance, function and safety of their products in greater depth, when they develop their ideas. Very good progress occurs when pupils produce designs for Christmas cards, learn about cross-stitch samplers and use information technology to control lights and buzzers. They develop skills in cutting materials with greater accuracy, learn how to apply finishing techniques and carry out product evaluation, for example, when they examine cereal packets, make sleighs and design a theatre with a moving part.

143. The response of pupils is good. They are keen and willing to talk about their models and some of the projects involve pupils in collaborating together. Pupils are pleasant and courteous when discussing their work and show maturity and confidence when revising their models and taking advice. Pupils persevere well when encountering difficulties, which sometimes arise when their designs are not easily translated into practice. In both the school and the unit, pupils are supportive of each other's efforts and are keen to see their friends succeed. They help one another with their work and share equipment sensibly.

144. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The previous inspection found that the quality of teaching was variable and this is still the case to small extent. Half the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 were very good but there was an element of unsatisfactory teaching. A high standard of teaching occurs where subject knowledge and expertise are evident, techniques are demonstrated well and pupils are encouraged to try out their own ideas within the constraints of the learning objectives. Shortcomings in teaching relate to a lack of helpful intervention and support for pupils, weak management of activities, brief planning and inappropriate expectations.

145. The curriculum is suitably planned to provide breadth and balance and to show how pupils will build on their skills as they move through the school. This is an improvement since the subject was under represented at the time of the previous inspection. A new scheme of work clearly sets out the designing and making skills, which had been deficient, with appropriate examples. The co-ordinator is conscientious but has major subject and management responsibilities in addition to design and technology. No time has been given for the monitoring of the subject. Teachers are gaining expertise in the subject and are willing to tackle the Programmes of Study. Resources are now adequate although storage space is limited which presents some limitations and there is a limited selection of wood. Some resources are supplemented by teachers themselves. The co-ordinator plans for each class to have a basic set of tools. Assessment and record keeping tend to be informal although there is much on-going assessment and feedback from teachers within lessons. The subject is enriched by events such as the 'Eggmobile' competition where pupils designed a product that would carry an egg. There are good links with other subjects across the curriculum and control technology, which involves the use of programmable robots

147.

### **Geography**

146. During the inspection, no teaching of geography was observed at Key Stage 1 due to timetabling factors. At Key Stage 2, two lessons were seen. Judgements are based on these lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' work and of teachers' planning and discussions. At Key Stage 2 and at Key Stage 1, the pupils attain average standards for their ages. These findings are similar to those of the school's last inspection that judged standards to be mainly sound. At Key Stage 2, the pupils show awareness of geological periods, a good understanding of rivers and sound mapping skills including an grasp of symbols and contour lines. They have a suitable knowledge of the local area and can identify features which make it an attractive area to live in. They show sound skills in finding and using information which they obtain from a variety of sources including books and information technology. At Key Stage 1, the pupils exhibit an early awareness of the purpose of maps and are starting to draw plans as maps, for example, of the classroom.

147. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at both key stages. For example, clear structured development of map work skills occurs. At Key Stage 1, the pupils build from understanding the purpose of a map to drawing a plan of a classroom and then plotting the layout of a room. At Key Stage 2, they develop their understanding of the use of symbols

and keys and use maps to locate, for example, settlements with a Viking place name, and to explain the location of Whitfield. By Year 6, the pupils can use an Ordnance Survey map with confidence, can give at least a four figure grid reference and understand and interpret contour lines.

148. The pupils make a satisfactory response to the teaching of geography at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 although their response is sometimes unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. In most cases, the pupils show interest in, and application to, their work, they co-operate well and work steadily once they have settled to their task. The quality of relationships is good and the way pupils from the Aspen Unit are welcomed into classes is very good. Where response is unsatisfactory, the pupils are slow to settle to their work, they are too noisy and they lack the application to produce sufficient work of a suitable quality.

149. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages although it varies from satisfactory to poor at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, the pupils' work shows that the teaching of map skills is suitably structured and promotes appropriate progress. The pupils produce an adequate amount of reasonably presented work. However, as this subject is taught as part of a topic, it is difficult to ensure that all aspects of it are covered in sufficient depth. A lesson about the location of Whitfield illustrated the strengths of the teaching in geography at Key Stage 2. In this lesson, the teacher made good use of pertinent questions to help the pupils to express and clarify their ideas and useful discussion took place to develop ideas further. The teacher kept the pace of lesson moving at a suitable speed and there was good application of literacy skills in the task that the pupils were set. The teacher showed secure understanding of the subject and made good use of the pupils' interest and knowledge of the area in which they live.

150. Weaknesses observed in teaching include a slow pace to lessons, giving pupils of all abilities the same work which is often undemanding for the higher attaining pupils, and shortcomings in the management and control of the pupils which give rise to an unsatisfactory response from them. In addition, the marking of the pupils' work is not always done in a way that helps them to understand how they can improve it.

151. The subject is suitably managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Curricular provision is broad and balanced and is supported by a good policy for the subject and a sound scheme of work. Some interesting fieldwork, including measuring the speed of the flow of a river in various ways, further broadens the curriculum. The subject is sufficiently well resourced to support its teaching although there are problems with storage because of limited space. Information technology is suitably used in the teaching of geography. The co-ordinator has an action plan for the development of the subject which includes the revision of the scheme of work, monitoring classroom practice and enhancing resources. These areas, together with the improvement of assessment procedures, are appropriate priorities. The subject action plan is a useful guide for development but it is not sufficiently formalised or related well enough to the school development plan. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development as they study the geography of their own and other areas.

153.

### **History**

152. During the inspection, no teaching of history was observed at Key Stage 1 due to timetabling factors. At Key Stage 2, three lessons were observed. Judgements are based on these lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' work and of teachers' planning and discussions. At Key Stage 2, pupils attain above average standards for their ages and, at Key Stage 1, they attain average standards for their ages. These findings represent an improvement on the findings of the school's last inspection which judged standards to be sound throughout the school. At Key Stage 2, pupils show a good understanding of the life of poor children in Victorian times, are aware of some of the contributions which the Ancient Greeks made to modern society, show a good understanding of chronology and use a range of sources, including information technology, to ask and answer questions about the past. In Key Stage 1, the pupils are aware of important historical figures such as Guy Fawkes and can place pictures in the right order, for example, bicycles of different ages, starting with the oldest one.

153. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. As they move through the school, the pupils gain an increasing awareness of a number of historical periods and of the society and major events of those times. Their

research and recording skills also improve. The pupils' understanding of chronology develops from knowing the routines of the school day, to using common terms which show the passing of time, to sequencing events in the correct order and using terms such as 'ancient' and 'modern' to define periods and to denote the passing of time.

154. The pupils make a satisfactory response to the teaching of history at Key Stage 1 and a good response at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, they produce a satisfactory amount of work which is suitably presented. At Key Stage 2, the pupils show interest in the subject in the way they listen carefully, ask and answer questions and build on the contributions of others in class discussions. They co-operate well in group work and are well behaved.

155. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The limited evidence at Key Stage 1 indicated appropriate curricular coverage and sound expectations. However, the subject is taught as part of a topic approach and is not always taught in sufficient depth or at a demanding enough pace. At Key Stage 2, a lesson about Victorian Britain illustrated the strengths of the teaching. This lesson was well planned, it built on earlier work and its purpose and objectives were clearly explained to the pupils. A good discussion of the pupils' earlier work extended their understanding and the teacher's very lively and enthusiastic style captured and maintained the pupils' interest and enthusiasm and promoted a good atmosphere for learning. The teacher's good knowledge of the subject and of the things which would interest the pupils, allied to good control of the class and a range of interesting activities, including research for them to undertake, promoted good progress. The lesson was well linked to the development of literacy skills.

156. Weaknesses in satisfactory teaching include a failure to use the marking of pupils' work to enable them to improve, giving pupils of all levels of attainment the same work to do and weaknesses in the control and management of the pupils.

157. The subject is managed effectively by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Since the school's previous OFSTED inspection, a good subject policy and an appropriate scheme of work have been produced. Curricular provision in the subject is broad and balanced and includes educational visits, for example, to the White Cliffs Experience. Learning resources for the subject are adequate and, in some respects, good although their storage is a problem because of limited space. The co-ordinator has a subject development plan which details revisions and improvements to the scheme of work and improving arrangements for monitoring the subject. Both of these areas, along with the lack of whole-school agreed assessment procedures, are weaknesses. In addition, the subject action plan is not fully formalised and is not securely linked to the school development plan. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their study of these aspects of the lives of people of different times.

## **Music**

158. Standards are above average for the age of the pupils. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when the findings were that attainment was mainly in line with expectations but that there was underachievement amongst the older pupils as the subject was not taught in sufficient depth. Year 6 pupils perform accurately and confidently when singing songs. They know that sounds can be structured in different ways through duration, tempo and texture and enjoy adding specific effects to a traditional song from the eighteenth century, called 'Hangman'. They recognise rhythms that symbolise the 'blues' when played on a guitar, clap accurately and identify repeating bars. Many pupils can sight read notation when singing or when playing instruments. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sing songs and rounds and pay good attention to dynamics. They copy complex rhythms with accuracy when they play the game 'hot potato', compose and play simple pieces with percussion instruments to suggest an effect and respond to hand signals. They listen to music with concentration, pick out instruments and loud and soft passages and begin to recognise waltzes and marches.

159. Pupils, including those with special educational needs in the school and in the Aspen Unit, make good progress, especially at the end of the key stages. Year 1 pupils learn to identify particular phrases of a song when they hear the tune being played on a piano. They clap syllables, identify happy and sad

music and begin to describe the sounds of music which they hear, by using technical language. Skills in improving the quality of their singing are well developed in Key Stage 1 when pupils benefit from the expertise of the music co-ordinator when classes join together. The scheme for pupils in Key Stage 2 enables them to sing, compose, listen and appraise in contexts that they find enjoyable. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn to add a percussion accompaniment when they sing carols and they make good progress in developing their musical vocabularies. Progress accelerates when pupils are particularly well taught as occurred in a Year 5 class when pupils focused on composing, playing and recording 'call and response' rhythms and were helped to evaluate the work by the skilful intervention of the teacher.

160. Pupils in both key stages and in the Aspen unit make good responses. They are enthusiastic, well behaved and have positive attitudes. They form constructive relationships with teachers and other pupils and enjoy participating as performers. This was particularly apparent when younger pupils in the unit acted out songs and when older ones played different instruments in a box for others to recognise. All pupils in the school show good concentration skills, listen attentively and work well together. They are respectful of others' efforts and are consistently well behaved. When pupils from the Aspen Unit are integrated with those in the school, they are made welcome and are encouraged to be fully involved in the activities.

161. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Lessons are well managed and teachers have positive relationships with pupils. Very good teaching occurs at the end of Key Stage 1 and this reflects good knowledge of the subject, high expectations that are well communicated to pupils and imaginative approaches to promote musical understanding. For example, a puppet was used to help pupils to see how notes moved up and down, and to help pupils to determine high and low pitch. Strong teaching is linked to precise planning, which includes a range of musical elements, and good organisation and management. All teachers have positive relationships with pupils but, in the best lessons, there are high expectations and useful evaluations of the work which help pupils to improve their performance.

162. The curriculum is broad and balanced and a clear scheme of work is now in place to show how pupils are expected to make progress as they move through the school. Procedures for assessment are good and effective use is made of it to guide the direction of lessons and to inform future planning. Recent developments have involved the taping of whole-class and group work. Teachers make a good attempt to develop their own knowledge and expertise and have benefited from attendance at courses. The subject is enthusiastically led and managed and the co-ordinator has a very clear vision of how musical opportunities can be further developed across the school. Teachers demonstrate a breadth of musical skills and have the capacity to share their own enjoyment of the subject with the pupils.

163. There continues to be good provision for extra curricular activities. Several pupils receive good instrumental tuition in piano, keyboard and the violin from visiting specialists. Parents finance this provision. The recorder clubs, of which there are five, the school band and the choir, enable pupils to develop their musical expertise. Music is an important feature of the acts of collective worship and the school band and recorder groups make important contributions. Pupils are alerted to the identification of the composer of the piece of music that is playing as they enter the hall. The curriculum is enriched by musical productions during the school year. The infant pupils told of the origin of the carol 'Silent Night' and older pupils have put on shows entitled 'Blue Suede Shoes' and 'What a performance'. A saxophone choir from the local secondary school has given a performance and visiting musicians have introduced the pupils to medieval music. The school choir has broadcast on Radio Kent and has recently visited Dover to sing carols at the War Memorial. Pupils in the Aspen Unit also participate in carol singing and visited a local supermarket during the inspection. Visits have been made to retirement homes and the school has welcomed people from the Institute for the Blind to hear a musical performance. Resources are adequate and the school plans to build up a greater collection of ethnic instruments. There is insufficient storage space but teachers cope well with some aspects of inaccessibility. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils learn songs such as 'One little candle' which represent festivals of light as celebrated by Hanukkah and Divali, and have the chance to hear dance and instrumental music from around the world. They work together productively in groups as instrumentalists and composers, follow the lead from a fellow conductor and learn about music from different times and places.



## Physical education

164. During the inspection, games, gymnastics, dance and swimming were observed at Key Stage 2 and gymnastics, games skills and dance were seen at Key Stage 1. At both key stages, the pupils reach average standards for their ages which is the same judgement as that made by the school's previous OFSTED inspection. At Key Stage 2, the pupils show good balancing skills, create and develop varied dance sequences, show sound ball control skills when passing or receiving a football and understand the principles and common skills of attack/defence games such as football. Most pupils are able to swim 25 metres safely and unaided by the time that they leave the school. At Key Stage 1, the pupils throw and catch bean bags with suitable accuracy and skill, they vary height and speed appropriately when composing dance movements and travel successfully in varied ways on small apparatus.

165. The pupils, including those in the main school with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. Pupils from the Aspen Unit make very good progress due to the individual support which they receive. Progress was clearly evident in a swimming lesson observed. All of the pupils seen showed confidence in the water. The progress which had previously been made was evident in the organisation of the lesson into three groups of pupils based on what they could do. The attainment levels of these groups ranged from a need to use floats to assist the development of their swimming skills to a clear ability to swim confidently with a reasonable style using front and back strokes. At both key stages, the pupils' ability to evaluate their own and others' performance in order to improve it are under developed.

166. The pupils enjoy physical education and their response is good at both key stages. They are highly motivated, work hard and are eager to succeed and to do well. The pupils listen carefully to the teachers, follow their instructions well, show a secure understanding of the need to act safely and co-operate well with others. They behave well and show initiative in devising and modifying dance routines in response to the challenge set by the music.

167. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2 although there is some very good teaching at both key stages. In a satisfactory dance lesson at Key Stage 1, the pupils changed quickly and entered the hall on time in a quiet and orderly manner. The taped lesson was used appropriately by the teacher who gave some additional clarification and used pupils to demonstrate what was required. The teacher's control and management of the pupils were good. However, the pace of the lesson was slow, dance skills were not taught in sufficient depth and the challenge of the lesson was not fully exploited. A good games lesson at Key Stage 2 exemplified the strengths of the teaching at this key stages. This lesson proceeded at a good pace with well thought out warm up work which off set the cold weather. The pupils were appropriately dressed for games and the weather and resources were well organised. Football skills in terms of passing and trapping were consolidated and then extended by the teaching and practice of dribbling. The pupils then took part in small sided games and the lesson finished with appropriate cooling down work. Throughout the lesson, the teacher's control was firm but relaxed, the quality of relationships was very good and the pupils were well motivated.

168. The subject is successfully managed by a well qualified and experienced co-ordinator. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the statutory requirement to teach swimming at Key Stage 2 is met. The provision of learning resources effectively supports the teaching of the subject. The subject action plan is to revise the scheme of work and to implement a 'Top Sport' initiative in the school. These are good objectives although the action plan itself is not sufficiently formalised or well enough linked to the school development plan and it does not contain any reference to the further development of assessment procedures which are limited other than in swimming. The co-ordinator monitors the teachers' planning for the subject but does not have any non teaching time to observe and monitor lessons. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and moral development as they learn to work together as part of a team.

169. The school makes very good provision for extracurricular activities including the competitive games of netball, football, cricket, rounders and swimming according to season. A touch rugby club has been held in the past and is to be organised again in the future. Each activity is organised by a teacher who is normally supported by one or two other adult helpers. All sports take place for one hour weekly and are mainly for pupils in Years 5 and 6 although there is a rounders/cricket club for pupils in

Years 3 and 4. All clubs are open to boys and girls and around 30 pupils normally attend the sessions. The pupils regularly take part in competitive house matches in football, netball and potted sports. In 1998-99, Whitfield school were runners up in a local netball tournament, it has frequently reached the quarter final stage of the Dover area kwik cricket tournament, it reached the county finals in a touch rugby tournament and regularly enters competitive football events with some success.

171. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

172. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspection was carried out by a team of five inspectors who spent a total of 22 inspector days in the school. Time spent observing teaching, scrutinising the work of pupils and checking their attainment by working with them during the inspection - 103 hours. Eleven hours at Pre Key Stage 1, 23 hours at Key Stage 1, 18 hours in the Aspen Unit and 51 hours at Key Stage 2. In addition, a further 35 hours were spent on the other inspection activities listed below.

- .Ninety one lessons or parts of lessons were observed as were a number of registration periods, assemblies, playtimes, lunchtimes and extracurricular activities;
- .discussions were held with all teaching staff and some non-teaching staff;
- .many pupils were heard to read and were questioned about their mathematical knowledge and understanding;
- .three samples of pupils' work across the full range of ability in all year groups were inspected in addition to work examined during lessons;
- .all available school documentation was analysed;
- .attendance records, pupils' records kept by the school and teachers' planning documents were examined;
- .the budget figures were inspected;
- .discussions were held with pupils, parents and governors;
- .a parents' meeting was held and the views of the 14 parents at this meeting and those of the 88 families who responded to a questionnaire were taken into account.

### 173. DATA AND INDICATORS

#### 173. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	378	42	107	62

#### 173. Teachers and classes

##### Main school

#### 173. Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	28

##### Aspen Unit(YR - Year 6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	6.5

#### 173. Education support staff (YR – Y6)

##### Main school

Total number of education support staff:	9
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<b>Aspen Unit</b>	Total aggregate hours worked each week:	175
	Total number of education support staff:	14
	Total aggregate hours worked each week:	370
	Average class size: School/Aspen Unit	31/20

### 173. Financial data

#### Main school

Financial year:	1997/98
	£
Total Income	517131
Total Expenditure	499303
Expenditure per pupil	1536.32
Balance brought forward from previous year	18389
Balance carried forward to next year	36217

#### Aspen Unit

Financial year: 1997/98	1997/98
	£
Total Income	324634
Total Expenditure	322735
Expenditure per pupil	7171.89
Balance brought forward from previous year	11658
Balance carried forward to next year	13557

### 173. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 269  
 Number of questionnaires returned: 88

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	27	60	10	1	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	41	50	3	6	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	20	43	31	5	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	30	52	9	6	3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	28	51	8	7	6
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	34	47	15	3	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	36	44	13	7	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	32	45	11	7	5
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	41	46	10	2	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	44	42	12	2	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	60	35	3	1	1

### 173. Other issues raised by parents

Eighteen parents made additional comments on their questionnaires. The only strongly recurring theme was praise for the school and the Aspen Unit. A small number were unhappy about the consistency with which homework is provided and an equally small number were concerned about aspects of the pupils' behaviour.