

INSPECTION REPORT

**Charsfield Voluntary Controlled Primary
School**
Woodbridge

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique Reference Number: 124725

Inspection Number: 187283

Headteacher: Mr Michael Hayes

Reporting inspector: Susan Walker
21045

Dates of inspection: September 27 – 29 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707814

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
Type of control:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address	Charsfield Church Road Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 7QB
Telephone number:	01473 737347
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Richard Addington
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

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Christine Richardson Team Inspector	English Religious education Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs	Curriculum and assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Efficiency

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The school has a supportive and caring family atmosphere; every pupil is cherished.
- Relationships are excellent.
 - The behaviour of the pupils and their attitudes to learning are very good; they are considerate, polite and mature.
 - The school has very effective methods for promoting good behaviour and self-discipline.
 - The teaching is good or very good in over three-quarters of lessons and it is never less than satisfactory.
 - The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
 - The pastoral needs of the pupils are well met.
 - The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Curriculum documentation does not promote a whole-school approach to planning and assessment.
- I. The work of the school is not monitored systematically enough.
 - II. Educational priorities for the future are not made explicit in a clear development plan.
 - III. The governors are not involved enough in managing the school.

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be distributed to all parents.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has partially overcome the weaknesses raised as key issues for action from the previous inspection report, though curriculum documentation is still not fully developed. Further work still needs to be done to bring about a more cohesive, whole-school approach to planning and assessment. Planning of the curriculum has been improved and there are now policies for each subject, though not all provide enough guidance to support planning. Annual reports to parents have improved significantly and are now more detailed; most parents are happy with them. The school has been successful at maintaining its strengths, though standards in most subjects remain the same as they were at the time of the previous inspection. With the commitment of staff, increased involvement of the governing body and the continuing support of the local education authority the school is well placed to bring about further improvement.

Standards in subjects

Standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in the national tests are not reported as only seven pupils took the tests in 1999. In this school test results fluctuate considerably from year to year, owing not only to the varying levels of attainment of the pupils, but also to the very small year groups. They thus give an unreliable picture of attainment in the school as a whole. Evidence from work samples in the current and previous years indicate that most pupils are achieving standards that match and sometimes exceed those found nationally in English, mathematics and science. Results of national tests in 1999 show an improvement on those achieved in 1998, with a higher proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in all three subjects. In information

technology the majority of pupils achieve standards that exceed those found nationally and they use computers very competently to support their work in most subjects. Standards in religious education are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. In art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education pupils reach standards found typically in primary schools.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science		Satisfactory	Good
Information technology		None seen	Good
Religious education		Satisfactory	None seen
Other subjects	Good	Good	Good

The teaching is good or very good in about seven out of ten lessons and it is never less than satisfactory. In about one lesson in ten it is very good. A particular feature is the good use that is made of teachers' individual subject knowledge in information technology, science and art. This enables pupils to make sound and often good progress. Most lessons are well organised and well meet the needs of individual pupils.

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	Very good. Most pupils have mature attitudes to their work.
Attendance	Good. It is above the national average.
Ethos*	This is a strength of the school. The 'family' community is effective in promoting good learning habits, consideration for others and self-discipline. Relationships are excellent.
Leadership and management	The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory overall but governors are not sufficiently involved in decision-making. The management of the curriculum and monitoring the school's work rely too heavily on informal systems.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by additional features such as educational visits and French. Planning of the curriculum and assessment are sound but lack a common approach that is adopted by all staff.
Pupils with special educational needs	These pupils are integrated very well into the life of the school and they make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Spiritual and social development are both very good, moral development is good and cultural development is satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school is generously staffed. Teachers benefit from professional development and the effects are seen in the quality of teaching. Staff and pupils manage the constraints of the small building well.
Value for money	The school provides good value for money.

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

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

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
IV. The family atmosphere of a small school. V. The positive attitudes and values promoted by the school. VI. The way in which the school encourages more than daily lessons VII. Most are satisfied with the standards achieved.	VIII. Some parents would like to receive IX. Some parents are not happy with the

Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views of the school and upholds their concerns about the lack of a clear policy for homework and lack of information about the curriculum.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise standards and improve further the quality of education provided, the staff and governors should work together to:

- X. Continue with the development of curriculum documentation to bring about a more cohesive, whole-school approach to planning and assessment by:
 - (a) refining and improving medium-term plans and supplementing them with policy guidelines that will assist teachers more with their planning (see paragraphs 37, 40, 47, 103, 134);
 - (b) ensuring that all staff adopt similar procedures for planning and assessing work, and recording pupils' progress (see paragraphs 52, 60, 73, 78, 112, 126, 134).
- (●) Monitor systematically and regularly the work of the school (see paragraphs 71, 74, 75).
- (●) Prepare a school development plan that clearly sets out educational objectives for the future and the steps that will be taken to achieve them, taking into account the school budget implications, staff development implications, time-scales and how success will be measured (see paragraph 76).
- (●) Increase the level of involvement of governors in managing the school so that they contribute to determining future educational priorities, curriculum development, monitoring and financial planning (see paragraphs 66, 72, 84).

In addition to the key issues for action governors may wish to consider the following minor points for development for inclusion in their action plan:

- (●) improve communication with parents so they are better informed about what is being taught (see paragraph 69);
- (●) establish a consistent approach to homework and ensure it is conveyed clearly to parents (see paragraph 41);
- (●) improve the provision for multi-cultural awareness (see paragraph 59).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 Charsfield Voluntary Controlled School is a primary school taking pupils aged between four and eleven. It is much smaller than other primary schools with 49 pupils, compared with a national average figure of 242. The school is situated in a rural environment near to the market town of Woodbridge. Most of the pupils are drawn from the surrounding area, which comprises mainly privately owned housing, though a significant proportion of the pupils travel to the school from outlying areas. The percentage of pupils coming from homes with adults who have higher educational qualifications is more than double the national average. Many of the parents are in professional and managerial occupations. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Attendance figures in the school were about average in 1998.

2 Charsfield School offers part-time education for children under the age of five, following the policy of the local education authority. They attend for half days, usually mornings, until the term in which they become five, when they start full-time. At the time of the inspection seven children were still only four years old. They had been in school for only three weeks. Assessments made when children enter the school show a wide spread of attainment on entry. About half have advanced speech and social skills for their age. Most have attended nurseries prior to starting full-time education.

1 Pupils are taught in two mixed age classes; one with pupils in Reception and Year 1 and the other with pupils in Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. For most of the week the junior class is split between two teachers, which thus provides smaller teaching groups and a narrower age range.

2 Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin and none of them come from homes where English is not the first language spoken. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average when compared with schools of a similar type. There has been a recent increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs who have been admitted to the school. There are five pupils with statements of special educational need and a further six are on the school's own special needs register.

3 The school's pastoral and curricular aims are concerned with:

- developing self-awareness and acquiring a set of moral values;
- reading, writing and communicating fluently;
- listening attentively and with understanding;
- learning how to find information from various sources;
- understanding and applying computational skills;
- developing spiritually;
- mastering basic scientific ideas, investigating and interpreting evidence;
- becoming aware of other times and places;
- using music, drama, arts and crafts as a means of self-expression;
- developing agility and co-ordination through play and physical activity.

6 Educational priorities for the forthcoming year are:

- to maintain the high standards in art;
- to raise standards in mathematics;
- to develop further the provision for information technology;
- to maintain the breadth of the curriculum;
- to enhance the music provision;

- to include a governor in target setting;
- to develop literacy in key Stage 2;
- to link personal and social development to other areas of the curriculum;
- to develop the school's outdoor environment.

7 Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	3	3	6

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	4	3	7

Due to the small number of pupils being assessed the school is not required to publish its National Curriculum test results.

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.0
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	11
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

8 Children under five entering the reception class start school with a range of skills that are typical for their age. About half have levels of attainment that are higher than expected, seen, for example, in their well developed speech and social skills. Most of the children starting in the reception class have had pre-school experiences in play groups or nurseries and rapidly settle into school routines.

9 By the time they are five most children reach at least the levels of attainment that are typical for their age in all the nationally agreed areas of learning and they make sound progress. They make good progress in the mathematical area of learning through the daily routine of mental computation activities. They can count forwards and backwards to ten and beyond, recognise coins and know which numbers are odd and even. Even after just a few weeks in school they already recognise words in simple texts and are beginning to know letter sounds. They are developing their knowledge of differences between the past and present and handle materials to make pictures and models with growing confidence. Social development is good and children make good progress, integrating well with the older children in their class. By the end of their first year in full time education all of the children are well launched into the National Curriculum.

10 In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science attainment matches the national average at the end of both key stages. In national tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998, results in reading, writing and mathematics were very low compared with the national averages and in comparison with the results in similar schools. The Key Stage 2 national test results were slightly better. In mathematics and science the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was close to the national average though in English standards were below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in English was about average; it was below average in mathematics and above average in science. When compared with the standards achieved by pupils in schools of a similar type, standards were below average in science and well below average in English and mathematics. Results of tests in 1999 show a contrasting picture at the end of both key stages in English, mathematics and science, with most pupils reaching the expected levels for their ages and a greater proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. There are as yet no national figures with which to make comparisons.

11 The test results in this school fluctuate considerably from year to year because of the very small numbers of pupils in the year groups and the varying proportion of pupils with special educational needs from year to year within each age group. These factors can seriously distort the figures and prevent a meaningful picture of trends in attainment over a three-year period emerging. Taking into account samples of pupils' current and past work, inspection judgement is that attainment in English, mathematics and science in both key stages is about average overall, a few pupils attaining beyond this. There is no evidence to suggest variations in attainment between boys and girls. The school has set realistic targets for improvement in the future.

12 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above average in both key stages. Most pupils in the school are confident speakers, participating readily in class discussions and talking about their work. They often give thoughtful and well-expressed responses to teachers' questions. Listening is consistently good. By the time they leave the school pupils are able to

use spoken language for increasingly sophisticated purposes; for example, they work effectively on group tasks in science, discussing, negotiating and expressing their viewpoints confidently and maturely.

13 Standards of reading in both key stages are about average, although in both key stages several pupils attain beyond this level. In Key Stage 1 pupils use letter sounds and picture clues to establish the meaning of unknown words, and they read with growing accuracy, confidence and fluency. In Key Stage 2 most pupils read confidently, with growing skills of comprehension. They become increasingly proficient at expressing their views on the books they read and describing events or characters in a story. Of particular note is the expressive way in which many of the pupils read aloud. Higher attaining pupils name their favourite books and can explain why they enjoy particular authors. Pupils in the Key Stage 2 class access information proficiently from the library, referring to indexes and contents appropriately.

14 Standards in writing are about average in both key stages. Writing is used extensively in all year groups for a variety of purposes such as recording personal thoughts, communicating information and writing creatively in letters and poetry. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are independent writers, spelling common words reasonably accurately and using simple punctuation. From their earliest days in school pupils are expected to write in a joined style. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have established secure writing skills and their work is descriptive and purposeful. Information technology is often used well to present writing in an attractive format in Key Stage 2.

1 Progress in English is satisfactory over time at both key stages, and there is some good progress in individual lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages. In speaking and listening pupils use a developing vocabulary that increases appropriately as they move through the school. The secure early reading skills established in the infant class are built upon steadily as pupils grow older. They use their reading frequently in almost all subjects and this consolidates their technical skills and skills of comprehension. Frequent use of the library to access information contributes to the steady progress made in the acquisition of retrieval skills. Pupils' writing shows clear improvement from the communication of meaning in single words and phrases in the infant class, to the more lengthy and sophisticated presentation of ideas in Year 6.

16 Pupils in both key stages develop secure foundations of mathematical skills, which they use confidently in problem-solving. Most demonstrate accurate mental recall in the numeracy hour. In Key Stage 1 pupils begin to understand and calculate number and money. They apply their skills to work out problems such as the cost of ice-cream desserts and how much change is needed to buy them. Skills are built upon effectively in Key Stage 2 and are used for increasingly complex purposes. For example, pupils investigate probability and produce a range of different types of graphs to record their data. They demonstrate quick and accurate mental recall and record their work methodically and often neatly.

17 Progress in mathematics is satisfactory over time and often good in lessons where the teaching is good. Pupils in both key stages deepen their understanding of number through daily activities in the numeracy hour. Skills that are established in the Reception/Year 1 class are built upon steadily as pupils grow older. Pupils calculate with confidence using increasingly complex numbers and apply their skills in problem-solving and open-ended investigations. Pupils in all classes develop the speed and accuracy of their mental agility through regular practice and this contributes well to their progress. On a few occasions however, tasks are too easy and when this happens progress is limited. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the way they are integrated into oral lessons through skilful, well-pitched questioning by teachers and suitable tasks that match their abilities.

18 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have gained simple scientific knowledge relating to their topics and are beginning to use investigative skills, such as observation and predicting, for example when growing plants. They develop sound recording skills and begin to learn to work collaboratively. Early skills and knowledge are built upon well in Key Stage 2 so that by the end of their time in school pupils have a secure understanding of topics such as electricity. They use the skills of observation, experimentation and drawing conclusions well. Literacy and information technology are used effectively to record work in science.

19 In science progress is sound overall, accelerating in Key Stage 2, where it is taught by a teacher with good subject knowledge. As they move through the school pupils make sound gains in knowledge, broaden their vocabulary of scientific language and deepen their understanding of scientific processes in practical activities that build effectively on what they have learned previously. They learn scientific skills which are consolidated in increasingly complex practical applications that require them to make evaluations and modifications. Science topics are planned effectively for both classes so that experiences in the infant class are extended and broadened in the juniors.

20 In religious education pupils make sound progress in both key stages in meeting the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. They acquire knowledge and understanding of Bible stories and Christian festivals and gain an insight into other world faiths such as Judaism. They are reflective and able to contribute thoughtfully to discussions about values.

21 Pupils in the Reception/Year 1 class make adequate progress in establishing basic skills in using information technology such as controlling a mouse and following simple instructions. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils attain standards that exceed those typical for their age and they make good, sometimes very good progress in their acquisition of skills and their deepening understanding of the capabilities of technology. They use computers frequently and make good progress in building up a repertoire of skills, which they use in most subjects. All the pupils are confident and proficient in handling computers and understand how their application can be used in real life. Information technology is well used to support most other subjects in the curriculum, such as science and geography, and it is particularly beneficial in advancing the learning of pupils with special needs by motivating them and providing opportunities for them to achieve success.

22 Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress in establishing basic skills that are in line with the targets on their individual education plans. The pupils integrate well in classes and are well supported not only by staff but also by the other pupils. They make particularly good progress in the development of self-esteem and confidence. Good progress is made towards the targets in reading and writing over time, and often in individual lessons. Attainment is as expected for pupils with special educational needs.

23 Progress is satisfactory overall in the other foundation subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Progress is sometimes good in lessons where the teacher has a particular expertise and enthusiasm, as in some art lessons. Pupils progress well in their French lessons; they are developing a familiarity with basic vocabulary and simple sentence construction that prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

24 The literacy hour is now an established part of the curriculum and its effects are seen in the improved standards in spelling, letter writing and the presentation of pupils' work. Literacy is used effectively to support most other subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy has recently been introduced but is still at an early stage of development. The way in which pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects is developing, but this is not yet as well promoted as literacy. Overall standards in all subjects have remained the same since the time of the last inspection.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

25 Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and their personal development is good. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. This judgement is similar to the finding of the previous inspection, when pupils were said to be "confident in their learning and (to) display positive attitudes and enjoyment." Parents' confident views are justified.

1Children under the age of five settle well into the school and develop social skills and good attitudes to work. They are interested and responsive, relating well to each other and adults. Most children confidently share their ideas and, with encouragement, answer questions and describe their feelings. They take responsibility, for example, when they get their scissors and pencils for their task or clear away at the end of lessons. Children develop very good relationships with older children and move around the school sensibly for assemblies and lessons.

27 Pupils enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. They are interested in activities and persevere with tasks until they have completed them. Invariably they settle quickly to lessons, and, when in the playground, always stop the moment they hear the headteacher's whistle or the bell. Most pupils listen carefully and contribute to discussions with growing confidence. They share their work eagerly with adults, ask for help or advice very politely, and happily respond to queries with explanations. In all the classes pupils collaborate well with each other, offering help where appropriate, and they give each other support. For example, pupils quietly and sensitively remind pupils with special needs of what they have to do next. They respect the ideas and suggestions of others and are pleased when they achieve success.

28 Behaviour in school is very good overall. Pupils of all ages clearly understand what is expected of them and this has a positive effect on the quality of life in the school. They settle quietly to their work and show great maturity when there are any incidents of disruption by getting on with their task calmly and sensibly. The school is an orderly place. For example, pupils go into, and wait for, assembly very quietly. They listen to any music that is being played with enjoyment and show admiration of the skills of the pupils who are playing instruments. Pupils behave very well in the playground and use the space well. They share the outdoor apparatus happily and there is no evidence of any bullying. Any isolated incidents that do occur are dealt with quickly and effectively. There have been no exclusions.

29 Relationships in the school are excellent and make a very positive contribution to pupils' social and personal development. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy. They relate very well to their teachers and other adults working in the school. They are welcoming to visitors, to whom they are respectful and polite. In the classroom they share activities well and co-operate with each other. As they move through the school, they show a developing capacity to reflect on and discuss their feelings towards each other. They co-operate well in lessons and play comfortably together at playtimes. Older pupils care for younger ones and help them to deal with any problems they encounter during the day.

1Pupils' personal development is good overall. Throughout the school pupils carry out tasks competently and efficiently. Ways are built in to daily routines to help pupils to develop a sense of personal initiative and responsibility. For example, pupils organise themselves into teams for sports day and the Year 6 pupils organise a party for the rest of the school by themselves. They conduct a survey to find out pupils' food preferences, calculate the quantities of food required and the associated costs, then they purchase the ingredients and prepare the food. In English, pupils set themselves targets for improvement in their work. Pupils consider the needs of others

in the wider world and they develop a caring attitude through involvement with various charities.

30 **Attendance**

31 Attendance levels at the school are above national averages for primary schools. The rate of unauthorised absence is well below the national average. The great majority of pupils really like their school and are eager to attend. Their punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

30 **Teaching**

32 The quality of teaching is good overall; indeed, during the inspection seven out of ten lessons were judged to be of good quality, while a further one in ten was very good. No lessons were unsatisfactory. The major strengths in the teaching lie in the specialist expertise in subjects such as information technology and art, the way in which teachers plan for the individual needs of the pupils and the excellent relationships that exist between the staff and pupils.

33 The teaching of children under five is good. The teacher has a delightful rapport with the class that is both encouraging and engaging. Planning takes account of the different levels of attainment in the class and successfully merges the National Curriculum with the areas of learning for the under fives. The teacher has a clear understanding of how to explain material to young children simply and explanations are well supported by effective questioning and practical tasks.

34 All the teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. The thoughtful deployment of staff effectively capitalises on teachers' specialisms and interests and this enables pupils to make good progress. For example, in information technology and art the teachers' depth of understanding of the subjects means that the help they give to individual pupils takes learning forward with knowledgeable advice and comment.

35 All the teachers plan their lessons to take account of the individual needs of the pupils. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which staff know their pupils so well. When the teaching is very good tasks, are demanding and challenging, as in a mathematics lesson when older pupils in Key Stage 2 were able to investigate number patterns. With constructive support from the teacher they were able to complete the task successfully and so deepen their understanding of probability.

36 Pupils with special educational needs have regular times when they are withdrawn from lessons for individual work with a support assistant. The work for these pupils is planned carefully in consultation with the teacher and special needs co-ordinator, and careful account is taken of the targets of the pupils in planning their group work. Targets are reviewed regularly by all who work with the pupils. The teachers and support assistants work well together. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is of high quality and enables pupils to make good progress towards their targets and to grow in confidence. Teachers manage pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties skilfully and enable them to play a full part in the lessons and to learn to manage their own behaviour.

37 Day-to-day planning is satisfactory though not always made explicit in written form. Teachers know what they want the pupils to learn in each lesson and how they will achieve that goal. The planning for the art lessons is an example of very good practice, clearly identifying tasks, assessment opportunities and lesson objectives. Lessons are generally well organised and resources readily available and well prepared.

38 All teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and encourage good conduct gently but firmly and consistently. On the rare occasions when there is a need for admonishment it is done in a low key, gentle manner. There is a mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are treated with considerable sensitivity and understanding. Occasionally some staff lack confidence in their handling of challenging behaviour and have yet to develop effective strategies to deal with disruptive conduct. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally appropriate but occasionally they are not sufficiently high and there is scope to provide more challenge for the pupils of higher attainment. This happens when they are given tasks that require them to reinforce skills that are already secure and are well within their capabilities.

39 Staff make effective use the school's resources, supplementing them with materials of good quality that they prepare themselves when necessary. The use of time is satisfactory although sometimes a lack of precision in planning can result in misjudgement in the timing of a lesson, resulting in activities petering out towards the end of the lesson. When the teaching is very good the pace is brisk and the lesson covers a range of different elements, ending in an effective plenary session that reinforces what has been learned. When lessons are satisfactory rather than good it is sometimes because the pace slackens, pupils become restless and the impact of the lesson diminishes.

40 Assessments of pupils' progress are made both formally and informally and in general staff use their knowledge of the pupils well to determine what they need to learn next. The quality and depth of marking are of variable quality. At times the marking is minimal, providing little feedback, but at its best, as in English in Key Stage 2, it provides pupils with clear comments about their work, praising good work but also providing advice as to how they might improve. The setting of specific targets, also in English, is a useful development in enabling pupils to make further progress.

41 The setting of homework is inconsistent throughout the school. Though all teachers do give homework tasks there is no clear structure for the setting and marking of homework and its impact on pupils' progress therefore varies. Parents expressed concern at the lack of a clear policy for homework.

42 At the time of the previous inspection the quality of teaching was judged to be good and the school has been successful in maintaining a similar standard since then.

30 **The curriculum and assessment**

43 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is a sound basis for the next stage of education.

1The curriculum for children under five appropriately integrates the National Curriculum programmes of study with the nationally agreed areas of learning. There is a suitable emphasis on the key areas of literacy and numeracy, as well as on practical and creative activities. Careful assessments are made of the attainment of the children when they start school to provide a useful starting point in their education and to assist with grouping children appropriately.

45 The curriculum is similar to that provided at the time of the last inspection. For pupils of compulsory school age, the curriculum complies fully with the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. French is taught as an additional subject for the older pupils. The school successfully promotes the intellectual, physical and personal development of all pupils and prepares them appropriately for the next stage of their education. The organisation of the curriculum provides effective equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Although there is no written policy for personal, social and health education, a strong emphasis is placed on these areas, both in the daily life of the school and in lessons. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught appropriately within science and health education lessons. Together with the school, the local education authority is monitoring the development of the National Literacy Strategy carefully. The National Numeracy Strategy is being introduced this term.

46 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and continues to be a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy full access to the breadth of the curriculum. The recommendations of the Code of Practice are met successfully by the special needs co-ordinator, who keeps detailed records and monitors the provision well. Targets are reviewed regularly, and programmes amended, where appropriate. Individual education plans are clear and can be incorporated effectively into teachers' planning.

47 There are policies and schemes of work for most subjects. Some of these have been updated this year and match well the programmes of study and the two-year rolling programme of topics to be studied and skills to be learned. Others, notably in science, provide little more than the curriculum content for each subject, without the benefit of additional guidelines to support teachers with their planning. The school was in the process of developing its documentation and curriculum planning at the time of the last inspection but the task is not yet completed. This was a key issue. There is still no cohesive plan of the curriculum with appropriate medium-term plans for all age groups and no whole-school approach to planning. Without this, it is not easy to identify priorities for development, to check that work is appropriate for the mixed-age classes or to identify the level of key skills for each age group. Although there are some very good examples of short-term planning, plans do not always clearly identify the focus on skills and learning in the lesson or provide an opportunity to check on what has been learned by the pupils.

48 There is good communication with the local secondary school and the playgroup or nursery that some young children have attended. Opportunities for careful induction into the infant class and for transition to the secondary school are provided. This helps to ensure that pupils move on with confidence to the next stage of their education.

49 The curriculum is enriched in several ways. There are a few after-school clubs and many pupils regularly benefit from outside play activities after school. The school takes part successfully in sporting fixtures and competitions with other schools. Parental support for sports day is very good. Older pupils enjoy an overnight camp during their final year and there has recently been a residential trip to France. These occasions provide pupils with good opportunities to develop personal and physical skills in a different setting. Visits and visitors to the school give appropriate opportunities for pupils to extend their learning and develop their sense of place in the world.

50 Overall, assessment procedures are satisfactory. Formal assessments, including assessments in the reception class and statutory assessment tasks, are carried out appropriately each year. Children under five have useful on going records of their achievement in all the areas of learning. Information gained from a study of statutory assessments and national data has been used in English to identify areas of weakness and to raise standards

successfully. Individual targets are set for pupils in group reading tasks and spelling and this is having a beneficial impact on pupils' progress.

51 Day-to-day assessment is used effectively by teachers to ensure that work is appropriately matched to pupils' capabilities. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are identified at a young age and action is taken to clarify their needs if teachers have concerns. Individual education plans have suitable and measurable targets for literacy and personal and social development. Progress towards these is measured efficiently.

52 The school does not have a consistent system for recording pupils' attainment and progress in lessons as it occurs daily, weekly and monthly, although individual teachers keep their own useful and sufficiently detailed records. Some teachers have helpful examples of assessed and moderated work in some subjects, but there is no formal system in place to standardise this practice. Records maintained by the support staff are clear and are conscientiously maintained. Reports, which meet statutory requirements, have been much improved since the last inspection and parents appreciate this. This was a key issue at the last inspection and has been dealt with well.

44 **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

53 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The quality of the provision has been maintained since the last inspection. There is a supportive climate throughout the school and the school fosters a sense of community. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in the life of the school. Their contributions to lessons and assemblies are invited and valued and they are involved in all school activities.

54 Children under five learn to talk about kindness and concern for others when listening to stories about friendship and people who help us. They learn about people from other cultures and the importance of family events, such as a christening. They are given many opportunities to develop socially through group activities that require them to share, listen to others and take turns.

55 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Teachers encourage pupils, through a range of activities, to reflect on their own experiences and the experience of others. In discussion and written work, teachers give pupils opportunities to express their feelings about themselves; for example, about their lack of self-confidence and the need for good examples from which they can learn. Pupils are encouraged to wonder at the order and splendour of the world in which they live, to reflect on it and share their feelings with others. During a religious education lesson, they were asked to draw and write about the best view they had ever seen. Pupils recalled a very beautiful sunset and the view from the top of a mountain when on holiday. Work in English, history, music and art help pupils to understand spiritual values. Some of the artwork on display is inspirational and captions invite contemplation.

56 Daily acts of collective worship which are of good quality, meet statutory requirements and the school keeps clear records of the themes of each assembly. This is valuable when all staff regularly take assemblies. Some themes, for example, the story of Pandora, are linked well to English lessons. Within assemblies, the school provides opportunities for pupils to reflect during prayers of thanks or for those who are ill. Assemblies are used as an opportunity to project the school's ethos and for pupils to reflect on and contemplate a set of values and gain insight into the wider community. They learn the Lord's Prayer line by line and talk about the meaning of each line, so that it is meaningful to them. There are opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths, such as Judaism and Sikhism, and for pupils to reflect on their importance in life.

57 Provision for pupils' moral development is good. This reflects the good examples set by the teachers and adults in the school. They promote values of self-discipline and respect for one another. The school provides a supportive atmosphere for all its pupils and encourages good behaviour. Adults in the school work hard to promote and encourage high standards of behaviour and tolerance of individual differences. Teachers offer guidance through careful discussion of any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and parents approve of the school's aims and work in this area. There are sets of rules on display and pupils, and parents, are fully aware of these. Pupils enjoy and appreciate rewards for good behaviour and are aware of any sanctions that may be applied. They are encouraged to work together and to co-operate. Pupils are offered, and willingly accept, responsibilities around the school. Pupils also support and collect for charities during the school year.

58 The school supports pupils' social development very successfully. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop socially, during outings that support learning and through planned community partnerships. For example, the school has participated in, and won awards, and pupils have been proud to go as members of their school to collect their prizes. During lessons, pupils are encouraged to co-operate as they work in small groups and pairs. Everyone is valued. In all subjects, the quality of co-operation has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils, as they share ideas and learn from each other. Pupils enjoy participating in clubs and inter-school and sports tournaments. They come to value the taking-part more than the winning and applaud winners warmly. The variety of visitors to the school, and outside visits made by pupils, enhance pupils' social development.

59 The overall provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils develop an appropriate awareness of their own culture, and the cultures of others through history, literature, art and music. Visits to places of interest, such as museums and castles, help them to develop awareness their own culture. The school successfully raises pupils' awareness of the lifestyles, values and traditions of people from a range of different cultures through religious education, geography, history and literature. They learn about France when they study French, and on their visit to France. They learn about Islam and Sikhism in religious education. There are limited opportunities to help pupils appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures however. The school is aware of the need to develop this area further.

44 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

60 The staff and governing body contribute to the provision of a very caring school in which the personal needs of the pupils are met. The academic progress of pupils is adequately assessed, although there is a lack of formal ways of doing this for all areas of the curriculum. However, the staff of this small school know well how much their pupils have learned and they set appropriate targets for pupils.

61 There is a positive atmosphere and parents and pupils say that all the staff are kind and supportive. Pupils with special needs are identified and are given appropriate help both by staff in the school and also by experts from the local education authority. The school works well with other agencies, who give valuable support to the school. This is of benefit to the pupils and their families. The level of pastoral support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

62 Attendance and punctuality are monitored well. All unexplained absences are followed up immediately. The registration procedures are quiet and efficient and are completed in accordance with legal requirements. The school has carefully considered parental attitudes to

the importance of good attendance and has achieved satisfactory levels.

63 The school maintains a high level of good behaviour. This is achieved through positive encouragement, adult role models and, in those classes with mixed age groups, the valuable example of older pupils. No complex structure of rewards and sanctions is used, nor are these needed in such a tightly knit community. There is no evidence of bullying.

64 There are no regular, formal opportunities for pupils to discuss feelings, attitudes and behaviour with each other through 'circle time' or other special lessons. There is no curriculum statement for personal and social development to provide a framework to enable staff to make sure that all aspects of this important area are covered. Aspects of drug awareness and sex education are covered in the National Curriculum; education in these two important areas is rather limited.

65 The headteacher is well aware of child protection issues but there is no policy and other teaching and non-teaching staff have not been trained to recognise possible signs of problems.

66 The premises are clean and well looked after by staff, who take great care of their pupils. However, the school's monitoring of health and safety issues through accident books, risk assessments and regular audits should be tightened up. Procedures lack rigour and potential problems can be overlooked, or if recognised, not followed up immediately. A few minor health and safety issues have been brought to the attention of the school and action is being taken.

44 **Partnership with parents and the community**

67 There are good links between the school, the local nursery school, and all the parents and pupils about to come to the school. The school provides useful information for staff at the secondary school about the children coming into their care. Pupils have plenty of opportunity to visit the secondary school before starting and the transition is easily accomplished. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed of any concerns and the setting of targets for their children. They are involved in their child's annual review and are able to discuss their child's programmes.

68 Parents agree that they are actively encouraged to contribute to the life of the school. They have opportunities to visit assemblies to see their children take part and they are encouraged to attend social occasions such as the annual barbecue. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. There are regular review meetings about the progress of pupils with special needs. There is a thriving school association, which organises fund-raising events which contribute significantly to the spirit of the community. The playground is used by the community.

69 The amount of information for parents is good though some parents say they would like more information about what is being taught in school and feel that they would like longer notice of forthcoming events. The information is presented in a readable style which, however occasionally inappropriately errs towards the polemical. Parents receive a considerable amount of information about school activities, including some information about the curriculum in the infant class, but a significant number of parents would welcome more information about what is being taught to enable them to become more involved in their children's learning.

70 Since the last inspection the school has improved the annual reports on pupils' progress. They are now very informative and give parents a clear indication of the level of their children's attainment, though the school does not retain copies of the reports. In addition there are brief, useful, interim reports. There are many informal opportunities for parents to discuss their

children's progress with staff and parents are offered a formal meeting after they receive the summer term report.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

44 Leadership and management

71 The management of the school is satisfactory overall. It has several strengths, but shortcomings in important areas. The headteacher provides strong leadership through an informal management style and works effectively with staff as part of a team. With the support of staff he has been responsible for successfully establishing and maintaining the ethos of the school with a family atmosphere which is much appreciated by parents. The relaxed leadership style is very effective in promoting a welcoming, warm and loving atmosphere. At times however, they are too informal, with too few systems and strategies in place to provide a secure managerial framework.

72 Governors are very supportive of the school, though the part they play in its management is limited. Governors are not sufficiently involved in strategic planning, monitoring or decision making. Much has been delegated to the headteacher with the result that governors do not have sufficient depth of knowledge or understanding of how the school is managed, nor are they sufficiently aware of standards and matters relating to the curriculum. There are, for instance, no committees to discuss areas such as finance or the curriculum. Governors give approval to policies but do not yet take in the process of drafting at the initial stage. Though such delegation indicates the confidence that governors place in the headteacher it also limits their involvement. In view of the considerable support it gives and its interest and expertise, the governing body has the potential to be used more fully for the good of the school. Except for one or two minor omissions in the school prospectus governors fulfil their legal obligations satisfactorily. Governors meet their statutory requirements with regard to pupils with special educational needs.

73 The school documentation has been improved since the previous inspection. There are now policies for all subjects and a long and medium-term planning format, though further refinement is still needed. The management of the curriculum and the implementation of policies are not sufficiently rigorous, however, to ensure that there is a common approach by all staff to planning and assessment.

74 All staff are co-ordinators for several subjects and fulfil their roles satisfactorily. They are aware of the relative strengths and weaknesses within their subjects and in some subjects, notably English and art, have begun to monitor standards with a view to further improvement though this practice is not common to all subjects.

75 Monitoring of the school's work is satisfactory overall, though it is informal, relying too heavily on the headteacher's knowledge of the school. Although the headteacher has extensive knowledge of what is happening in the school, the monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is not systematic enough, nor is it sufficiently well documented to provide meaningful information to guide any action to sustain or improve their quality. The co-ordinator for English has recently introduced effective systems for monitoring standards in the subject in order to identify areas for further improvement, but this practice does not yet extend to other subjects.

76 The school development plan is inadequate as a tool of management. It does not provide a clear formula for the strategic development of the school. Educational priorities for the current year and beyond are not clearly identified, nor are they linked to the budget and staff development. Governors have not been involved in establishing future priorities for the school.

77 The ethos of the school is strong. The belief that children learn best if they are happy, self-confident, high in self-esteem and well motivated is at its heart. There is an emphasis on nurturing and integrating all pupils with careful regard for their varying educational needs. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. There is a relaxed, calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. The school has clear aims, which are set out appropriately in the prospectus.

78 The school has partially overcome the weaknesses raised as issues for action in the previous inspection report. Curriculum documentation has been completed, though it requires further refinement to ensure a cohesive, whole-school approach to planning and assessment. Policy statements have been formalised for each subject, though they do not yet benefit from additional guidelines to help teachers with their planning. The school has been very successful in improving the annual reports to parents. These are now of good quality. The many strengths of the school have been successfully sustained. In view of the combined skills of the staff, the potential of the governors to be more involved in managing and the continuing strong support of the local education authority the school is judged to be well placed to improve further.

44 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

79 The school is generously staffed with two full-time and three part-time teachers who are all appropriately qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a particular strength in the way the individual subject specialisms of all staff are deployed and this enhances the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. Teaching staff are well supported by the contribution of the support staff. Although none have specific qualifications or training for their roles, they are well briefed by the teachers with whom they work. Together the teaching and non-teaching staff work as an effective and committed team. There is no formal policy for the induction of new staff; this takes place satisfactorily through the support of all staff. Staff do not have specific job descriptions which define clearly their roles and responsibilities, though there is a clear collective understanding that all tasks will be shared. This informal arrangement works satisfactorily. The staff are keen to develop their skills and the arrangements for their professional development are good. Teachers attend a wide range of training events, which include training for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and this has a positive impact on the quality of the teaching. The appraisal of teachers has been suspended on the advice of the teachers' union.

80 Pupils with special educational needs are supported sensitively and well by very conscientious and well organised support assistants and skilled teachers. The support assistants are prepared well for their tasks by the special needs co-ordinator, who provides thoughtful and essential guidance for them. There are, however, occasions when additional adult support is required to enable pupils with special educational needs to participate more fully in group activities.

81 The school accommodation in a Victorian house is adequate for implementing the curriculum. It is clean, well maintained and enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. The accommodation does however, have limitations of space, which staff and pupils manage very well. For example, there is no school hall in which physical education lessons can take place. The narrow hallway which houses the computer suite has the potential to become congested at times, but pupils are considerate and sensible as they pass and this does not present any apparent difficulty. The recently re-furbished entrance to the school has created a central office area and additional toilets. The small, attractive library is well stocked and used frequently by pupils for a range of activities.

82 Externally the school grounds are attractive, tidy and well exploited. A large field provides plenty of space for play and physical education lessons. There is a splendid adventure playground, which is used enthusiastically by pupils both during and after school hours to develop their motor skills. The chequer-board garden provides every pupil with a good opportunity to grow things. There are plans to further develop the grounds with a wildlife area.

83 The school's resources are good. They are generally plentiful, well cared for and put to good use. There is a generous ratio of computers and information technology peripherals to pupils. This equipment is used very well to support teaching in all subjects. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are good and the accommodation enables such pupils to be supported effectively in the classroom or the library.

44 **The efficiency of the school**

1The efficiency of the school is good overall and has been maintained since the last inspection. The school's financial planning is good but the governors have not recently been involved in the long-term planning and preparation of the budget and school development plan. They would welcome a higher level of discussion about the priorities of the school and how these are being costed and funded in order to help them to assess the cost-effectiveness of the decisions made and to plan, with the headteacher and staff, for future developments. At present, there are no costings in the school development plan and this makes it an ineffective document in the planning process. The school keeps well within its budget, however, and plans thoughtfully for eventualities such as a reduction in pupil numbers by maintaining a higher balance than is usual.

2Specific funds for staff training are used appropriately to support such priority training as that in numeracy and literacy, and staff have the opportunity to attend other courses for the mutual benefit of their own and the school's development. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used appropriately for the benefit of these pupils to provide additional support and resources.

86 The teaching and support staff are deployed well and this has a good impact on pupils' learning. The school makes good use of voluntary and parental support to teach older pupils French and to provide music tuition for all pupils as they move through the school. Parents give valuable help by hearing their pupils read at home and by supporting the school's spelling programme. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

87 Classroom resources are used well, especially books and computers. Good use is made of the playground activities and the adventure playground before and after school, as well as at times when pupils are outside. The school makes good use of the museums and places of interest in the area. The use of the local swimming pool provides valuable opportunities for pupils to acquire confidence in the water and swimming skills, especially when lessons in other aspects of physical education are limited. Wherever possible, visitors are invited into the school. All of these activities have a good impact on pupils' learning and social development.

88 School administration and financial control are good. Clear daily routines and procedures are established and carried out effectively and efficiently. The majority of the recommendations in the 1998 auditor's report have been carried out and the school runs smoothly. All procedures and routines for ordering goods and processing invoices are in place and are carried out efficiently and thoughtfully.

89 The efficiency of the school has been maintained since the last inspection. The unit cost to educate pupils is above the average for small schools, and includes additional funding for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is typical for

their age, and the standards achieved in both key stages are broadly average. The quality of teaching is good in well over half the lessons and pupils have very good attitudes to work. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual and social development and a caring ethos in the school. The school therefore continues to provide good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

90 Children under the age of five are not yet of statutory school age and are not subject to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Instead they follow a curriculum based on the areas of learning for under-fives; language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical, personal and social development. At the time of this inspection seven of the children were still four years old, four of them attending part time only, and three full time. By the age of five the children's attainments are typical for their age in all the areas of learning except in their personal and social development, in which their attainments exceed expectations at this age. Children are making good progress in their personal and social development and in mathematics. In all the other areas of learning they make sound progress.

85 *Personal and social development*

91 At the time of the inspection those attending school part time had been in school for only three weeks yet already they are confident and familiar with school routines and are developing positive attitudes to learning. They rapidly develop concentration and perseverance to enable them to become confident learners. They learn to listen politely and to refrain from calling out and most join in activities enthusiastically. They show increasing independence, dressing themselves or changing their own painting water when required for instance. Materials and equipment are handled with care and consideration and most of the children are quick to respond to requests to tidy materials away at the end of a lesson. They display good attitudes to their work and behaviour both in the classroom and in the playground is very good. Progress in social development is effectively influenced by the presence of the Year 1 pupils, who demonstrate through their behaviour the expectations in the classroom.

92 Teaching in this area is good. There is a clear expectation that behaviour will be good and children respond well to the calm atmosphere in the classroom and the teacher's gentle manner. The children are encouraged to think about a range of topics in sensitively led discussions and they make good progress in expressing their own thoughts and opinions. They are provided with suitable opportunities to show initiative, be independent and work in groups sharing and taking turns.

85 *Language and Literacy*

93 The majority of children make sound progress. They are communicative and respond readily to questions. They listen attentively to their teacher and the contributions of other children. Higher attaining children have well-developed speech and use a wide vocabulary for their age. All are in the very early stages of reading from a structured scheme. They recognise a few letters and associate them with the correct sounds, which they can build into simple one-syllable words. They know how to handle books correctly and enjoy looking at an enlarged text about a 'Bear Hunt' together, following the words with the teacher. The children make sound progress with early writing skills, copying over their teacher's writing with reasonable accuracy and beginning to form letters independently with increasing pencil control.

94 The teaching in language and literacy is satisfactory. Lessons are well pitched for the mixed age group. The teacher explains clearly the specific points she wants the children to learn, such as letter sounds and their combinations, and questioning skilfully establishes their

levels of understanding. At times the pace of the lesson is too slow; children spend lengthy periods of time sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher and insufficient time engaged in activity. Opportunities to further extend language through creative activities such as puppetry and role-play are limited. During the inspection, for example, only occasionally were children observed playing in the home corner and they did not benefit from adult involvement that would further develop their language and vocabulary. The children are encouraged to take books home to share with adults. This arrangement has a positive impact on their progress in reading.

Mathematics

95 In the mathematical area of learning most of the children are making good progress. They count proficiently forwards and backwards. They recognise numbers up to twenty and beyond and high attainers count up in twos, and fives without hesitation. They recognise coins to the value of one pound, one pence and two pence and know the names of the simple shapes they have cut in their pastry. Over time they increase their knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and develop early skills in mental computation.

96 Teaching in mathematics is consistently good and sometimes very good, resulting in good progress. The teacher has very effective techniques for encouraging children to count and understand the simple number concepts by making learning fun. Secure mathematical skills and knowledge of each child's potential enable the mental component of the lesson to be of high quality and the children to make good progress. Appropriate opportunities are provided for children to use their number skills for real purposes, for example to make biscuits. Activities using sand and water are not promoted sufficiently in the curriculum to help children to develop an understanding of mathematical concepts such as capacity and volume.

85 *Knowledge and Understanding of the world*

97 A growing awareness and knowledge of the world develop satisfactorily through the range of topics and activities. The children make sound progress in their gains in knowledge and in the application of new skills in practical activities. Children begin to develop an understanding of change over time as they listen to the story of 'The Patchwork Quilt' and compare their home life with that in the past. They broaden their vocabulary, learning words such as 'evacuated,' and can identify activities which are rarely seen nowadays such as making toast over a fire. Through making a pictorial representation of Granny's life story they understand something of genealogy and make connections with their own lives. Children are becoming familiar with simple computer skills such as how to manipulate a mouse. They begin to understand simple scientific concepts, for example that some of their toys are powered by batteries. They know that household appliances need electricity to make them work and that electricity is stored in batteries.

98 The teaching in the one history lesson observed was good. The story was read expressively and every opportunity was taken to exploit the pictures to develop factual knowledge and vocabulary. Pertinent questions were asked to establish understanding. Explanations were clear and suitably pitched for the age-mix in the class. The practical activity was well chosen to reinforce learning. Photographic evidence shows that an appropriate range of activities and themes is taught over the year.

Creative development

99 In the creative area of learning children are introduced to a suitable range of skills and

techniques and they make sound progress. They mix powder paints with increasing proficiency, learning which colours combine to produce a particular shade. They are learning how to look closely at the subject of their pictures and are trying to paint exactly what they see. They draw recognisable replicas of common objects and know which are the primary colours. There is scope to widen further the range of creative experiences provided, for example through exploring creatively the potential of materials through making pictures of their own choice and experimenting with paint and colour through free painting. The children sing a growing repertoire of songs enthusiastically. They respond to recorded music, joining in with the refrain, and can play simple musical patterns with chime bars.

100 The teaching is good in this area, particularly in activities such as paint mixing, which call upon children to observe closely, and when skills are directly taught by the art subject specialist. Sound provision is made in class activities for children to consolidate the skills learned in their art lessons. Tape recorded music lessons are used judiciously, supplemented by the teacher's own ideas and contributions.

Physical development

101 Children's physical development matches the expectation for children of their age and they make satisfactory progress over time. Fine motor skills develop through the regular handling of pencils, scissors and paintbrushes and the children demonstrate an increasing dexterity. Malleable materials such as biscuit dough are moulded with developing control. Provision for outdoor physical play is good and children have access to very good climbing apparatus and wheeled toys to develop balance and co-ordination. In a taped movement lesson they learned to hop, skip and jump, to use space sensibly when they joined in with the 'Hokey Cokey'.

102 The teaching in this area is good overall. Despite the limitations imposed by the lack of hall space there is a suitable range of activities to promote physical development. In a taped music and movement lessons there was a good balance of activity, including a warm-up. The children were well managed in a quiet but effective way and they made good progress as they learned new skills and consolidated those they had already mastered.

103 The classroom environment is managed to make the best use of the space. There is a good range of resources to promote learning. The school has no clear written policy for the under-fives that makes explicit how children's development and progress are assessed. Assessments of progress are, however, made frequently. Attractive scrapbooks of work samples recording what children have achieved have the potential to be useful records of progress if annotated with information about the context of the work. At the time of the last inspection children achieved appropriate standards in all the areas of learning and teaching was sound overall. These standards have been maintained.

85 ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

104 Results of national tests in Key Stage 1 in 1998 were very low in both reading and writing and low in comparison with the results obtained by pupils in comparable schools. Over the three-year period 1996 to 1998 the performance has been variable in comparison with that of other and similar schools. Variations have been largely due to the size of the year groups and the higher number of pupils with special educational needs within some groups. The results in

1999 indicate that the level of attainment is likely to be broadly in line with national averages but there are no national figures with which to compare the figures at present. Inspection evidence supports the view that pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining standards that are broadly average.

105 Results at the end of Key Stage 2 are similarly affected by the size of year groups and the higher number of pupils with special educational needs in some groups. In 1998 the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels was well below average but the percentage reaching the higher Level 5 was close to the national average. In relation to schools of a similar type the results were well below the national average. Over three years the results have not varied as much as in Key Stage 1, but there has been a downward trend. Results in 1999 show a much higher number of pupils attaining Level 5 than previously. This is largely due to the improved structure within the English curriculum, the setting of individual targets and the support and guidance of the local education authority during the introduction of the Literacy Strategy. Spelling, presentation, for example in letter writing, and individual reading targets, were highlighted as priority areas for improvement. Inspection findings in lessons and scrutiny of work confirm these improvements over the year. There are no significant differences between boys' and girls' performance in these small groups.

106 As at the last inspection, standards in speaking and listening are above average at both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils listen attentively and confidently ask and answer questions. They participate well in discussion in class. For example, pupils in reception politely suggested how the biscuits should be used in mathematics, one opening the discussion with, "Perhaps we should count them in twos." Year 1 pupils can explain the difference between lower case and capital letters in an articulate manner. A Year 2 pupil was concerned that he would not be able to read a text. "I can't read it," he complained, "my finger won't fit on the lines." Once this problem was sorted out he read the text competently. Older pupils discussed a newspaper report on Dr Crippen. One said it was difficult to say how old people were. "You can work out how old she is from using the date you have there," pointed out another member of the group.

107 All pupils speak politely and pleasantly to adults. A Year 2 pupil asked an adult if she would hold the door open for him. This was all done in a courteous manner. An older pupil came to ask a visitor for help in such a way that it was difficult to refuse. Pupils talk clearly about their feelings in assembly and older pupils help younger ones to sort out any difficulties that arise. Pupils speak clearly, with a high degree of confidence in whole-class sessions when they present their work to others. When reading their parts from the story of Pandora to the others, pupils use intonation and expression well, working hard to improve their presentation each time.

108 Pupils at the end of the Key Stage 2 develop their speaking skills effectively when explaining their task on the computer. They discuss stories and reports and offer evidence to explain their thinking. Pupils with less well-developed skills in speaking and listening are slow to offer opinions at first, but gradually, through sensitive and skilled teaching and the support of their group, they grow in confidence and discuss their work sensibly, but with a more limited vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils have a wider vocabulary and speak with enthusiasm about books or events they have enjoyed.

1 Attainment in reading is broadly average at the end of both key stages, several pupils attaining at a higher level. This is the same as at the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school effectively apply a range of methods for coping with unfamiliar words and have the confidence to apply these effectively. Pupils read a wide variety of books and develop accuracy, fluency and expression. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils discuss books thoughtfully and most show that they understand the main points of what they are reading. They usually read simple

passages accurately and give sensible opinions about what is happening. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils make inferences and deductions about the plots in stories they read. They make references to parts of stories when explaining their views. Higher attaining pupils name several authors they enjoy and explain how they choose books and how their tastes are developing. Pupils are clear about the differences between books of information and storybooks and know how to make contents lists and use an index. Older pupils know how to use the library and all pupils select their own reading books, having them carefully checked by an adult to see that there is a match between reading ability, interest level and the degree of reading challenge.

2At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have targets for their group reading. They are able to discuss these and know why it is necessary to improve certain aspects of their reading. They enjoy the structure and routine these targets provide. A very good feature of the reading in the school is the way in which pupils from reception through to Year 6 use intonation and expression well. The importance of taking note of punctuation when reading is stressed, and this has an impact on the quality of pupils' reading. Pupils with special needs receive support of good quality from the support assistants and this helps them to make good progress towards their literacy targets and to grow in self-esteem.

111 In writing, pupils' attainments are broadly in line with national averages at both key stages. This is the same as at the last inspection. Pupils develop their vocabulary well as they move through the school. At the end of Key Stage 1 they write complete sentences, know what a conjunction is, and use capital letters and full stops consistently when writing at greater length. They plan and draft their work and this helps them to extend their vocabulary and develop a style. Pupils understand how to construct a story, using a beginning, middle and end. Higher attaining pupils use speech marks, commas and other punctuation confidently. Most pupils write in a cursive script from entry into school and some develop a good, legible style of handwriting in Key Stage 2. There are good examples of descriptive and purposeful letter writing. Pupils wrote to a firm after testing a piece of mathematical equipment and made suggestions as to how the item may be improved. Pupils write evocative poems about rivers and water, ones about the meander being particularly well written. The use of information technology for the presentation of these enhances their appearance and gives them a professional quality. Pupils are proud to see their work displayed so well.

112 A structured spelling scheme has been introduced recently and pupils have spellings to learn each week. Correct spellings are being transferred to other written work consistently. Rules and structures for setting out work in books have also improved presentation. There are some very good examples of marking which involve pupils in a dialogue and give them suggestions as to how they may improve, though not all marking is of the same high quality. All of these elements have a significant impact on pupils' learning and the acquisition of good working habits.

113 Boys and girls make satisfactory progress over time at both key stages and there is some good progress in individual lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. There is clear evidence of progress in speaking and listening, from the enthusiastic responses of pupils in reception when they discuss their work, to the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, who discuss the contents of the report they are writing. Steady, and sometimes good, progress is made in reading from the recognition of familiar words in reception to the higher attainers at the end of Key Stage 2, who read complex texts with good expression. Pupils' writing shows clear improvement from the communication of meaning in single words and phrases to the presentation of writing in sustained ideas in paragraphs and with appropriate punctuation.

114 The school, with the support of the local education authority, has planned effectively for

the literacy hour. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils are given tasks that are appropriately matched to their capabilities and that will interest them. Literacy skills are extended into other subjects, such as religious education and history. There are good links with the themes in assemblies and pupils use their research skills to find information in the library well.

115 Pupils have good attitudes towards work. They are eager to read the text or their own work and they answer questions with enthusiasm. Pupils sustain concentration well. Pupils put up their hands rather than call out in discussions. They are sensible and work quietly in pairs, groups or independently. Pupils quietly help pupils with special educational needs, and, on one occasion, a pupil with special educational needs went to help another child in the class who was unsure of the next step. Pupils are adapting well to the expectations during the literacy hour of working quietly without direct supervision for part of the lesson. They work well together and respond well to the sensitive management.

116 The teaching of English is good in both key stages. Teachers make good use of the guidelines for the National Literacy Strategy and plan their work very carefully and thoughtfully. Where two teachers work with groups during the week, they liaise carefully and lessons follow on well from each other. Teachers make good use of teaching materials, such as the big books, and have a range of interesting activities. They plan links with other areas of the curriculum with imagination and forethought. Teachers use praise effectively to stimulate thought, but are always available to suggest ways of improving work. They ask challenging questions during the lesson and respond to pupils' answers sensitively. Teachers and support staff work well together and relationships between staff and pupils are good.

117 The co-ordinator and the adviser from the local education authority monitor the implementation of the Literacy Strategy carefully to ensure that a good balance of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills is maintained across the mixed-age groups. Resources to support the teaching of English are satisfactory and, as needs are identified, the co-ordinator develops resources appropriately. The co-ordinator joined the school staff only last term but is aware of the formal assessments in place and, with the adviser, has analysed results effectively to identify priorities for action. Emphasis has been placed on the implementation of the literacy hour to improve pupils' progress and attainment in English and two teachers are involved in further training. The English curriculum is being rewritten to take account of the Literacy Strategy and give further structure to pupils' learning.

118 There is an attractive library area and this is used well. Pupils know the organisation of the library and this allows them to develop their research skills further. There is a wide range of books in the Reception/Year 1 class and the school is developing a useful range of non-fiction and reference material.

110 **Mathematics**

119 Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with national averages and pupils make sound progress. In lessons where teaching is good they often make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.

120 Results of national tests show a very variable picture, fluctuating considerably from year to year, depending on the different characteristics of the very small year groups. In national tests in 1998 at the end of Key Stage 1 results were very low in comparison with the national average and no pupil achieved Level 3. When compared to the results achieved in schools of a similar type, results were very low. However, within this very small cohort of pupils there were three pupils with statements of special educational need. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 1998 results were closer to the national average, though well below the performance of schools of a similar type. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 was also below average. Results of national tests in 1999 show a higher proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in both

key stages, with about one third reaching Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2. There is no apparent trend in test results over a three-year period. With such small numbers of pupils statistical analysis is unreliable and should be interpreted with caution.

121 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have gained a secure grounding in basic counting and skills of computation, which they use effectively for real purposes. Young pupils, for example, competently work out how many biscuits to put in a bag for each child when sharing out the biscuits they have made in the group, or calculate the cost of five biscuits. They know the mathematical vocabulary associated with shape, for example that a cylinder has two faces. All can count money and calculate which coins are required to make up given amounts. Through undertaking practical tasks with coins they understand the relationship between money and number and learn to add and subtract sums of money. Higher attainers can count on to calculate the amount of change required in a transaction. All the pupils know how to make a simple tally chart to record data, such as how frequently they pick up different coloured blocks in a random sample, and can make realistic predictions about the outcome of simple mathematical problems.

122 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils handle numbers with growing confidence and a deeper understanding. For example, they mentally calculate increasingly complex problems relating to the cost of fairground rides. Older pupils understand the principles of probability and collect and collate data relating to their investigations, for example of how frequently particular letters recur in a text. Higher attaining pupils investigate the patterns in number sequences and use correct mathematical vocabulary when explaining their work.

123 In the majority of lessons pupils make sound progress through frequent practice and consolidation of skills in increasingly demanding tasks. They make good progress in lessons where the pace is brisk and activities make demands on them. Pupils in all classes develop their skills in mental agility and improve the speed and accuracy of their responses through regular practice. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the way they are integrated into oral lessons through skilful well-pitched questioning by teachers and suitable tasks that match their abilities.

124 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. They participate enthusiastically in oral activities, answering questions eagerly, showing that they are attentive and well motivated. In group activities they work together well, sharing ideas and discussing their work thoughtfully. Most are enthusiastic about their work, some citing mathematics as their favourite subject. They show considerable independence when organising their work behaviour is consistently good. Though most activities are collaborative and require conversation noise levels in the classrooms are low.

125 The quality of teaching is good in most lessons and never less than satisfactory. Features of the good teaching include questioning of high quality that draws in pupils of all levels of attainment and develops mathematical understanding, tasks which are well matched to pupils' needs and very good relationships which result in pupils working hard. When all of these features are present the progress made by pupils is good. Just occasionally higher attaining pupils do not make the best possible progress in their development of number skills because of unnecessary reinforcement of clearly understood mathematical processes, which makes little demands on them. In the best lessons the teacher makes the explanation challenging and entertaining to capture the interest of the pupils. This is then followed up by circulation among the pupils to provide encouragement and support and to correct misconceptions and reinforce teaching points. When this does not happen and pupils are left with too little help from an adult they make less progress.

126 There is some variation in the way in which teachers assess their pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and informal assessments are generally helpful and accurate. However, without

the benefit of a systematic whole-school approach assessments are not always used as effectively as they might be, for example to monitor progress or pupils' performance in different aspects of the curriculum.

127 The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is at an early stage. Teachers are becoming more confident with the format and planning their work to take account of the prescribed structure for each lesson, particularly the mental component. The policy for mathematics has been superseded by the National Numeracy Strategy, which now forms the basis of teachers' medium term plans. The use of numeracy to promote other subjects such as geography and science is satisfactory, though not as strong as it could be. Information technology is used well in mathematics, for example to collect and present data. At the time of the previous inspection standards and the quality of teaching were similar to those seen currently.

122

122 Science

128 In Key Stage 1 in 1998 teacher assessments placed pupils' performance below the national average. Results in 1999 are closer to the national average. In Key Stage 2 in 1998 attainment in national tests was about average, though the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 was above the national average. Results were below average when compared with those found in similar schools. Results in 1999 reflect a similar pattern, over two thirds of the pupils reaching the expected level or above. However, because of the small size of the year groups and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some classes, the analysis of statistical data does not give a reliable picture of attainment in the school as a whole.

129 Standards of attainment are close to the national average in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have covered an appropriate range of topics and have begun to understand simple scientific processes. For example, they know that electricity makes domestic appliances work and they can name examples of electrical appliances. They know which of their toys are powered by batteries, understanding that a battery harnesses electricity. They begin to undertake simple scientific investigations such as how to make cars vary their speed when descending a slope. Higher attainers can explain how to make the cars slow down, go faster and change direction. They record their findings in simple pictorial form. By the end of the key stage they can make an electrical circuit competently and introduce a switch to turn on a light. They understand that the plastic coating on scissors is insulation.

130 By the end of Key Stage 2 they are knowledgeable about their teeth, differentiating between the different types of teeth and their respective functions. They confidently recount investigations they have made with plants, describing, for example, the things plants need for healthy growth and what happened and why when they placed sticks of celery in coloured water. By the end of the key stage their understanding of electricity has deepened and they create more complex circuits, understanding that additional batteries will provide more power to make the lights brighter. They are familiar with insulators and conductors and most predict the outcome of their experiments with circuits accurately.

131 Progress is satisfactory overall and it accelerates in Key Stage 2. As they move through the school pupils deepen their understanding of scientific processes through practical activities that build effectively on what they have learned previously. For example, younger pupils in Key Stage 2 can make deductions about insulation and conductors from their experiments and discussion. They replicate the teacher's example and then try their own experiments that lead them to understand that a covering of paint prevents metal from being a good conductor. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 extend their understanding of electricity by using their basic knowledge to help them to interpret more complex circuit diagrams and diagnose why a light bulb will not light

up. They become increasingly confident at evaluating and modifying their circuits to make them better.

132 In both key stages pupils' attitudes to their work are good. They work productively in pairs or friendship groups, discussing their work maturely. They are confident enough to experiment with equipment, drawing on their past knowledge to help them form hypotheses and predict outcomes. In practical tasks pupils help and support each other, as was seen in an incident when one pupil sensitively offered to assist a pupil with special educational needs with cutting out. They persevere with activities and show delight at their achievements, for example when successfully making a bulb light up.

133 The quality of teaching is sound overall and often good in Key Stage 2. Effective deployment of staff capitalises on teachers' subject knowledge and interest in the subject. This practice ensures that most pupils benefit from the specialist teaching that contributes to their progress. When the teaching is good pupils are given challenging, open-ended tasks that require them to think carefully about their work and employ several different skills such as predicting outcomes and considering the reasons why things go wrong. For example, when older pupils were unsuccessful in completing their circuit they were able to re-trace their steps to find the problem and they made good progress in their learning. Despite the apparent informality in lessons, high expectations of behaviour ensure that all pupils concentrate on their tasks. The teacher's secure subject knowledge translates into interesting and clear explanations. The complexities of teaching classes with mixed year groups are overcome through thorough knowledge of the individual pupils and careful planning for their needs.

134 The teaching practice in the school is considerably better than the documentation. Though curriculum planning ensures that learning builds effectively on past experiences this is not explicit in the medium-term plans. These simply list the National Curriculum content to be covered but give no clear indication of how skills will be extended as pupils move through the school. There is no common system to assess pupils and monitor their progress, though teachers do assess informally in their own way. The last inspection in 1996 reported similar standards which have been sustained successfully.

122 OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

122 Information Technology

135 In the Reception/Year 1 class no information technology was seen during the inspection. Teachers' planning and discussion with staff and pupils suggest that though pupils in this class are introduced to computers and they learn to control a mouse, the structured use of information technology for a variety of purposes is limited. Pupils' progress rapidly accelerates from Year 2 and subsequently, when they are taught by a teacher with considerable expertise in the subject. Overall progress is sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national standards; by the end of Key Stage 2 it is higher than this.

136 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have developed basic word-processing skills using the save, delete and capital letter facilities. Most can key-in text and change the size and style of font of their writing. They readily access and close the files and programs they require and print their work when it is complete. They can access information from a CD-ROM encyclopaedia and use computer programs to help consolidate their work in most subjects.

137 Older pupils in Key Stage 2 can access the school website, adding their own information when required. They create a database competently to show the frequency with which particular letters occur in a text. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are competent and

familiar with a wide range of skills in information technology. They use a mapping program to extend their geographical knowledge and prepare databases in mathematics. When describing their work they use the correct vocabulary. Pupils who have confidence and experience use their skills effectively to help others. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well by teachers and other pupils and work on carefully structured tasks that enable them to achieve success.

138 Progress by the end of Key Stage 2 is good but in the early part of Key Stage 1 pupils do not use computers in a sufficiently structured way to make more than minimal progress. Throughout the school pupils have frequent access to the computers and many are able to develop what has been learned in school on their computers at home. Computer skills are taught directly in an entertaining way that is carefully structured to provide increasingly challenging material. Pupils are taught in small steps and they then consolidate their new skills through practice in pairs and individually. They use computer programs to help consolidate their work in most subjects of the curriculum, and particularly in mathematics, geography, science and English. Pupils with special educational needs make suitable progress.

139 Pupils have very positive attitudes to information technology. They enjoy working on the equipment and concentrate well on the tasks they are given without direct adult supervision. They are eager to show their skills and use correct vocabulary when talking about their work. They explain the processes they have applied with good levels of understanding and maturity, using the correct terminology as a matter of course. They are highly motivated and demonstrate sustained effort. Pupils work well together on tasks, co-operating well in pairs and helping each other in solving problems. They respect property and accept responsibility well. They are excited when they achieve the right result to a problem. Many show good levels of resourcefulness and are not always dependent on the teacher. Pupils derive much enjoyment and satisfaction from their work.

140 The quality of teaching is good in Year 2 and throughout Key Stage 2. At times it is very good. Most lessons are taken by a teacher who has a secure knowledge and understanding of information technology and this enables pupils to make good progress. No teaching was observed in the early part of Key Stage 1, though there is considerable variation in the levels of expertise among staff. In the best lessons whole-class teaching is supplemented by individual support and encouragement to pupils who experience any difficulties. This approach enables pupils who are proficient with computers to tutor their peers and adds to their personal development. Information technology is used imaginatively to develop most subjects and tasks are well chosen to link with class topics. The time used on computers is frequent, productive and well monitored. The teacher gives appropriate support, without being over-directive. The management of pupils and resources is good.

122 141 The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, who keeps up to date with current issues. The school is well resourced with a ratio of one computer per two pupils. There is plenty of software to support most subjects and a good range of peripherals such as printers and a digital camera. The recently produced policy produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has been adopted by the school and this provides good support for planning, ensuring that pupils develop skills in an appropriate sequence as they progress through the school. A newly developed system of storing pupils' work in portfolios on a database has been collated by older pupils. This has the potential, when fully established, to provide an effective means of monitoring progress. The school has recently been successful in its bid for funding for an exciting project with a local independent school to link information technology with literacy. This is a good opportunity both in terms of curriculum and staff development and in the fostering of links with another school community.

122 Religious education

142 During the inspection it was possible to observe only one lesson in religious education. This was in Key Stage 1. From this, observations of assemblies, scrutiny of displays and planning, and discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, it is judged that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Attainment in religious education is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus in both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at both key stages.

143 Pupils in Key Stage 1 have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of aspects of Christianity. For example, they are aware of Christian festivals and celebrations, such as Easter, Christmas and baptisms. They refer to stories from the Bible and have an awareness of other religions. For instance, they know some of the practices and beliefs of Judaism and Islam.

Pupils begin to understand the links between faith and symbols, such as the Christian crosses and the Jewish Torah. Pupils respond to the natural world and have an understanding of the effects of seasonal change on the world about them. They see how environmental changes in the seasons affect us. For example, pupils sort clothes into groups of those appropriate for hot or cold weather with little difficulty, and much humour, explaining their choices clearly.

144 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have an appropriate understanding of aspects of Christianity and other faiths. They can explain the value of friendship and consider the different groups to which people belong. They recognise the significance of the Easter story and identify the use of religious artefacts, such as the Bible in Christianity and the Koran in Islam. They are aware of the stories of the Old and New Testaments and find references in the Bible for the stories which are told to them. Pupils learn about values and distinguish between the myths and legends and stories from the Bible. For example, they enjoy hearing the story of Pandora's box and how it was opened to bring evils and hope into the world. They contrast this tale with other versions and stories they have heard. Pupils are aware of the difference between points of view and facts.

145 Pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils consolidate earlier learning and develop their understanding and knowledge of religions steadily. For example, in Key Stage 1 they learn about Hanukkah and special people. In Key Stage 2 they learn more of the interior of a synagogue, Jewish practices and beliefs and belonging to a Jewish community. They learn of the lives of famous people and care for the environment. Pupils develop a deeper understanding of the messages delivered in assemblies about truth and trust. They learn the meaning and purpose of prayer and join in prayers reverently and thoughtfully. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress. In the secure, supportive environment they are able to participate alongside their friends.

146 The response of pupils is good. Pupils sit and listen well, enjoy discussions and contribute willingly to the lesson or in assembly. They enjoy humour but think hard about what is being said to them.

147 The teaching in the lesson seen was satisfactory. The teacher made pupils feel that their contributions were valued and all pupils were given an opportunity to answer and ask questions.

148 The co-ordinator is reviewing the policy, and the scheme of work is linked well to the locally Agreed Syllabus. There are good materials to support the teaching and the co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop the work on other faiths and religions further. Resources are good and there are several visitors to the school who support units of work. Assemblies make a good contribution to religious education in the school and the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

149 In both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress in their acquisition of skills and by the end of each key stage their work is typical of that found in primary schools. In Key Stage 1 pupils know the names of primary colours and are beginning to understand which colours combine to make a particular shade. They know how to mix and apply powder paint and can paint recognisable representations of colourful objects from close observation. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into groups and make sound progress.

1The youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 extend their drawing skills, learning how to place facial features in the correct position. They extend their understanding of proportion and know how to use pencils to achieve a range of effects. The pencil skills of the oldest pupils in the school become more sophisticated when they are used to achieve shade and tone in line drawing. They study the work of artists such as Antoni Gaudi and reproduce his style in line drawings and clay sculptures of high quality. The quality of work achieved in the lessons taught by a subject specialist often exceeds that seen in illustrative work in other subjects, particularly among older pupils. Skills learned in art lessons are not always transferred to drawing in other subjects and some work lacks the precision and detail seen typically at the end of Key Stage 2.

151 Pupils in both key stages make sound progress in developing their skills. In Key Stage 1 they practise and improve their ability to use a paintbrush correctly to achieve the best results and become more adept at mixing colours accurately. Through studying the work of other artists, older pupils broaden their understanding of the ways in which art forms relate to each other, for example when they extend their simple line drawings into striking mono-print designs. They broaden their repertoire of skills with a range of different techniques and materials and extend their ability to evaluate their work.

152 The attitudes of pupils throughout the school are good overall. They enjoy their art and sustain concentration during the lessons. They listen attentively to the teacher's explanation and try hard to follow it up in their own work. Behaviour is generally good. Pupils co-operate well with the sharing of resources and work independently and sensibly.

153 The quality of teaching is consistently good because most art lessons are taught by a subject specialist. This has a positive impact on the quality of art in the school because pupils are given informed and helpful individual support to help them improve their work. Where art activities are taught by teachers with less subject knowledge the standard of work is not as high as in the lessons taken by the specialist because other teachers do not all have the same level of expertise. Occasionally the lesson content is too advanced for the pupils with the result that they are not always clear about what is expected of them. Teachers' lesson plans are meticulous and well focused on what pupils are to learn and how it will be achieved. Lessons are well managed and organised to make the best use of time. Good use is made of assessments to determine the progress made by pupils and plan the next stage of learning.

154 The quality of medium-term planning is very good, showing clearly how skills in art are sequenced to build on one another. The recently introduced sketchbooks are an effective means of assessing pupils' work. Pupils' work is valued in the attractive displays mounted in the school.

150 **Design and technology**

155 Only one lesson was observed. This was with the younger pupils of Key Stage 2. From this, scrutiny of teachers' plans and displays, and discussion with the co-ordinator, it is judged

that the quality of the school's work has been maintained since the last inspection. From this evidence, boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at both key stages.

156 Pupils in the Reception/Year 1 class use biscuits the youngest pupils have made as a basis for their mathematics lesson, deciding how many calculations one can do with them – before eating them, of course. They learn how to mix, measure and weigh, as well as using tools to cut out their biscuits from the rolled dough. Pupils pleat card to make storybooks in an art and design lesson, before drawing and writing their story on the pages they have made.

157 Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 develop their skills of cutting and sticking when they make boxes for biscuits the older pupils will prepare. They know that tabs and flaps are needed for assembling the box and how to take it apart and label the parts on the “net” they make. Pupils create an interesting display of wrappers and pick out catchy, easily remembered slogans that tempt people to buy a product. When studying a range of packets, they write clearly and well to describe the boxes and their special features. These make an attractive and interesting display in the library. Key Stage 2 pupils work with clay to produce exciting towers in the style of Antonio Gaudi. The quality of the modelling of the clay and painting is very high and the display of these architectural sculptures is aesthetically pleasing and inspiring.

158. Throughout the school pupils acquire an appropriate range of skills which they use to make models and artefacts. They handle tools with increasing precision and develop the ability to evaluate their work, suggesting how it might be improved.

159 In the one lesson seen in Key Stage 2 pupils' response was good. They listened well and helped each other with the task. Pupils were proud of what they achieved in the lesson.

160 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Resources are prepared and used well and the teacher's instructions clear. Pupils understand what they are to achieve and are encouraged to plan their work carefully.

161 The co-ordinator is new to the role but is enthusiastic and has prepared clear guidelines to develop the subject throughout the school. Resources for the subject as currently planned are satisfactory.

150 **History/Geography**

162 Attainment is judged to be typical for the ages of the pupils and they make satisfactory progress in both subjects. No geography lessons were observed because curriculum planning focuses on history this term. Evidence was gathered from medium term plans, pupils' work samples and through discussions with pupils.

163 In history the youngest pupils in the school know some of the differences between domestic life now and in the past and understand that people grow older and change in that time. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils gain knowledge and understanding of past events through an appropriate range of practical experiences. They accurately recall events and characters in Greek myths. They are knowledgeable about life in Ancient Greece and use artefacts to help them form hypotheses and make observations. By the end of the key stage they recount the story of Perseus and Medusa in greater detail, summarising events pictorially. They confidently recall the things they have learned about Ancient Egypt and are able to make comparisons between the Egyptians and the Greeks.

1In geography pupils in Key Stage 1 know what types of clothing are suitable for winter or summer. They become aware of the key features of the place where they live. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 know about the water cycle and settlements and they develop appropriate mapping skills. Through their study of a distant place they gain an insight into the similarities and geographical differences between St Lucia and the United Kingdom. They use enquiry skills to build up a picture of everyday life on a Caribbean island, for example by formulating questions to pose to local people about their life-style.

165 Satisfactory progress is made in developing the skills associated with history and geography. Pupils make suitable gains in knowledge and they widen their vocabulary. They increase their capacity to record their findings in a variety of ways. They appropriately extend their range of enquiry and investigative skills to find out about the past and other places. Good use is made of reference materials to find out information for their topics. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress through the adult support they receive.

2Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are good overall; at times they are very good. Pupils are attentive and responsive, often making mature observations and perceptive comments. When engaged in group tasks they are co-operative and willing to help each other. They are able to work independently, pursuing their own line of enquiry.

167 The quality of teaching is sound overall. Teachers have sufficient knowledge of the subjects to teach them with confidence. Effective links are made between geography and history. Through the teacher's careful selection of appropriate stories the youngest children establish an understanding of change and family history. Explanations in history lessons are clear, well informed and supplemented by questions that encourage pupils to think about what they have learned. There is a suitable balance between the acquisition of knowledge and the development of enquiry skills such as using evidence to draw conclusions.

168 The curriculum in history and geography is appropriately rooted in National Curriculum programmes of study. The subjects make a good contribution to speaking and listening through class discussions that extend skills in questioning, reasoning and speculating. Literacy and information technology are both used extensively to support the subjects. There is less emphasis on the use of numeracy in the subjects. There are sufficient resources to teach the curriculum in geography and history, including artefacts for pupils to handle and investigate, videos and challenging computer programs. The school makes good use of local places of interest to develop pupils' experiences in history and geography.

165 **Music**

169 Only one lesson in the Reception/Year 1 class was observed. Evidence was taken from this and observations of assemblies, discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator. According to this evidence, the achievement of pupils in music has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress.

170 Pupils in the Reception/Year 1 class acquire a broad repertoire of songs, rhymes and action songs. They listen to taped music well and join in the echo in the songs tunefully and spontaneously. They are aware of rests and make sensible suggestions about the noises they are asked to identify on the tape. Pupils learn to play the rhythm of a phrase, for example "my red bike," on three chime bars accurately and hold the beater at a good angle. Pupils pick up the rhythm of "Who stole the cookie jar?" very quickly and then listen thoughtfully to quiet music. One spoke movingly of a sad moment of which the music reminds her and most had some comment to offer.

170 In assemblies music is used well to create an atmosphere of warmth and coming together. Pupils join in with the playing of the headteacher's guitar so that there is soon a group of four playing guitars and recorders to accompany the singing. Pupils play accurately without reading any music and the rest of the school sing the hymns tunefully and joyfully. Music adds much to assemblies.

171 Pupils respond very well to music. The youngest pupils are delighted to have books to share and find words and notes on the pages of their books. They maintain concentration well and try very hard to get their playing right when it is their turn to play.

172 In the lesson seen the teaching was good. The teacher emphasised the importance of listening carefully and had high expectations of what pupils would achieve. Praise and encouragement were used well and the teacher made good use of the taped resource and the instruments.

173 Music also makes a good contribution to the French lesson, when pupils learn the days of the week through song. This technique was learned on a course by the parent leading the lesson and had a clear impact on the learning of the pupils in the lesson. Pupils have an opportunity to learn guitar and recorder and they value the quality of the teaching they receive. Many older pupils learn to read notation and this helps them when they are composing and performing. The programme of study of the National Curriculum is met over the year and there are resources of good quality to support pupils' learning.

165 **Physical education**

174 Only one lesson was observed in physical education, in the Reception/Year 1 class. From this and observations of pupils on sports day and the adventure playground, discussion with the co-ordinator and scrutiny of planning, it is judged that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. All pupils go swimming during the year and most pupils quickly acquire confidence in the water and learn to swim a least 25 metres before the end of Key Stage 2.

175 Pupils in the Reception/Year 1 class hop, skip and jump along to music, using the limited space with increasing confidence. They stretch and curl, the older ones with greater control of their body and limbs, and jump with two feet together. Pupils put together a short sequence of movements very effectively. When outside, they run around the field twice without any difficulty, before practising their skipping, hopping and striding movements. They quickly learn to use the additional space well and distinguish between right and left when playing in a circle. They practise their understanding and recall of north, south, east and west, co-ordinate their turns well until they do it consistently, before cooling down at the end of the lesson.

176 In both key stages the majority of pupils show agility and good co-ordination when participating in a variety of races on sports day. They swing, climb, balance and pivot on the playground equipment and use the space when playing with balls and other equipment in the playground safely and sensibly.

177 Pupils respond well in physical education lessons. They dress appropriately with footwear that is suitable for indoor and outdoor activities. They enjoy the activities and follow sensibly instructions from the tape and the teacher. They listen carefully and are enthusiastic and co-operative.

178 In the one lesson seen the quality of teaching was good and the teacher made the

expectations clear to the pupils. Good use was made of the classroom space and the lesson was extended effectively into the playground. The teacher stimulated pupils' interest and response by her own imaginative response to the music. The lesson was well balanced and planned to give opportunities for pupils to practise basic skills in a wide range of interesting activities. There was an enjoyable warm-up session at the beginning of the lesson and time to cool down at the end.

179 The requirements of the National Curriculum are met over the year and include outdoor pursuits for the oldest pupils. The indoor activities are limited by the lack of a hall but the school makes good use of its outdoor facilities. Teams are involved in inter-school netball and football games and sports tournaments with other schools, which provide additional opportunities for personal and social development

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

180 Three inspectors, including a lay inspector, visited the school for a total of six inspection days, totalling over 50 hours. During this time, 28 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work, listened to a sample of pupils from all classes and year groups read, and examined a sample of pupils' previous work. This included work completed by pupils in most areas of the curriculum and provided a representative sample from pupils of all ages and attainment. Displays in classes and public areas were examined.

181 Teachers' planning, records of pupils' attainment and progress, and samples of annual reports to parents were examined. A wide range of school documentation was examined, including school policies and guidelines, minutes of meetings and the school development plan. All documents and records relating to pupils with special educational needs were also inspected.

182 Acts of worship were observed and interviews were held with teachers, non-teaching staff, the school secretary, several members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a number of parents and visitors to the school.

183 The Registered Inspector also held a meeting attended by 37 parents shortly before the inspection. In addition, 21 responses to the questionnaires completed by parents were analysed.

184 DATA AND INDICATORS

165 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	49	5	11	4

165 Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	3.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.8

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	20

Average class size:	16
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165 Financial data

Financial year:	1998/9
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	£
Total Income	131,950
Total Expenditure	122,450
Expenditure per pupil	2,661.96
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,500
Balance carried forward to next year	19,000

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

36

Number of questionnaires returned:

21

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	28	57	14	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	48	33	5	10	5
The school handles complaints from parents well	19	38	33	10	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	24	48	5	24	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	14	71	10	5	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	33	48	14	5	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	38	52	10	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	29	33	24	14	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	52	33	10	5	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	48	33	14	5	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	62	33	0	5	0