

INSPECTION REPORT

SHEPEAU STOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shepeau Stow, Spalding

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120422

Headteacher: Mr. D. O'Brien

Reporting inspector: Mr. M. Thompson
25372

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th March 2001

Inspection number: 187506

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Dowsdale Bank
Shepeau Stow
Spalding
Lincolnshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. R. Yorath

Date of previous inspection: February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25372	Mike Thompson	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Science; Information and communication technology; Design and technology.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9053	Vivienne Phillips	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18709	Nina Bee	<i>Team inspector</i>	The foundation stage; Special educational needs; English; Geography; Music; Physical education; Religious education.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18241	Wendy Harknett	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and design; History.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shepeau Stow Primary School is a small school, located about ten miles to the north-east of Peterborough. There are 81 pupils on roll, taught in three classes. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, although none is entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs, at 16 per cent of the school roll, is slightly below the national average. However, six of these pupils have statements of special need, which entitle them to extra help, and a further pupil is awaiting a statement. This number of pupils with severe learning difficulties is very high in relation to the size of the school and is more than four times the national average. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Pupils are admitted to the school in a single intake at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls. Shortly after admission, these youngest children are assessed, using a nationally accredited 'baseline assessment'. The results of these assessments fluctuate considerably from year to year but, overall, attainment on entry to the school is about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school which provides good value for money. Teaching is generally of good quality and pupils learn well in lessons. Overall, academic standards are average and standards of behaviour and pupils' personal development are above average. The good learning in classes is not translated into good progress over time and into higher academic standards, particularly in the core subjects of English and science, because of weaknesses in the assessment of pupils in English and the curriculum in science. The school is well led and managed and provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop skills outside lessons, particularly in sport and the arts.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The standards achieved by 11 year olds are above average in mathematics, music and French.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good; they behave well, form very good relationships and make good progress in their personal development.
- Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well integrated into the life of the school and receive good quality help.
- Overall, arrangements for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are good.
- The school is good at caring for its pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good or better in over two thirds of lessons.
- The school is well led and managed.
- The youngest children are given a good start to their education.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards achieved in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE) by seven and 11 year olds, and standards achieved in geography by 11 year olds.
- The way in which the curriculum is planned in science and the foundation subjects¹.
- The way in which the school uses assessment information to help pupils to make better progress, particularly higher-attaining pupils.
- The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1996. The key issues from the previous inspection report have been fully addressed. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects, though some of these now need to be reviewed. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are now met, the cost-effectiveness of the school is monitored more closely, and the accommodation has been improved. Standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved, and pupils' positive attitudes to school, standards of behaviour and the quality of relationships have been sustained. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is better, and its good standards of teaching, leadership, and care for pupils have been maintained. Good quality teaching of French has been introduced in Years 5 and 6. However, standards in ICT, RE and geography are not as good as they were.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	D	C	D
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	B	C	D	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The information shows, for example, that standards in English in the national tests for the year 2000 were average in comparison with those achieved in all schools nationally. However, when compared with the English test results achieved by schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were below average. The grades that appear in the chart need to be viewed with some caution because, in each of the years, the group of pupils tested was small. When this occurs, changes in the performance of a single pupil can disproportionately affect the overall grade of a subject.

¹ Foundation subjects are those other than the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science.

A more statistically reliable method of assessing the school's performance is achieved by combining the results of individual pupils over the past four years. This longer-term view of a larger number of pupils shows that standards over this period are average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. The year-on-year rate of improvement is above the national trend.

Inspection findings show that attainment, in terms of the proportion of Year 6 pupils likely to achieve or exceed the national target of Level 4 by the end of the school year, is above average in mathematics and music. The study of French is not a national requirement at Key Stage 2, but the standards achieved are better than those normally seen in schools in which French is taught to this age group of pupils. Attainment in English, science, art and design, design and technology, history and physical education is about average. Attainment in geography is below what is expected nationally because the subject is not taught in enough depth. Standards in ICT are also below average because the lack of some programs and items of equipment means that some elements of the planned curriculum are not taught. Standards in RE are below those expected in the local Agreed Syllabus. This is because not enough time is spent on reinforcing what has been taught.

The attainment of seven year-olds is average in all subjects except ICT and RE, where it is below average. Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics, music and French, and satisfactory progress in all other subjects except ICT, geography and RE. The school is on course to achieve the realistic targets set for 11 year-olds' performance in English and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very keen to come to school, and enjoy their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in class and play sensibly together at break times.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships within the school are very good and pupils are good at taking responsibility for tasks around the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory, and in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The standards of teaching observed at the time of the previous inspection have been sustained. Of the 28 lessons observed, three were very good, 16 were good and nine were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

The most consistently good teaching is provided for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Other good features are the teaching in French and science. Skills in literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily. Strengths of teaching are teachers' good subject knowledge, the clear explanations they give to pupils, high expectations of behaviour, and the good quality of individual help for pupils, because teachers know their pupils so well. The impact of his good teaching is that pupils work hard and at a good pace, because they know precisely what they have to do. Pupils sustain high levels of concentration on their tasks because teachers stimulate their interest. The chief weakness of teaching is that sometimes all pupils are given the same basic tasks to do, irrespective of their prior attainment. Therefore higher-attaining pupils are sometimes not challenged enough. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are often well taught and receive good quality help from skilled learning support assistants.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant. However, planning for science and the foundation subjects lacks important detail. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage children is sound, but needs to be developed further to reflect new national recommendations.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are well supported by all members of the school community.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Arrangements for developing pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness are satisfactory. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school knows its pupils very well and provides a good standard of care for them.

There is a good working partnership between the school and the parents. While the planned curriculum for ICT meets requirements, the lack of some equipment means that it cannot be fully taught. The school assesses its pupils regularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but does not always make the best use of the resulting information.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. All staff work together well as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are committed and supportive. They have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in shaping its future development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school regularly looks at how well pupils are progressing, but does not consistently record the information in enough detail. Governors are beginning to apply the principles of 'best value' by comparing the school's performance against costs.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its staff, accommodation and equipment well. Money provided for specific purposes, such as for special educational needs, is well spent.

The school is well staffed and its accommodation and levels of books and equipment are satisfactory. The lack of provision for ICT has been recognised, and work is underway to install an ICT suite.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; • Their children are well taught and make good progress; • Teachers expect their children to work hard; • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible; • Teachers are approachable; • Behaviour in the school is good; • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework provided; • Information provided about children's progress; • The school's partnership with parents; • The range of activities provided outside lessons.

Inspectors' judgements support almost all of the parents' positive views. Overall, pupils are well taught and make good progress in lessons, but progress over time is only satisfactory because of weaknesses in the curriculum for science and the foundation subjects and in the way in which assessment information is used.

With regard to the areas that parents would like to see improved:

- The amount of homework provided reflects the school's policy statement. In general, homework is not frequently used to complement learning in school.
- Inspectors agree that information about pupils' progress could be better. Reports provide a good general outline of progress, but because of weaknesses in assessment procedures they lack precise detail of individual targets that need to be achieved.
- The school's partnership with parents is good. However, the way in which the school keeps all parents informed needs to be reviewed.
- The range of activities provided outside lessons is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Each year, the numbers of pupils taking the national tests at the end of both key stages are small. Conclusions drawn from the results achieved in a single year may therefore be unreliable, because the performance of a single pupil can disproportionately affect the overall percentage score. A more statistically reliable sample is achieved by combining the results of individual pupils over the past four years. This method shows that, during this period, about 80 per cent of seven year-olds tested at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and writing, and almost ninety per cent of those tested in mathematics, achieved or exceeded the national target of Level 2. Standards achieved over this period are broadly average in all three areas tested.
2. When results at the end of Key Stage 2 are viewed over the same period, 73 per cent of 11 year-olds achieved or exceeded the national target of Level 4 in English, and 77 per cent achieved Level 4 in science. Results in mathematics were better, with 83 per cent of pupils at or above the expected level. Standards achieved over this period are average in English and science and well above average in mathematics.
3. Published targets for performance are clearly affected by the small size of year groups. For example, while the school is on course to achieve its targets for English and mathematics in the national tests for 2001, the actual percentage of pupils at Level 4 may either be well in excess of its subject target or well short. This can occur because each pupil taking the tests equates to eight per cent of the school's total score.
4. Inspection findings broadly reflect the results of the national tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is average in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above average in mathematics, music and French, and average in English, science, art and design, design and technology, history and physical education. Attainment is below average in information and communication technology (ICT) at the end of both key stages and in geography at the end of Key Stage 2. In ICT, the lack of hardware and software means that some elements of the subject are not taught, while in geography the subject is not taught in enough depth. Attainment in religious education is below what the local Agreed Syllabus expects pupils to achieve at the end of both key stages because, as is the case in geography, not enough time has been spent on developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls.
5. Shortly after children start school at the start of their reception year, their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics and personal and social development are assessed by means of a nationally accredited 'baseline assessment'. Results of these assessments, carried out over the past four years, show that attainment sometimes varies considerably from year to year, because of the effects that the performance of individual children can have on a small yearly sample. Taken overall, attainment on entry is average, but barely so.

6. Children quickly settle into school because of the good induction procedures. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage year as a result of good teaching and of the teacher's clear understanding of the way in which very young children learn. Owing to the small number on roll, children in the Foundation Stage are taught alongside pupils in Key Stage 1. The needs of the Foundation Stage children are properly met, although more work needs to be done to link planning more closely to the new curriculum guidance for these children.

7. Throughout the school pupils make satisfactory progress overall. A particularly good feature of pupils' progress is the development of good social skills. To a degree this comes from the way in which pupils are grouped in mixed-age classes, since older pupils have regular opportunities to help those younger than themselves and show them what to do. The acquisition of these skills is an important factor in the development of the strong sense of community which permeates all aspects of the school's work.

8. Teachers get to know their pupils very well, because there are so few pupils and they are likely to be taught by the same teacher for more than one year. Consequently, the day-to-day needs of pupils are generally well met. However, information gained from periodic testing of pupils in English and mathematics is not always used well enough to determine precisely what needs to be taught next. Assessment in science and the foundation subjects is also in need of improvement. This is because of the lack of information provided by the curriculum planning on which assessment is based. In these subjects, progress over time is satisfactory, but it could be better if teachers knew precisely what should be taught and assessed.

9. Pupils make sound progress in developing skills in literacy at Key Stage 1. They listen carefully and show understanding by being able to follow instructions. By the age of seven they speak with clarity and fluency appropriate to their age. Pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds well to help them to decipher unfamiliar words and to produce phonetically acceptable attempts at spellings. Their growing vocabulary and knowledge of high-frequency words helps them to write with reasonable fluency. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make sound progress. Skills in speaking and listening steadily develop as pupils grow in confidence and maturity and begin to take an increasingly active role in their learning. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently explained the reasons for their findings when discussing tests carried out to explore the relationships between pulse rate and exercise. Reading skills also develop steadily as pupils use an increasing range of strategies, such as the context of a sentence, to help them to read more demanding text. Their improving skills in research help them to quickly locate information in non-fiction books. Pupils' improved punctuation and sound knowledge of basic grammar, together with the wide range of opportunities to write in a range of different styles, results in generally clear and fluent written work. However, while the style and content of pupils' writing is of a satisfactory standard, their work is not always carefully presented.

10. Pupils' skills in numeracy develop satisfactorily at Key Stage 1. Throughout this key stage their understanding of number and their skills in using numbers are regularly practised. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils show a developing knowledge of the place value of numbers up to 100 and accurately add and subtract two-digit numbers. Emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills in recognising the patterns created by numbers. These skills help them to learn about odd and even

numbers and to count on or back in fives and tens. However, higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged enough when teachers use the same materials for all ability groups. At Key Stage 2 pupils make more rapid progress. The best progress is made in Years 3 and 4 because of the consistently good standard of teaching. Pupils successfully develop their skills in estimation, so that by the time they are in Year 6 they have a good idea as to whether or not the answer to a calculation is likely to be correct. Their skills in manipulating numbers also develop well and they show speed and accuracy in mental arithmetic.

11. Skills of scientific enquiry develop satisfactorily at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 pupils develop a basic understanding of simple scientific principles such as 'fair testing' and learn how to record their answers in a logical way. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on this sound foundation and, by the end of the Key Stage, are able to make reasonable hypotheses based on the results of their experiments.

12. Pupils are given regular opportunities to improve their skills in literacy through their work in many other areas of the curriculum, although sometimes the use of photocopied worksheets for recording purposes reduces pupils' opportunities to plan their own writing. Skills in numeracy are regularly practised in subjects such as science and design and technology. However, apart from some word-processing and data handling, opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in ICT through other subjects are limited.

13. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with work matched to their prior attainment. All these pupils, including those with severe learning difficulties, play a full part in all activities and achieve at the same rate as their classmates. To a great extent, this is due to the good quality help provided by skilled learning support assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils are very keen to come to school. They enjoy their lessons and are ready to respond very well to the learning opportunities they are given. Where teaching is lively and focuses well on the different needs of groups and individuals, pupils show great interest and rapid involvement in activities. For instance, with skilled help provided by their learning support assistant, reception children were soon absorbed in a task of writing messages for people important to them and were very proud of the striking results. Even when work is not matched carefully to individual strengths and weaknesses, pupils are happy and willing to learn. Attitudes to school and learning are very good.

15. Behaviour is good, overall, in and out of lessons. Occasionally when assemblies or lessons are dull, pupils become slightly unsettled and lose concentration. When work is too easy or too difficult, one or two pupils become restless and distract others briefly. Most of the time they work and play together very well. During lessons, they usually do what is asked without fuss. They run around and play happily outside, and their behaviour shows no signs of the intimidation associated with bullies. They are polite and friendly and enjoy chatting to other people, including visitors. Exclusion is rare, but one pupil was excluded for good reason in the year before inspection.

Children in the Foundation Stage quickly settle into school and follow the same code of good behaviour as everyone else. This is because of the good example shown to them by older pupils.

16. Personal development and relationships are good overall. Pupils develop very good understanding of the effect their actions have on others, in response to the very strong moral and social codes of the school, which underpin its sense of community. They have good levels of respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. Within the school community such respect is very strong. It shows in the very positive way that pupils with special educational needs are treated and valued by their classmates. Respect and understanding are not as well developed in relation to people of different cultures and backgrounds from outside the local area. This is partly because of gaps in provision in religious education and other subjects, including the lack of a planned programme of personal and social education. Pupils are good at taking responsibility when given the chance, as in helping teachers set up lessons and assemblies. They use initiative well, for instance in organising their own playtime games. Relationships are very good. Pupils get on very well with each other and with adults. They co-operate very well when asked to work in groups. They often help each other quietly, without disturbing others, as in literacy lessons when the teacher is working with another group.

17. Attendance is satisfactory. Levels of attendance are about average, with unauthorised absence below that found nationally. Recently, there have been a few term-time holidays and unavoidable absences linked to long term medical conditions, and these have contributed to an absence rate that has otherwise been below average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is good in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2, and is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Almost seven out of ten lessons are good and about one in ten are very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the course of the inspection. The quality of teaching is similar to that observed at the time of the previous inspection in 1996.

19. Owing to the small size of the school and the way in which numbers vary considerably from year group to year group, pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. In the cases of Years 2 and 4, some year groups are split between classes. To address some of the difficulties posed by the way in which pupils in Year 2 are grouped, a part-time teacher is employed to teach literacy, numeracy and some science to the whole year group for three mornings each week. This also means that, during these sessions, there are fewer pupils in the two classes from which the Year 2 pupils come. In the third class, the headteacher is freed from class teaching responsibility for four mornings per week, so that he can carry out his monitoring and administrative tasks. During these sessions, a part-time teacher takes the class for literacy, numeracy and physical education. Once a week, a part-time teacher provides specialist teaching in French for pupils in Years 5 and 6, and specialist teaching in music is achieved by swapping classes. There is also a very high proportion of pupils with severe learning difficulties. Skilled learning support assistants help these pupils and, in addition, the school employs a learning support assistant to work with children in the Foundation Stage.

20. Judgements about the quality of teaching were made only in English, mathematics, science, physical education and French. In all other subjects, not enough lessons were observed to enable overall judgements to be made. The quality of teaching in French was very good in both the lessons seen, and all lessons in science were good. In English, mathematics and physical education teaching was satisfactory overall, but in all subjects in which just one or two lessons were observed the teaching was good or better. The most consistently good teaching was observed in Years 3 and 4.

21. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher has a good understanding of the way in which the youngest children learn, and the learning support assistant gives skilled help.

22. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of what they have to teach and give clear explanations to their pupils. They use a good range of different teaching methods and ways of organising their pupils, which vary according to what has to be taught. Expectations of behaviour are high, and as a result teachers are able to concentrate on teaching without having to spend time dealing with unsatisfactory behaviour. All teachers, and particularly the full-time staff, know their pupils very well and are good at ensuring that all pupils are involved in what is being taught.

23. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of their knowledge of the individual needs of pupils and their good relationship with their class to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged and that everyone is working hard. The combination of clear explanations of tasks and good preparation of resources ensures that all pupils get to work quickly and that no time is wasted. A good example of this quality of teaching and learning was observed in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4. The teacher made good use of the clear structure provided by the commercially produced scheme of work to ensure that pupils worked on the same basic task, but at different levels. She ensured that they were all fully involved in the introduction to the task, by using her skills in questioning to good effect, and similarly ensured that everyone had something to contribute to the plenary session at the end of the lesson, when she reviewed what had been learned.

24. In some lessons, teachers do not manage to challenge higher-attaining pupils enough. This happens when photocopied worksheets are used for all pupils, regardless of prior attainment. It also occurs when teachers are not experienced enough to know at precisely what level they are to teach in subjects in which the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is not clearly mapped out in the curriculum planning.

25. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported in their lessons by their teachers and the learning support assistants. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, in particular when they receive help from the learning support assistants. However, in some cases, teachers' planning does not always clearly identify the targets that pupils are working on. All adults enjoy good relationships with the pupils they work with. This results in pupils having positive attitudes to lessons and has an impact on learning in all areas of the curriculum.

26. During the course of the inspection, the only homework activities noted were those where pupils were required to practise their reading, and the research conducted by some pupils into the period of second world war. In general, homework does not appear to be frequently used to complement learning in school.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

27. The school provides a good range of worthwhile curricular opportunities which are relevant to the pupils' needs. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. However, apart from in English and mathematics, curriculum planning tends to focus on the topics to be taught and does not clearly map out the way in which pupils' skills are to be developed year by year. As a result, teachers are not given information as to precisely what skills are to be taught and at what level they are to be taught to different year groups. This weakness affects science and all foundation subjects, particularly geography, religious education, science and ICT. At present, teachers have individual pupils when deciding at what level to teach various activities. The weakness of this system is exposed when teachers who are less knowledgeable about individual pupils, or who are less informed about the step-by-step development of techniques in different subjects, have to plan and teach. In their present form, the curriculum plans recently adopted do not reflect the way in which pupils are grouped in mixed age-groups and the fact that sometimes age groups are split between classes.

28. The headteacher is aware of the need to review the time allocation of some subjects. Some lessons are too long and this affects learning over time, in particular when the pace of the lesson slows down.

29. The day-to-day planning of work for under fives is linked to the new national guidelines but is governed by the National Curriculum, which is taught to the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in the class. The curriculum for Foundation Stage children is not yet fully planned and documented, using the new national guidelines.

30. The school has sound strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy have been effectively integrated into the school curriculum. The skills gained by the pupils in literacy and numeracy are frequently reinforced in other subjects, in particular in geography, history and science.

31. The provision for pupils' personal and social education is good. Relevant issues such as the importance of having a healthy lifestyle, and dangerous aspects of life such as keeping oneself safe are discussed in the science curriculum and in 'circle times'. Visitors, for example the local police and the school nurse, are invited into school to promote this area of learning. There are appropriate policies for sex education and to make pupils aware of the dangers of drugs misuse.

32. The curriculum provides equality of opportunity and access for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Arrangements for pupils with special educational comply fully with the national Code of Practice. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of the targets on pupils' individual education plans varies. In the best plans the targets are clear because the pupils' individual needs have been precisely identified, and this makes progress easy to measure. However, some targets are too vague. Reviews of the progress made by pupils with special needs

are held termly. Parents are invited into school for these reviews, and contribute to the new targets set through their discussions in these meetings.

33. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities and has maintained this strength since the previous inspection. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in musical activities such as playing in the orchestra. Some sing in a choir which is made up from pupils in a number of local schools. All have the opportunity to take part in sporting activities such as football, netball and Maypole dancing. These activities are open to boys and girls and make a valuable contribution to extending their learning and experiences. The pupils do well when they compete in sporting events against other schools. Before they leave the school at the age of eleven, all pupils have the chance to take part in a residential visit, where they are able to interact socially and develop social skills.

34. The constructive relationships with partner institutions such as the local primary and secondary schools have produced mutual benefits. There are good links between the pre-school playgroup and the school.

35. Good links have been established with the local community. The teaching of the orchestra is funded by a local business, and the pupils go out into the local community to play their musical instruments and sing in the choir. Each week a group of pupils have dance lessons at a local dance centre. Last year this resulted in a significant number of pupils going on a mini-tour in which they performed in local primary schools while working with a professional group of dancers. The school has good connections with a local artist, and artwork is exhibited in a local gallery. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in educational visits to local places of interest such as the local church. These planned visits within the local community enrich the curriculum in many areas such as history, geography, art and religious education.

36. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are satisfactory arrangements for developing pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness and very good arrangements for promoting moral and social skills.

37. Provision for spiritual education is provided for in some religious education lessons, where the pupils begin to gain a limited knowledge and appreciation of some of the beliefs of major world faiths. Acts of collective worship are generally of good quality and provide pupils with sound opportunities to reflect and to develop their spiritual awareness. A good example of this occurred when the pupils were given time to reflect upon what happened when Jesus was crucified. They looked on in amazement as the headteacher showed them a large nail, which was similar in size to those often thought to have been used on the hands of Jesus. Inspectors observed few planned opportunities for pupils to experience moments of wonder or reflection in their learning. However, a very good example was observed in an assembly when one of the older pupils played on the flute a tune which she had composed, accompanied by one of the teachers on the piano. In the school grounds there are special places where pupils can sit and enjoy quiet moments if they wish. Sometimes, the plenary sessions at the end of lessons, when learning is reviewed, offer good opportunities for reflection, but these opportunities are often missed.

38. The way in which the school promotes pupils' moral development is very good. All pupils are expected to behave well, and they are clearly taught the difference between right and wrong actions.

Adults constantly reinforce thoughtful and good behaviour. The well-planned assemblies regularly remind pupils about moral issues, such as the story told by the local vicar. Pupils show high levels of respect for all adults and visitors in the school and towards each other. They are made aware that everyone in the world is not as fortunate as they are, and they collect monies for local charities. All adults who work in the school provide very good role models for the pupils to follow throughout the school day.

39. Very good arrangements are made for pupils' social development. A well-ordered framework has been created within which social development blossoms. Pupils are confident and show initiative as they proudly look after their school when completing their daily duties. They are encouraged to get on very well together and are given good opportunities to make their own points of view known, as well to listen when others speak. All pupils are expected to show courtesy to others and to move around the school sensibly. Teachers carefully develop pupils' social skills through group activities in the classrooms and during the time that pupils spend in the playground. Annual residential visits for the oldest pupils are also important in promoting social development.

40. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils begin to learn to value and understand their own cultural traditions through links with the community, educational visits and visitors invited into school. In music lessons and during assemblies they are introduced to a range of composers and musicians. Pupils look at art from many countries around the world, such as Aboriginal art, and develop their own creative skills through art and music lessons. They learn about other countries and cultures in geography lessons. For instance, pupils in Year 5 and 6 have recently completed a topic about life in India.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school provides good quality care for pupils through its network of very good relationships, routines and the informal monitoring of pupils' welfare. Teachers know pupils very well, including those with special educational needs. They are well aware of pupils' physical and emotional needs and respond well to these. The school has good day-to-day arrangements for complying with local child protection procedures. Children are well supervised at play. Careful attention is given to their general health and safety. As the school is small, it relies more on adults' familiarity with children's patterns of behaviour and development than on formal procedures. This works well, generally, with an established staff, so informal monitoring of personal development and related support for pupils is good. The home-school agreement and simple, positive rules for pupils to follow, help to ensure that good behaviour is fostered well. The school is careful to check reasons for absence and to ensure that all pupils attend regularly, so procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school deals promptly with any incidents of bullying or racism. There are clear policy statements and good procedures for confronting oppressive behaviour. Provision outlined in statements of special educational needs is good.

42. Teachers rely heavily on their impressions and working knowledge of the children to keep track of their personal and academic development. This works more successfully with monitoring personal development, because adults soon recognise any lack of confidence or need for encouragement. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are

satisfactory. Overall, monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress is adequate. The pupils receive satisfactory educational and personal support.

43. The school assesses pupils' work fairly regularly, but does not always make best use of the resulting information to track their progress, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. It does not analyse assessment information systematically to check on the achievements of different groups and individuals and to diagnose flaws in what they know, understand or can do. Teachers and support staff know their pupils' general capabilities well, but lack precise information on specific strengths and weaknesses or where children need help. They rarely make notes of individual responses in lessons, and lack detailed written records to track pupils' academic and personal development rigorously. As a result, help is not always directed effectively to pupils who need it most in a particular lesson. Within curriculum and lesson planning, there is a lack of precise information about what skills are to be developed as a result of a unit of work. Consequently, assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. The school's current arrangements do not ensure that individual progress is tracked in such a way that action can be taken to raise achievement by modifying the curriculum, or by setting individual targets for improvement in different subjects. Use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is, therefore, unsatisfactory.

44. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well cared for. They receive good quality help in class and when working individually, and their individual education plans help them to progress at the same rate as their classmates. A particularly noteworthy initiative, organised by the school, is the staff training day arranged in conjunction with the national Down's Syndrome Association.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents' views of the school are positive. They appreciate its welcoming atmosphere and the effect this has on their children's enthusiasm for school. Most parents have regular contact with the school, and this helps to reassure and inform them about events and progress. The few who are not able to come to the school regularly, for whatever reason, are less likely to believe that the school works closely with them. There is no arrangement for weekly newsletters or updates on school life to ensure that they do not feel overlooked. However, most parents feel very comfortable about approaching the school to discuss their concerns. In individual cases, parents are not up to date on school routines, including the need for a prompt start to literacy and numeracy hours. This leaves room for misunderstanding about how and when to contact teachers to discuss problems with progress. The school community is close-knit and most people know each other very well. Staff and parents meet informally before and after school and at events, and formally at parents' meetings. In general, the school has a good range of effective links with parents, and these support children's achievement well.

46. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. They support the school and their children's learning through active participation in the Friends' Association, as governors, and by attending events and meetings. They ensure that their children come to school regularly and arrive on time and are happy to help with homework or reading when appropriate.

47. Parents are kept well informed about school events through letters home, including clear messages such as those about local safety issues, and in most cases through day-to-day contact. They are usually involved well in annual reviews if their children have special educational needs. One or two parents have reservations about the information provided, particularly about the curriculum. In general, though, parents are happy with the flow of information, which is usually clear and easy to read. Its overall quality is good. They receive useful outlines of the general progress made by their children. There is, however, scope for better use of assessment to provide sharper comments on specific strengths and weaknesses, subject by subject, with targets for improvement. Arrangements for homework are not as clear to parents as they would wish. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The school is well led by the headteacher. He manages the school effectively and has established a good partnership with parents and the wider community. He knows his pupils very well and has a clear view of the future development of the school. Teaching and support staff work very well with the headteacher, as a team.

49. Most of the governors are closely connected with the school in that they are parents or grandparents of past or present pupils. They know the school very well and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses through their regular visits and through their day-to-day contact with parents and staff. Formal visits made by governors often have a specific focus. For example, a recent visit focused on the effect of pupils with severe learning difficulties on day-to-day classroom organisation and management. The Chair of Governors provides useful support and advice to the headteacher, based on his considerable experience in education. Governors successfully fulfil their role as 'critical friend' to the school through their monitoring of the school's work in their committees and in regular meetings of the full governing body.

50. Following the previous inspection in February 1996, an action plan was prepared in response to the key issues identified for future improvement. The points identified in the key issues have been successfully addressed and are as follows:

Key Issue 1: *'Ensure that the curriculum is co-ordinated and monitored effectively.'*

51. Overall, good progress has been made in addressing this issue. At the time of the last inspection, shortly after the headteacher's appointment, none of the staff had curriculum responsibilities. There are now co-ordinators for all subjects. Teachers plan together, and monitoring stems from this. The headteacher, who carries out all formal monitoring, acknowledges that there are very limited opportunities for teachers to observe one another. However, teachers do use their expertise to good effect by teaching other classes. For example, the musical skills of one of the teachers are used to good effect in this way.

Key Issue 2: *'Meet statutory requirements for written policies, for example, for behaviour; and the full requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs.'*

52. Good progress has been made in addressing this issue. At the time of the last inspection, there were no policies for special educational needs or for behaviour. These are now fully in place.

Key Issue 3: *‘Review some outdated written subject policies in a more suitable priority and timescale.’*

53. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made. At the time of the previous inspection, there were no policies for some subjects and others were significantly out of date. All subjects now have satisfactory policies to guide practice. The headteacher has been anxious not to overburden his staff, and therefore the rate at which policies are reviewed has perhaps not been as great as in some other schools. He considers that the work is being done steadily but thoroughly.

Key Issue 4: *‘Monitor more closely the school’s cost effectiveness.’*

54. Good progress has been made. Governors carefully consider the likely effects of spending decisions; for instance, the recent decision to commit a large amount of money to purchase a new scheme of work for mathematics was discussed in terms of its possible impact on standards. The value provided from previous spending decisions is also reviewed. One example is the effect of improvements in grounds and premises maintenance on the learning environment for pupils.

Key Issue 5: *‘Continue to explore ways of extending the accommodation.’*

55. Very good progress has been made in addressing this issue. A considerable amount of additional space has now been created. One of the original classrooms has been extended, and a temporary classroom installed. A new cooking area, a library and an ICT suite have been created from spaces within the building. The conversion of a porch into a classroom annexe and the purchase of a small temporary building have added to the areas available for teaching individual pupils or small groups.

56. The school development plan gives a clear outline of how the school is to develop in future terms, and is the product of discussions between staff and governors. However, some of the criteria against which progress is to be measured lack precision and, as a result, detailed monitoring of the plan’s effectiveness is less easy to achieve.

57. Statutory requirements, in terms of the planned curriculum, are fully met, though the lack of equipment in ICT means that some areas of the curriculum cannot be taught. However, neither the prospectus nor the governors’ annual report to parents complies with legal requirements. Each omits a number of important pieces of information. The prospectus does not give information about the school’s policy for special educational needs, absence rates, or national test results. The governors’ report to parents also fails to provide information about absences and the implementation of the special educational needs policy. In addition, it contains no information about the school’s policy and facilities for pupils with disabilities or about the in-service training undertaken by staff.

58. The school makes good use of its resources. Staff are effectively deployed and all available space is used well. The premises are very well maintained and are cleaned to a good standard. The school secretary provides efficient and effective support for teachers, enabling them to focus on their work in classes rather than spend unnecessary time on routine administration. Learning support assistants are a skilled and talented resource. They make a significant contribution to the quality of education provided, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in helping pupils with severe learning difficulties.

59. Finances are well maintained and grants received for specific purposes, such as for special educational needs, are well spent. The day-to-day management of special educational needs is good.

60. When the effectiveness of the school is determined, account has to be taken of the unfavourable social circumstances of many pupils and the quality of education they receive. The quality of teaching and leadership, and the standards achieved, make for an effective school. In light of this, and the fact that it receives less income than many schools of a similar size, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The school should now:

- raise attainment in ICT, geography and RE by:
(*Paragraph: 4, 12, 57, 113, 121, 122, 141, 143*)
 - * ensuring that there is enough equipment to enable the full breadth of the ICT curriculum to be taught, and that staff are properly trained in its use;
 - * examining the way in which geography and RE are taught, so that topics are covered in greater depth and pupils have more opportunities to review what they have learned.
- improve curriculum planning in science and the foundation subjects by:
(*Paragraphs: 27,43, 99, 102, 109, 114, 119, 124, 134, 140, 141*)
 - * clearly setting out the way in which skills are to be developed as pupils move through the school from Year 1 to Year 6;
 - * indicating on the curriculum plan precisely what is to be expected of each year group in terms of the skills and knowledge to be taught.
- provide better challenges for higher-attaining pupils and improve the way in which assessment information about all pupils is used by:
(*Paragraphs: 8, 24, 43, 80, 82, 87, 92, 96, 99, 116, 119, 124, 141*)
 - * ensuring that the criteria used to assess pupils' progress are based on the skills mapped out in curriculum planning;
 - * carrying out good quality analyses of the results of periodic testing in the core subjects to determine what is to be taught next;
 - * using the information from assessments to make sure that higher-attaining pupils are given tasks which are better matched to their abilities.
- review the information provided in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents to ensure that it complies with statutory requirements.
(*Paragraph 57*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	57	32	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	81
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	13

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	N/A	N/A	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (60)	94 (60)	94 (60)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (60)	94 (60)	94 (60)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	N/A	N/A	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	9	11	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (64)	92 (93)	83 (86)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	9	12	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (93)	100 (100)	92 (86)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

The scores of boys and girls are not reported separately because the small numbers of pupils tested may make it easy to identify individual pupils.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	63
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes:****YR– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.9
Average class size	27

Education support staff:**YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	142

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	159,991.00
Total expenditure	154,902.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,913.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,450.00
Balance carried forward to next year	6,539.00

Qualified teachers and support staff:**Nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	81
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category (rounded to the nearest whole number)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	46	9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	49	15	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	15	33	18	12
The teaching is good.	42	55	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	39	24	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	27	6	9	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	46	12	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	33	36	24	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	36	46	6	0	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	56	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	33	21	6	15

Forty-one per cent of questionnaires were returned.

14 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector. Views expressed at this meeting were overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. Children under the age of five are admitted to the reception class in September, and the school provides a sensitive induction into classroom routines, which results in the children settling happily and quickly. The 13 reception children share the classroom with seven Year 1 pupils and three Year 2 pupils. A very experienced learning support assistant provides valuable help for the teacher, along with additional learning support staff who work with two pupils with specific special educational needs. All adults who work with these young children give good quality support. The school has maintained these high standards since the inspection previous report.

63. The children are given a simple test at the beginning of the year to measure their attainment. The information from the test is useful, as it identifies children who may encounter difficulties and alerts adults to their difficulties. It enables the teacher to begin to put the children into effective working groups and give them tasks that are suited to their attainment. Information from this process indicates that the children's attainment on entry to the school is on the low side of average. Inspection evidence supports this. The adults who work with the youngest children are beginning to plan to the new national guidelines. However, further work is necessary in order to link their day-to-day planning more closely to these new guidelines for the Foundation Stage.

64. There was little evidence during the lessons of adults recording what individual pupils achieved in any area of learning. All adults know the children well, but there is little evidence to indicate that adults are systematically tracking individual children's progress through the recommended areas of learning.

65. Teaching is good overall, and the three support staff who assist the teacher consistently give good quality help to children.

66. The school's policy for the Early Years is out of date and does not refer to the new national arrangements. It therefore does not offer a satisfactory level of guidance for the adults who work in this mixed-age class and also deal with pupils in Key Stage 1. The headteacher is monitoring the provision for the Foundation Stage. As in many schools, this a trial period and the staff will use the findings of their review to guide the arrangements for subsequent years.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. The children are in line to reach the nationally expected levels by the end of the reception class. They respond well to opportunities to work in groups, and they interact confidently with each other and the adults who work with them. Relationships between the children, with the adults who help them, and with visitors around the school are very good. Reception children are able to sit still and listen, sustaining attention. Well-planned routines train the children in polite behaviour, and require them to tidy up after activities. The younger ones benefit from the model of the older pupils around them. They make good progress, and in assemblies they are indistinguishable from the older

classes in their good behaviour. Teaching is good, and ensures that there are good opportunities for the children to develop their capacity to select activities, develop personal interests, and take responsibility.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Most children are likely to reach the expected level by the end of the reception class. All children make good progress and, along with the pupils in Year 1, the younger children learn how text can be written in different forms. For example, Year 1 pupils act as good role models as they successfully attempt to read a play about 'Farmer Duck' in parts. This enables the younger children to develop a good understanding of the difference between words and pictures, and to identify familiar words in texts. Teaching is good. Adults support all the groups well and develop good relationships with the children. They question the children expertly to reinforce learning, and promote speaking and listening skills well. This results in most children speaking confidently and showing a good awareness of the listener. They begin to identify characters in the stories they read. With support, they choose their favourite characters in 'Farmer Duck' and develop 'character webs' to describe them. Most read back the words they have written, such as '*smelly*' '*nasty*' and '*greedy*' as they describe Farmer Duck. All attempt to write their own names, and many begin to form simple sentences as they independently attempt to write in the form of a letter or a note.

Mathematical development

69. The standards are broadly average, and all children make good progress in preparation for the start of the formal National Curriculum. The teacher builds in sound practical activities to give the children hands-on experience by playing counting games and recording the results. They write numbers up to five with confidence and many have a sound idea of numbers from five to ten. These experiences help to improve children's mathematical understanding, and their basic mathematical vocabulary such as '*heavier*', '*lighter*', '*taller*' and '*shorter*' develops well. Reception children work in a group on their own during mathematical sessions, and they receive good quality help from the learning support assistant and the assistants who work with the children with special educational needs. The higher-attaining children quickly work out simple addition and subtraction problems in their heads, using numbers 1 – 5, and a few other children are confident with problems associated with addition. The teaching is good during numeracy sessions; activities are interesting and enable all children to gain confidence when working with numbers. All adults use their good skills in questioning to remind children about what has been taught. This helps children to make progress during the lessons and over time.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Progress is good in this area of learning. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted by focused teaching sessions and by a learning environment filled with objects to stimulate their curiosity and interest. An example is the informative display of artefacts found in Victorian homes. The children's level of knowledge is in line with that expected for their age. They

have opportunities to develop an understanding of how things grow as they plant seeds and watch what happens. Writing skills are carefully encouraged as children write their names to identify their own plant. The children learn about the world in and around the school, and as they go on their 'plant hunt' they identify where the plants grow. They look at the different types of houses people live in around the world, and know that a long way away in hot countries the people live in huts. The children look carefully at pictures and at the models they make and, using skills they have learned in mathematical lessons, identify that some houses are round and some are square. All children develop a good idea of the past as they look at how things in our homes are different from those of long ago. Good displays enhance learning in this area. The children develop satisfactory computer skills, and confidently move the cursor on screen by using the mouse. They use a good range of programs, mostly designed to reinforce basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Physical development

71. Most of the children's physical education lessons take place in the school hall. When the weather is fine there are opportunities to develop physical skills in the secure outside area. No outdoor sessions were observed during the inspection. Teaching is satisfactory. The children develop skills appropriate to their age as they travel on, under, and over apparatus. Most develop a satisfactory awareness of space and move confidently. Progress in this area is sound, but learning is hindered slightly when teaching does not consistently make demands on children to develop good quality movements. The children are agile, alert and enthusiastic. Many of the classroom activities involve the precise handling skills of glue-spreaders, scissors and other small tools. Most children handle all tools safely. All enjoy using materials, for example modelling material, to make items such as small pots and letters.

Creative development

72. The children's creative development is near to the average for their age. They make good progress in a range of activities through generally good teaching. Children develop enthusiasm and confidence to explore their own ideas and to develop vocabulary appropriate to the tasks they complete. In music they show the capacity to learn words of songs, and when they sing they show an awareness of the other children in the group. Alongside the pupils in Years 1 and 2 they begin to identify short patterns in music. The children's paintings and collage, and the models they have made, are displayed well and show that the adults who work with them value all their artwork. In particular, the children were very proud of the picture frames they recently made, and they used mathematical knowledge well to identify whether these are square or rectangular shapes.

ENGLISH

73. By the age of eleven standards in English are broadly average and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school is on course to achieve its published target for the performance of 11 year-olds in 2001.

74. Since only a small number of pupils are tested each year, the results of national tests need to be viewed as a whole over the past four years to provide a statistically more reliable sample. This sample shows that 73 per cent of pupils achieved or exceeded the national target of Level 4, which is about average when compared to all schools nationally.

75. By the age of seven, pupils attain standards that are average and reflect those reported in the previous report. A four-year sample of national test scores shows that, during this period, 81 per cent of pupils achieved the national target of Level 2 in reading and 80 per cent achieved this level in writing. In both of these elements of the subject, attainment over this four year period was about average.

76. Overall, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. However, higher-attaining pupils are not always consistently challenged. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in relation to the targets on their individual education plans and often make better progress when they receive extra help during lessons. When pupils receive good quality guidance from learning support assistants they gain confidence when reading and writing and this has an impact on their attainment. Several examples of this good quality help were seen during the inspection as pupils worked with the learning support assistants to develop reading skills in small group situations in the library.

77. By the age of seven, the levels of attainment for speaking and listening, reading and writing are average. Pupils talk confidently, listen well to instructions and communicate well with each other and the adults who work with them. Learning is good during lessons when teachers engage pupils of all abilities and ages in answering questions in class discussions. As they get older the pupils develop their ideas well. A good example was seen in a Year 3 and 4 lesson as pupils thoughtfully discussed writing a story based on the Greek legend about Polyphemus and Odysseus. Good questioning from the teacher added to the pupils' enthusiasm for learning, and their confidence in speaking enabled the majority of pupils to articulate their thinking well. By the age of 11, pupils listen with good concentration, respond accurately to questions and begin to use their skills to justify their viewpoint, for instance when discussing the poem 'Matilda'. Speaking and listening skills are carefully promoted in all curriculum areas. Most teachers set consistently high standards and insist that pupils listen properly.

78. Reading skills are steadily developed, in particular in all 'literacy hour' sessions. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 read a wide range of different texts and discuss the plays and stories they read and listen to with enthusiasm. Most read with confidence and demonstrate good understanding as they reach standards that are appropriate for their ages. A few reach standards which are higher than average. Pupils of all abilities identify the title and author of the books they read. They begin to use their knowledge of sounds to help them. Learning is good when adults encourage pupils to use the pictures and the sounds to guess new words. As they get older, pupils are given many opportunities to study a variety of texts, which are written in different ways. In Years 5 and 6 most pupils read fluently and expressively. Many pupils 'skim' texts for information and most use contents and index pages in book well as they develop sound research skills. Average and higher-attaining pupils speak confidently about their favourite authors. Lower-attaining pupils have positive attitudes to reading and are confident to ask if they do not understand what some words mean. Pupils generally talk enthusiastically about changing their library books each fortnight when the library van visits the

school. A few pupils who have difficulty acquiring basic reading skills work through a commercially produced reading scheme specially designed for their needs. Teachers' records need to be improved. They show what books have been read and give some indication of pupils' skills when reading in groups during the 'literacy hour'. However, they do not consistently show what aspects of reading the pupils are having difficulty with and what they need to do in order to improve. This weakness in the teaching of reading impacts on learning within lessons and progress over time.

79. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in writing are in line with those expected nationally. By the age of seven, pupils begin to write in sentences and most have some idea of when to use a capital letter and a full stop. They spell familiar words independently and begin to develop dictionary skills to help them spell more difficult words. Pupils begin to form letters correctly and, although teaching is satisfactory overall, too little emphasis is placed on the importance of writing letters with correct letter formation. Pupils develop a sound cursive script when writing, but this is not consistently well promoted, in particular in Key Stage 1. Samples of pupils' work scrutinised showed that written work is not well presented in all classes. An example of good presentation was seen in Year 1, where pupils developed a 'character web' to describe 'Farmer Duck'. They wrote words clearly and with good attention to correct formation of letters. By the age of 11, pupils write in a wide range of styles. For example, they write notes, instructions for games, play scripts and imaginative stories. In both key stages, pupils develop an idea of writing poems, stories and summaries of events. All pupils have the opportunity to develop word processing skills on the computer.

80. The quality of teaching in the 'literacy hour' is satisfactory overall. Five lessons were observed, and of these two were good and three were satisfactory. Where teaching is good, the teachers skilfully questioned the pupils to reinforce and develop the vocabulary in the text that they were reading. Pupils worked on tasks that were well matched to the different abilities and ages in the group and higher-attaining pupils were challenged sufficiently. Teachers have worked hard to implement guidance and materials of the National Literacy Strategy into their teaching. In all lessons teachers show good subject knowledge and support staff are used effectively. Where teachers do not promote basic skills, in particular in writing at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' work is not as good as it should be. All activities are well resourced. The quality of teachers' day-to-day assessments varies and teachers do not consistently use this valuable information to inform the next step of learning. This has impact on standards throughout the school, the progress that individual pupils make over time and learning during some lessons. The use of English across the curriculum is good. English skills are used particularly well in religious education and history. Marking is generally supportive, but does not consistently inform the pupils what they need to do to improve. Displays in classrooms celebrate the work of the pupils and, in the best instances, reinforce literacy skills taught.

81. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive in both key stages. They listen and behave well because all teachers expect high standards of behaviour. Pupils enjoy their lessons, are well motivated and respond well.

82. Some pupils have been set targets for attainment in English, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Targets are not systematically recorded and there is little evidence of them being referred to during lessons. Assessment procedures for English are sound, but teachers do not

consistently identify assessment opportunities when planning lessons and there is little evidence of any evaluation of what has been taught or what is needed in order to move individuals or groups forward. There is no consistent approach where assessment systematically informs the next step in learning in English. Resources are of satisfactory quality and are used well. The library is an inviting place to sit in and the books are well organised and clearly labelled.

MATHEMATICS

83. Owing to the small groups of pupils tested each year, interpretations placed on the results of the national tests for a single year are unreliable. A more statistically sound sample is obtained by looking at test results as a whole over the past four years. This shows that at the end of Key Stage 2 standards in mathematics have been well above average overall, with eight out of every ten 11 year-olds attaining or exceeding the national target of Level 4. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 show that almost nine out of every ten pupils attained or exceeded the national target of Level 2, which is broadly average.

84. Inspection findings broadly reflect the national tests results. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and the proportion likely to achieve Level 2 by the age of seven is in line with the national average. In Key Stage 2, progress is good and the proportion of pupils on course to achieve Level 4 by the age of 11 is above average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved since the time of the previous inspection.

85. A scrutiny of the work produced by all pupils in Year 6 shows that the school is on course to achieve the challenging performance target set for the end of this school year.

86. The school groups pupils differently for mathematics than for work in most other subjects, with pupils in Years 1 and 2 often being taught separately and pupils in Years 5 and 6 separated once a week. Otherwise, pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The recently introduced, commercially produced scheme of work provides a good structure for teachers and, when used well, enables them to challenge pupils of different ages and abilities within the same topic. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were able to work on the same 'core' task of organising and interpreting data at different levels according to their prior attainment. Since the theme was the same for all, the introduction to the lesson and the important period at the end of the lesson when learning is reviewed were relevant to everyone, and the teacher skilfully ensured that pupils of all abilities contributed to these sessions. Where teachers are not as skilled in using the texts, lessons focus on the pupils of average ability and do not always challenge higher-attaining pupils enough. The needs of pupils of lower attainment are well known to teachers, and these pupils are often provided with good quality help from skilled learning support assistants.

87. Evidence from a close scrutiny of the work produced by pupils in Year 2 was borne out by a lesson observation. This showed that all pupils were covering the same work, with not enough provision for higher-attainers. Overall, standards of numeracy in Year 2 are satisfactory. Pupils understand simple place value and are able to place numbers into the correct order. They can count on and back in fives and tens from different starting points and can accurately add and subtract two-digit numbers. They know simple measurements of time such as the days of the week and the

months of the year, and can tell the time on the hour and at half past the hour. They are familiar with basic mathematical terms such as *heavier than*, *lighter than*, *higher than* or *further away from*. The format provided by the 'scheme' books helps to develop the skills of lower and average-attaining pupils in recording their answers by providing a framework within which pupils have to write on each page. However, this system does not provide opportunities for pupils to set out their answers by themselves.

88. By the time pupils are in Year 4, their skills in using numbers have developed well. They are able to count on in multiples of 25, and can accurately double numbers such as 85. Pupils competently add two and three digit numbers. They understand the relationship between multiplication and division and show this relationship by finding different ways of recording answers to problems involving the same three numbers, for example, $5 \times 4 = 20$ or $20 \div 4 = 5$ or $20 \div 5 = 4$. Pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables is greater, with the use of the six and eight time tables evident in their work. They record simple fractions such as $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ and become more skilled in measuring, for example by drawing a line of 11.5 cm with reasonable accuracy.

89. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 6 use the core skill of estimation well and are able to identify answers that are unlikely to be correct. They show a secure understanding of place value of numbers up to and exceeding 1,000 and over three-quarters of pupils have a good knowledge of the relationship between fractions and decimals. They quickly use their number skills to good effect in practical tasks in other subjects. For instance, when investigating the effects of exercise on their bodies during a science lesson they counted their pulse for 30 seconds and then doubled the total to arrive at an answer for the rate per minute. During a lesson, pupils again used skills of estimation to group angles into 'families' of acute, obtuse and right angles before measuring them accurately.

90. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons. At Key Stage 2, the progress made in lessons is not as good as the progress made over the course of the key stage. This may be due to the changes made in the way in which the subject is taught in some lessons. Of the four lessons observed, one was of good quality and three were satisfactory. The single good lesson was characterised by the teacher's good subject knowledge, evident in the clarity of explanations and the quality of questioning. In this lesson, the teacher skilfully ensured that all pupils were attentive and fully involved in the introduction, and had planned the work so that pupils of all abilities were suitably challenged. Resources were well prepared and good class routines were well established. As a result, pupils got to work quickly, because they knew precisely what they had to do and knew where to find the equipment that they needed. The teacher's very good relationships with pupils and her high expectations of their behaviour resulted in her being able to work with individual pupils without disturbance. Where teaching was less successful, but satisfactory overall, teachers did not manage to achieve a good balance between direct teaching, time for pupils to record their answers, and time to review what had been learned. In some cases work was not challenging enough for some higher-attaining pupils.

91. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and are keen to learn. They are generally very attentive and sustain good levels of concentration. Behaviour is very good in all lessons.

92. During lessons, teachers use carefully phrased questions to assess pupils' understanding of what is being taught. The information gained helps the teachers to decide what the pupils should do next. However, information from periodic tests is not generally used as effectively.

For example, teachers' records tend to focus on what has been covered, or on the marks achieved by pupils in tests, rather than on an analysis of results to highlight strengths and weaknesses in pupils' understanding.

SCIENCE

93. Attainment at the end of both key stages is about average and pupils make satisfactory progress. This was also the judgement of inspectors at the time of the previous inspection in 1996.

94. Comparisons between the school's national test and assessment results and those of other schools are unreliable because of the very small numbers of pupils in each year group. When a longer-term view of results is taken, over the past four years, inspection findings broadly reflect the picture of attainment that emerges.

95. Within lessons, pupils make good progress because they are well taught. However, this good progress in lessons is not translated into higher attainment and good progress over the course of both key stages, because of some weaknesses in the curriculum and in the way in which pupils are assessed.

96. A close scrutiny of samples of work previously completed by pupils in Year 2 shows that the topics taught during the course of this academic year have provided experiences across the breadth of the curriculum. However, when recording the outcome of their work on a particular topic, all pupils have usually been provided with identical photocopied worksheets. This method of working has not provided enough challenge to higher-attaining pupils, while lower-attainers have sometimes struggled to complete their assignments. Work completed by the average-attaining pupils shows a sound knowledge of topics appropriate to their age, such as the use and dangers of electricity, simple classification of foods, and elementary investigations about different types of forces. Work completed in the early years of Key Stage 2 shows that, while overall standards are appropriate to the ages of the pupils, what is recorded is very similar, regardless of prior attainment. By the time that pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, greater attention is paid to matching work to the range of ages and abilities, through the setting of slightly different tasks around the same basic theme. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of topics across the breadth of the curriculum. These include the classification of materials into liquids, solids and gases, the effects of friction and gravity, and the life cycles of animals, birds and plants. In all classes, regular emphasis has been placed on developing pupils' skills in investigating and experimenting. As a result, pupils in Year 2 have a basic understanding of what it means to be a scientist. This understanding is further developed in Years 3 and 4 as pupils routinely apply principles of 'fair testing' to their work. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have sound skills in planning and recording in a scientific way.

97. The quality of teaching was good in each of the three lessons observed. Lesson plans provided a clear structure, which enabled teachers to achieve a good balance between direct teaching, time for pupils to investigate or to record their findings, and time for a review of what had been learned. Teachers' good subject knowledge meant that they were able to give clear explanations and could fully answer any other questions that pupils needed to ask, and meant that basic skills were well taught. In all classes, the teachers were skilled in involving all pupils in the

topic being studied. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson about the relative absorbency of different types of paper, the class teacher chose to carry out the tests herself while the pupils looked on. This did not detract from the pupils' interest or enjoyment of the activity as the teacher constantly challenged pupils to predict likely outcomes or to form hypotheses, and used her questions to ensure that everyone took part in the testing. Pupils with special needs receive good quality help from skilled classroom support assistants. For example, a pupil with severe learning difficulties was able to play a full part in a simple investigation about forces because of the support provided. The assistant ensured that the pupil used the correct scientific vocabulary and that some basic recording of the task was completed.

98. Pupils' attitudes to science lessons are very good. They are keen to learn, interested, and very attentive. They behave very well, ask thoughtful questions, and get on with their work with little need for adult supervision.

99. The curriculum is being revised, with guidance from the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as a basis for planning. The use of this guidance ensures that all required elements of the subject are covered. However, although the school has adopted the outline guidance as the basis for its curriculum, it has yet to adapt the guidance to suit its specific circumstances. Consequently, planning documents provided only a brief outline as to what topics were to be taught, because the school has not yet mapped out the way in which it intends to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding from year to year. At present, the school is relying on individual teachers to use their own professional judgement in interpreting the outline plan, and in determining precisely at what level to teach the necessary work. The lack of a clearly recorded, progressive development of pupils' skills makes the accurate assessment of pupils' progress difficult, since teachers have no precise curricular criteria against which they can assess.

ART AND DESIGN

100. Pupils' attainment in art is satisfactory for their age. Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection. However, evidence from this lesson was supported by evidence from scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work and displays, discussions with pupils, and a review of teachers' plans and records. This indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress in the skills of observation and painting. Although there was no evidence of the use of modelling materials or the use of computers in graphic design, the school has adopted national guidance as the basis of its scheme of work for art, and this encompasses these aspects.

101. Attractive displays of the pupils' art make a substantial contribution to the school's welcoming and stimulating environment. These displays show that, within the limited range of media and techniques on show, pupils' practical skills gradually progress as they become older. Younger pupils entering school have well developed skills of observation, and this attention to detail enables them to produce competent work throughout the school. They enjoy art lessons and take great care to produce work of good quality. The younger pupils can print using sponges and templates. Older pupils studying the work of Escher can use his printing design to create their own, by means of templates of their own design.

102. Teachers' planning has yet to encompass the full range of media and skills in two and three dimensions. The result is that there is not the systematic development of a wide range of experience and skills which pupils require. There is a need for the policy to be reviewed and a coherent long-term plan of the curriculum to be agreed by teachers, so that skills which encompass all media can be taught progressively throughout the school.

103. Presentation of work for display is good and further encourages pupils to achieve high standards. Art contributes well to pupils' spiritual and social development, though the opportunities for examining the art of other cultures are not being sufficiently well addressed. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily through discussion and the use of technical vocabulary.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only one design and technology lesson was observed during the course of the inspection. Inspection evidence is drawn from this lesson, from observation of a group of pupils cooking, from discussions with pupils and teachers, and from a scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work and teachers' planning.

105. Standards are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages, and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

106. No overall judgement about the quality of teaching can be made, although the single lesson observed was of good quality. The five and six year olds were given the task of converting a small cardboard box into a 'house' for a model figure. The task, which provided a good level of challenge, was based on previous learning about the use of simple paper or card hinges to make a door. Pupils were therefore confident and needed little help to develop their ideas. The good routines established in the class enabled the teacher to concentrate on working with individual pupils without interruption, because the rest of the class knew exactly what they had to do and what was expected of them. The very good help given by the learning support assistant also enabled the teacher to work effectively.

107. By the end of Key Stage 1, seven year-olds have sound skills in designing and working with a range of simple tools, equipment and materials. For example, they have used construction kits to make model vehicles and have studied how axles work. They then used these skills to make their own vehicles from wood and card, first making a rigid wooden chassis by strengthening corner joints with triangles made from card, and then building a cardboard body on to this framework. By the end of Key Stage 2, eleven year-olds produce carefully detailed moving models, using simple mechanisms. For example, by turning a handle they make cardboard dolphins simulate the movements of real creatures leaping out of the sea.

108. Work in design and technology links well with work in other subjects. For instance, model houses made by the youngest pupils enhance geography work about Ghanaian homes, while skills of measuring, learned in mathematics, are needed as pupils in older classes learn to construct their models or to weigh ingredients. Skills in information and communication

technology are well used by the oldest pupils in devising animated presentations, viewed on a laptop computer, to illustrate their 'design and make' assignments. Regular cooking activities help to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of personal hygiene and their scientific understanding of the changes that can occur in materials.

109. While the curriculum is satisfactory overall, it relies heavily on the experience and subject knowledge of teachers for its effect. Long- and medium-term planning focuses on a general outline of the activities to be taught, rather than mapping out the way in which pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are to be developed year by year. Consequently, the planning does not give teachers precise information about the level at which topics are to be taught to different year groups, nor does it set out the expectations of what should be achieved by pupils at the end of each year. Teachers therefore have to base their lessons on what they know about their pupils and what their experience tells them is appropriate for the age group being taught. Fortunately, teachers know all pupils very well because they regularly share information about individual pupils; they are also very experienced and have a sound knowledge of the skills that pupils need to develop. Statutory requirements for assessment are met, in that teachers are able to make a 'best fit' judgement about the national curriculum level achieved by individual pupils at the end of each school year. Nevertheless, pupils' progress is not easy to measure or to monitor in greater detail. This is because the step-by-step development of skills is not clearly defined in the curriculum plan.

110. Facilities for design and technology are enhanced through the provision of a small kitchen area, suitable for groups of five or six pupils to use for regular work in food technology.

GEOGRAPHY

111. By the age of seven, pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. However, standards are below those expected nationally by the age of 11. The standards of seven year-olds have been maintained since the previous inspection, but standards achieved by 11 year-olds are now lower than they were. Judgements are based on one short lesson seen, discussions with pupils, and a limited amount of scrutiny of their work and of teachers' planning.

112. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 draw simple plans to show what they see when they visit the local area. Pupils' interest is heightened and concepts more easily taught through the use of a toy bear. All pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 follow the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' around the world. The pupils identify places their bear has visited, such as Dubai, America and the French Alps. With help they find these places using an atlas. As they get older, in Years 3 and 4, pupils develop research skills and begin to compare some of the places the bear has travelled to. Planning shows that the pupils are using the Internet to develop these research skills. There are good links with English as pupils use writing skills to write postcards from 'Barnaby Bear'. In Years 5 and 6, pupils look closely and use symbols to find locations on maps. They use photographs to try to determine the seasons and the weather conditions, looking at pictures of their immediate locality.

113. Discussions with pupils indicate that by the age of seven they begin to develop an idea of countries and places around the world. They name places locally and identify them as either villages or towns. All know that they live in England, but no-one knew the other countries which make up the United Kingdom. Pupils look at maps and begin to develop an understanding of what they are for. At the age of eleven, pupils talk in a very limited way about what they have previously studied in geography. Although they have completed work on India they could not describe its climate. They are unsure of the continents of the world and named them as America, Europe, Paris, Holland and Germany. In general, they have difficulty remembering what they have been taught.

114. The teaching of the mixed age classes has not been effectively addressed in this subject, in particular at Key Stage 2. Although teachers are now using the new national guidelines, the school's new curriculum plan does not take into account the mixed-age classes and is still unhelpful to teachers when they plan lessons. Planning does not ensure the progressive teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding, and this has resulted in the low standards by the age of 11.

115. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. However, in the one short lesson observation in Years 5 and 6, pupils interacted well. The lower-attaining pupils received good quality help from the learning support assistant, which enabled them to make sound progress. Learning was sound for most pupils, but learning was limited for a few pupils because they achieved little during the written task and their effects were untidy and careless.

116. Resources are satisfactory, but there is little evidence of ICT supporting the geography curriculum. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are underdeveloped and there is little evidence of any assessment information being used to determine the next stage of teaching for individuals or groups of pupils. This has an effect on progress over time. There is little evidence in the school to show that geography displays reinforce previous learning. The subject satisfactorily supports the development of pupils' cultural awareness.

HISTORY

117. Standards in history are satisfactory. Not enough teaching was observed to enable a judgement to be made about its quality. However, the evidence of pupils' previously completed work, teachers' planning, and discussion with pupils indicates that pupils develop sound knowledge and understanding of history at levels appropriate to their age.

118. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing historical skills, knowledge and understanding. They can use appropriate vocabulary to discuss the past, and can identify differences between past and present in people's lives. For example, younger pupils were able to use artefacts from World War II, and letters written by their families, to empathise with the situation of children evacuated at that time. Their enthusiasm had involved their families in extensive research, and they were able to highlight the important changes that have taken place over time. Older pupils had developed an understanding of the use of

historical evidence, such as paintings and photographs. For example, in their study of life in Victorian times, they gained an understanding of the place of women and children in Victorian society, and the differences in life styles between the different classes. They were able to relate this to their own lives, and to make links between past and present.

119. Sufficient time is given to history, and the school has made a wholly justified decision to link the subject with literacy and numeracy. However, these links are not identified clearly in teachers' planning. The pupils study a balanced programme of historical themes during each term. This programme is derived from the National curriculum programme of study for history. There is a need for the school to develop a history policy to reflect the new curriculum requirements and to provide teachers with guidance on setting activities at the appropriate level for all pupils. Pupils are sometimes expected to complete the same tasks, and frequently these tasks do not challenge those pupils of higher attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all activities, and skilled learning support assistants give these pupils good quality help.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

120. No direct teaching of ICT was observed during the course of the inspection. Judgements are based on evidence from observations of pupils using computers, discussions with pupils and teachers, a scrutiny of curriculum planning, an examination of documentation provided by the school, and a scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work.

121. Standards in ICT are below those expected nationally at the end of both key stages. At the time of the last inspection standards were satisfactory, but since then national requirements have increased significantly, and the school has not managed to keep pace with these changes. The school's planned curriculum, based on guidance from the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, includes all the required elements. However, there is no equipment in school to teach the monitoring and some of the control elements of the subject, and there are shortages of software for some of the other elements of the subject, such as the use of spreadsheets. The school is aware of this and has clearly set out the way in which improvements are to be brought about. A new ICT suite is being constructed, a network of computers is being developed, and a programme of staff training is planned.

122. Within the narrow areas of the subject taught, pupils achieve satisfactory standards. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced some well-structured animated presentations about their 'design and make' assignments in design and technology. Pupils in Year 3, observed working at a class computer, competently used features of graphics software such as the selection of different brush sizes, the use of a colour palette, 'flood fill' techniques and the insertion and manipulation of clip-art in their composition. However, pupils and teachers interviewed confirmed that, over the past few years, very little use has been made of the school's programmable floor 'robot' and some elements of the subject have not been taught. Opportunities for pupils to use computers for independent research are limited.

123. Word processing and data handling software is used satisfactorily to support pupils' work in other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 enhanced their work in history by using different font sizes and colours, while pupils in Years 3 and 4 used a data handling program to present information from a traffic survey and science work about temperature changes as graphs.

124. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is limited. This is because the school has yet to map out the way in which pupils' skills are to be developed year by year. Until this task is completed, teachers will not know precisely what is to be expected of pupils of different ages. The school understands this weakness and is taking steps to remedy the situation.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES - French

125. French is taught once a week to all pupils in Years 5 and 6. While the study of a modern foreign language is not a requirement for pupils at Key Stage 2, it considerably enhances pupils' social and cultural awareness. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above what is expected nationally, and pupils in both year groups make good progress over time. The subject was not taught in the school at the time of the previous inspection.

126. The quality of teaching is very good and pupils make very good progress within these lessons. However, progress over time slows because pupils are not able to benefit from more frequent practice, and consequently some tend to forget, between sessions, some of what they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and learn at the same pace as their classmates. The largely oral nature of the work means that pupils experiencing difficulties in reading and writing English generally function at the same level as others in lessons, and this helps to raise their self-esteem.

127. The teacher skilfully ensures that all pupils are involved and, because of her encouragement, pupils confidently answer without embarrassment. The teacher, a native French speaker, conducts the lessons at a crisp pace and uses a variety of strategies to make learning enjoyable. For example, the toy frog '*Coco la grenouille*' is used well to teach pupils positional words such as '*on*', '*under*' and '*in front of*'. The teacher makes good use of her skills as a musician to help pupils to learn vocabulary, such as numbers, through songs. Almost all the teaching is done in French, and this challenges the pupils to concentrate and to listen carefully. The vocabulary taught is all based on day-to-day activities, such as shopping or giving directions, and 'role-play' is used well to help pupils to develop their skills. For example, Year 6 pupils confidently give directions to various shops such as '*la patisserie*', using phrases such as '*tournez á gauche*' when directing the teacher to turn left. Pupils try hard to copy the teacher's accent and most are able to answer her questions using short phrases. Lessons are well structured and carefully build on what has been learned previously. There is no agreed school curriculum for the subject. The teacher devises all the topics taught, using her own resources.

MUSIC

128. It was possible to observe only one music lesson. Additional evidence was gained from listening to pupils sing in assemblies and discussions with pupils. Further evidence was gained by looking at planning and past work, and through discussions with the talented music specialist, who takes each class for music. All evidence clearly indicates that standards by the age of seven are broadly in line with those expected nationally, and that standards by the age of 11 exceed the expected levels.

129. Progress in music is good and has improved since the previous inspection. In the one lesson seen teaching was good. The lesson was well planned, learning objectives were clearly identified and all activities were interestingly thought out. These all have impact on learning, as do the pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and their ability to sustain concentration and work well together. Learning was good during the lesson. The specialist teacher teaches the whole school for music and this good teaching has impacted on standards.

130. Discussions with pupils show that, by the age of seven, many have difficulty naming tuned and untuned instruments which they have played, however they can give good descriptions of these instruments!

131. Lack of displays in classrooms, and of the use of basic musical words such as '*pitch*' and '*tempo*' in lessons, results in pupils having little idea of their meaning. In the lesson seen, the pupils listened well and repeated short patterns, using a chime bar. They tunelessly sang songs by heart, such as 'John Brown's baby'. All pupils throughout the school sing tunelessly and with enthusiasm.

132. By the age of 11 pupils have many opportunities to perform with percussion instruments. Many pupils learn to play a musical instrument and develop a sound musical vocabulary. Most learn to read music successfully and a significant number of pupils perform in the school orchestra, confidently playing instruments such as the violin, trumpet, French horn and clarinet. Pupils talk of listening to different kinds of music in assembly and in music lessons, and speak clearly about how they write their own music, record what they have written, and then perform their tunes.

133. Instrumental music tuition is offered to all pupils at Key Stage 2. Approximately seventeen pupils attended the orchestra practice and many have extra lessons each week, which are taken by visiting teachers. The school has developed good links with the local community through the music curriculum, and pupils have the opportunity to sing and play at the local church and in local schools.

134. Planning indicates that the school is beginning to use the new national guidelines for music. The headteacher is aware of the need to develop a rolling programme, which will ensure the systematic teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding in music in all classes. There is a yearly curriculum overview for music, but it does not address the needs of differing age groups in each class. Resources are sound, but during the course of the inspection there was little evidence of ICT used to support work in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. Pupils' achievements in physical education are sound by the end of both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress as they move through the school. These judgements reflect the standards achieved in the previous report. Judgements are based on discussions with teachers and a scrutiny of planning in addition to the three lessons observed, one a gymnastics lesson and the other two dance lessons.

136. By the age of seven, pupils demonstrate sound control of movement and balance. They perform safely on the floor and when moving on large apparatus. When given the opportunity pupils move apparatus safely at the end of the lesson. By the age of 11, pupils perform safely alone, in small groups, and as team members. They sustain energetic activity over suitable periods of time and develop a good idea of the skills necessary to learn dances, for example 'The Virginia Reel' and 'The Dashing White Sergeant'. All pupils take up the opportunity to learn to swim and, by the end of Key Stage 2, the majority can swim the nationally expected distance of 25 metres.

137. Pupils change into appropriate kit and participate well in all lessons. A strong feature in the lessons seen, in particular in Years 5 and 6, was the enthusiasm with which pupils took part as they worked together in small groups. They listen attentively to instructions, work well together and give one another good support.

138. The quality of teaching is sound. Lessons are suitably planned and well resourced. Learning support assistants are used well to help pupils with specific difficulties in controlling their movements, and as a result these pupils also make satisfactory progress over time. Teachers are very aware of the individual needs of all pupils and develop good relationships with their pupils.

139. The school places a high priority on the teaching of physical education as an extra-curricular activity. There are opportunities for pupils to play football, rugby, netball, and short tennis, and to learn to dance around the Maypole. Older pupils have had considerable success in playing competitive games against local schools. Each week pupils have the opportunity to attend a weekly dance club at a local centre. Visitors invited into school, such as Indian dancers, heighten pupils' interest and enhance their cultural development.

140. Accommodation for physical education lessons consists of a small hall and a spacious field at the side of the school building. Resources are satisfactory. There is an outline curriculum plan for the subject, but it does not clearly set out the levels of skills required of the different age groups in each class. The headteacher is aware of the need to develop a rolling programme which will ensure the systematic teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. The school has recently started to use the new, local Agreed Syllabus. This is a useful document, which clearly states what should be taught during both key stages. A recently developed curriculum plan is in place, showing what is to be taught during each year, but this is unhelpful because of the mixed-age classes in the school. At present the teachers do not have clear guidelines to teach the skills, knowledge and understanding effectively. There is no evidence of assessment in the subject and these factors contribute to the low standards the pupils achieve.

142. In the last inspection, standards in religious education were found to be in line with the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Inspection findings are that standards are currently below those expected at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Year 6 talk more confidently about Christianity than any other religion, but many are unsure of what they have been taught. Discussions with pupils, and scrutiny of planning and work, suggest that progress is slow. By the age of seven and 11, pupils have a limited and muddled knowledge and understanding of the subject. Pupils' previously completed work varies in quality and quantity, and generally lacks depth.

143. No overall judgement about the quality of teaching can be made. However, in the one lesson seen good questioning from the teacher directed questions at the many different ability levels in the class. This resulted in the pupils responding sensitively and maturely as they celebrated the special qualities of the 'chosen' person in the class. The learning support assistant was used well, and learning was good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Progress over time is hindered because teachers do not consistently reinforce subject-specific vocabulary and the concepts that they teach. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows some evidence of recorded work, but also shows that topics do not appear to have been covered in depth and that ideas are not reinforced sufficiently. Discussions with pupils, in particular in Years 2 and 6, clearly show that pupils often have difficulty remembering information. They are often confused when asked to recall facts which they have previously been taught.

144. Pupils in Year 2 are unsure about what they learn in religious education lessons. They show a muddled idea of different religions and confuse the word 'religion' with 'culture' and 'colour'. They talk in an enthusiastic way about the life of Jesus but are unsure about important Christian festivals. Although they have learnt about the Hindu festival of Diwali, no-one could remember that it was the festival of light, or the name of the religion which celebrates it. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 highlighted similar limitations in knowledge and understanding. They name different religions they have studied, but have difficulty recalling basic facts connected to these.

145. Provision for religious education meets statutory requirements, but monitoring of the subject and assessment procedures are generally underdeveloped. Resources are satisfactory. The subject is enhanced by visits to local places of worship and by visitors such as the local vicar, who comes to take assembly.