

INSPECTION REPORT

HILLTOP JUNIOR SCHOOL

WICKFORD

LEA area: Essex

Unique Reference Number: 115033

Inspection Number: 187543

Headteacher: Mrs Judy A Summersgill

Reporting inspector: Michael Renouf 1638

Dates of inspection: 22 - 26 November 1999

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

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Information about the school

Type of school	-	Junior
Type of control	-	County
Age range of pupils	-	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils	-	Mixed
School address	-	Hill Avenue Wickford Essex SS11 8LT
Telephone number:	-	01268 734649
Appropriate authority:	-	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	-	Mr David Harwood
Date of the previous inspection: -	4 March 1996	

Information about the inspection team

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Glenda Spencer	Equal opportunities.	Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community.
Nick Hardy	Mathematics; Information technology; Physical education; Special educational needs.	The curriculum and assessment.
Tom Prosser	Science; Design and technology; Geography.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; The efficiency of the school.
Gay Wilkinson	English; History; Music.	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher and governors provide good leadership.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress.
- Standards in information technology, in music and in the dance and swimming aspects of physical education are broadly above national expectations, and have improved since the last inspection.
- The promotion of pupils' social development is very good; the promotion of their spiritual, moral and cultural development is good.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good; relationships in the school are very good.
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- All members of staff work well together as a team.
- The school promotes a good ethos for learning.
- Day-to-day financial control is good, and good administration contributes well to the smooth running of the school.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- While standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are at least in line with national averages, they are below average when compared with similar schools.
- Assessment of what pupils have achieved in individual lessons is not always used to plan work in following lessons.
- Marking of pupils' work is not carried out consistently and does not contribute enough to pupils' learning.
- Work is not sufficiently matched to the needs of higher ability pupils, although in English and mathematics it is often satisfactory.

The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has overcome most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection in 1996. It also paid suitable attention to other weaknesses identified in the report. There is now guidance in place for all subjects to support progression in pupils' learning. Developments in science have been sustained and standards of attainment in the subject have risen. Standards of achievement are now being monitored closely. Where action has been less successful, the challenge of work for pupils of different abilities is not yet sufficient, although there have been improvements. The match of work for pupils of lower attainment is now generally good.

The quality of teaching has risen significantly. Standards of attainment have risen in science, information technology, music and physical education. The school's response to the last inspection has been mainly effective, other aspects of its work are better than they were, and it has a sound capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

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

Performance in	Compared with	Compared with	Key
	all schools	similar schools	

English	C	E	above average	A	above average
					average
					below average
Mathematics	C	E	well below average	E	below average
			average		
Science	C	D	well below average	E	

Similar schools are those with up to and including 8 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals. Standards of attainment in English and mathematics were above average in 1998, and rose again slightly in 1999, but not as sharply as the national average. As a result, standards of attainment in relation to all schools are now average. In comparison with similar schools, standards are well below average in English and mathematics. This is partly a result of the insufficient challenge for potential higher attainers. Standards in science in comparison with other schools is better because the proportion of pupils attaining at a higher level matched the national percentage. This was the case in English and mathematics in 1998.

The work seen in the school reflects these standards. Standards seen in English, mathematics and science at the age of 11 are broadly in line with the national expectations. Standards of attainment in IT by 11 year olds exceed the national expectations. Pupils' attainments in religious education are in line with the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus.

Standards in music and in the dance and swimming aspects of physical education are above expectations in the work seen. In other subjects, standards are broadly in line with the expectations for pupils at different ages across the school.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	7 - 11 years
English	good
Mathematics	satisfactory
Science	satisfactory
Information technology	good

Religious education	good
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Other subjects	good
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Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

Across the school, teaching is good overall. The teaching in 35 per cent of all lessons was satisfactory and, in a further 60 per cent of lessons, it was good, occasionally very good, and in one case, excellent. In five per cent of lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when nearly a quarter of lessons were unsatisfactory and about one lesson in five was good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils' behaviour is good in classes and around the school. They respond well to the high expectations of courtesy, relationships and behaviour, which are set.
Attendance	Good; levels of absence have dropped and are lower than the previous year's national average.
Ethos*	Good; attitudes to work are good, relationships are very good. The school is working to raise standards.
Leadership and management	The headteacher and governing body provide good leadership. Overall standards in the core subjects, and in all other subjects, are being monitored well.
Curriculum	Sound; very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision for individual pupils and groups by teachers and teaching assistants.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall; provision for pupils' social development is very good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory. Effective classroom support staff. Good use is made of the learning resources and accommodation. Adequate resources for all subjects.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

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

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school

- .Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.
- .It is easy to approach the school with questions of problems.
- .Their children enjoy coming to school.
- .Parents are given a clear understanding of what is taught.
- .Standards of behaviour are good.
- .They are satisfied with the homework their children are expected to do.
- .The school's attitudes and values have a positive effect on their children.
- .Children are encouraged to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.
- .Their children are enabled to achieve a good standard of work.

What some parents are not happy about

- .They do not get enough information on their children's progress.
- .They are not happy about the fixed amounts of homework that are set and are not flexible or suitable for individual children.
- .Complaints are not handled well.
- .If their children make slow progress.
- .The sorts of extra-curricular activities provided do not encourage all children to take part.
- .Swimming is not provided continuously for all pupils; they stop going if they are successful.

Inspectors received several positive written comments from parents about the school in general terms. Inspectors' findings support parents' positive views. Many pupils achieve satisfactory standards but standards could still be higher for some pupils. Inspectors find that the school provides good information overall and that reports are satisfactory. The school is responsive to any requests for information. Inspectors find that the homework given is generally helpful in supporting children's progress, but the school listens to feedback from parents. Many parents feel that it is easy to approach the school with any questions or problems, and the inspection shows that the school is well aware of parents' concerns and considers them carefully. However, there is a need for the school to ensure that all parents feel that their concerns are handled well.

The progress pupils make in lessons across the curriculum is mainly satisfactory. Often it is good in particular lessons. However, there is some evidence that may relate to the concerns of some parents who feel their children make slow progress. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good but there is not always sufficient attention given to more able pupils. Inspectors find that the very good range of extra-curricular activities provides something of interest for the majority of pupils. The school provides an appropriate swimming programme, balanced with the demands of the rest of the curriculum, that enables almost all pupils to meet the national expectations, and most pupils exceed them.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To further improve pupils' progress and to raise standards of attainment, including in relation to similar schools, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

improve the use of assessment on a day-to-day basis by:

- planning assessment opportunities in short-term planning;
- extending the weekly evaluations of teaching to note the performance of groups of pupils, and individual pupils, more consistently;
- using the information on the performance of pupils to plan the next stage of work more explicitly for those pupils, within the team's agreed learning objectives for the year group;
- ensuring that the implementation of the revised assessment policy in relation to classroom assessment is monitored and evaluated;
- creating portfolios of assessed pupils' work to help teachers to check their own assessments;

(paragraphs 40, 50, 94, 105, 113, 119, 145)

use the marking of pupils' work to help raise standards by:

- marking work regularly in line with the school's policy;
- ensuring that pupils have opportunity to consider the marking of their work, and see it as information which they can use to improve their work;

(paragraphs 41, 94, 105)

match work effectively to the needs of higher attainers by:

- routinely identifying ways in which tasks provided for the whole class can be extended for such pupils;
- using day-to-day assessment to ensure that tasks intended for these pupils are always appropriately challenging;
- involving pupils, where appropriate, in identifying targets for extending their learning.

(paragraphs 7, 8, 11, 34, 46, 102, 111, 113, 126, 145)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan, as part of the school's scheduled review of the curriculum in relation to the awaited revisions to the National Curriculum:

- There is a need to review the overall plan for teaching subjects across the school year. The curriculum map, by blocking some subjects for teaching at intervals, some of which are widely spaced, does not enable skills in those subject to be taught, practised and consolidated in a regular way. While this is not leading to unsatisfactory standards, higher standards are being attained in other subjects which are taught continuously over the year.

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1.Hilltop Junior School is situated in a residential area on the edge of the town of Wickford. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds in an area of mixed private, local authority and housing association properties.

2.There are 355 pupils on roll, larger than average for a junior school, taught in 12 classes. The school has increased in size since the last inspection, when there were 304 pupils in 11 classes. The school now has four classes in temporary accommodation. The majority of pupils enter the school from the adjoining Hilltop Infant School and a small number come from Wickford CE Infant School. Pupils' attainment on entry has been average overall but the standards of attainment of pupils entering the school are rising year-by-year.

3.The number of parents claiming free school meals for their children has dropped over the last five years and just under six per cent, below average, are known to be eligible. The school has identified 11.8 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs and, at present, seven pupils, above average, have statements of special educational need. There are two pupils from a minority ethnic background.

4.The school aims include the provision of a caring and trusting environment in which pupils and adults feel valued and safe to explore and make mistakes. The school aims to develop pupils' ability to listen, question, discuss and use the skills they learn in different subjects, and to promote self discipline, appropriate behaviour and respect for different religions, races and ways of life. The school is intent on helping pupils to understand our world and the contributions of individuals, groups and society generally; on helping pupils to understand and communicate emotions through the arts; and on encouraging sporting activity and competition. There is a commitment to partnership with parents and the community.

5.Priorities in the school development plan for the current year focus on the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS), reviewing the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and implementing a programme of additional literacy support, and further developing the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Plans for these subjects include the further monitoring of standards and the setting of appropriate targets for pupils' performance. The school is also monitoring the implementation of the new homework policy and reviewing reports to parents on their children's attainments and progress. Other priorities include developing the programme for personal, social and health education, preparing for the awaited revisions to the National Curriculum, and introducing the Top Sport programme to improve provision in PE.

Key indicators

6. Attainment at Key Stage 2¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	1999 (98)	48 (54)	36 (42)	84 (96)

National Curriculum	Test Results	English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	31 (35)	34 (38)	38 (40)
	Girls	31 (33)	25 (27)	32 (28)
	Total	64 (68)	59 (65)	70 (68)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	74 (72)	70 (68)	83 (72)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	33 (38)	34 (44)
	Girls	28 (35)	27 (33)
	Total	61 (73)	61 (77)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	73 (78)	73 (82)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)

5. Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised Absence	School	%
		National comparative data	5.4
			5.7 (1998)
	Unauthorised absence	School	0.03
		National comparative data	0.5 (1998)

Exclusions

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

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	4
	Satisfactory or better	95
	Less than satisfactory	5

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

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

1. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science have been rising steadily over the last four years, generally in line with, and just above, rising national standards. In 1999, they have risen again slightly in English and mathematics, but not as sharply as the national average. As a result, standards in comparison to all are average, but were above average in the previous year. In science, attainment has improved more significantly, in line with a national rise, and remains in line with the current national average. Many parents feel the school enables their children to achieve a good standard of work. For most pupils this is the case but there is some underachievement by more able pupils.

2. Standards of attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the national average and reflect standards identified at the previous inspection. In the 1999 tests, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level, level 4, was broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was below average, although it had been average in the previous year. However, in comparison with similar schools, the performance of pupils was well below average, in relation to the percentages attaining both level 4 and level 5.

3. Results over the three years from 1996 to 1998 show the average performance of pupils has risen steadily and broadly in line with the rising national average for all schools, with school scores being above the national percentages. The average results of boys and girls over this period have been broadly similar and above the national average. In 1999, school results continued to rise slightly but the national figure rose more sharply.

4. The inspection findings reflect these standards at the end of the key stage. Most pupils are on course to attain in line with national expectations and a minority will exceed national expectations. Standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils listen attentively, express themselves clearly and confidently, and show sensitivity to others when making responses. Standards in reading are good. By the end of the key stage, most pupils read fluently, with expression, understanding and enjoyment. Pupils scan texts accurately and have well-developed skills for finding information. They use these skills appropriately across the curriculum. Standards of writing are satisfactory overall. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and in a range of styles, and learn how to plan and draft written work, and to produce a good finished copy. Standards of spelling are varied, and are unsatisfactory overall. By the end of the key stage, most pupils can produce fluent cursive handwriting when required and many are beginning to develop an appropriate personal style.

5. In mathematics, the results of the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils reaching at least the expected level, level 4, was in line with national averages. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 was below average.

6. Over the three years from 1996 to 1998, the school's average results rose faster than the national trend, and in 1998 the performance of pupils at both levels 4 and 5 was above average. The school's results in 1999 have risen slightly again but a significant increase in the national average means that the school's performance currently is not ahead of the national average. In comparison with similar schools, however, attainments in 1998 were below the average and, in 1999, are well below average. During this time, girls performed a little less well than boys in the tests.

7.The inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is average across the school and at the end of the key stage. This is similar to the findings at the time of the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are developing their own strategies for problem solving. They record their findings accurately, apply their knowledge and understanding to practical contexts, and extend their mathematical vocabulary. Most pupils have a good understanding of place value in numbers over 1000, with many pupils confident in writing and reading numbers to one million. They apply the four rules of number to thousands, hundreds, tens and units confidently and accurately, and their understanding of fractions and decimals is good. Pupils measure perimeters and areas of shapes accurately, recognise line and rotational symmetry, calculate co-ordinates and construct graphs, using data they have collected. Mathematics is used in some work in other areas of the curriculum, for example, when measuring in design and technology, interrogating statistics and using negative numbers in science and recognising tempo in music.

8.In science, results of the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils attaining level 4, the national expectation, or above is above the national average and that those achieving level 5 is close to the national average. Pupils' overall results are average when compared with all schools nationally but are below average when compared with similar schools. Current inspection findings confirm these levels of attainment at the end of the key stage.

9.Over the three years from 1996 to 1998, standards of attainment have been close to the national average and, in 1999, they have exceeded the national rise in standards, although remaining overall broadly in line with them. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below average. There has been an overall improvement in pupils' attainment and, particularly, in the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5. The performance of boys and girls is similar.

10.Across the school, pupils learn to carry out investigations and experimentation. By the end of the key stage, they have a clear understanding of a fair test and of how to set up and systematically record their experiments. Pupils learn to use correct technical language. They develop a sound understanding of life processes, the properties of materials, and physical processes.

11.In information technology (IT), standards of attainment are generally above the national expectations and above those found at the time of the previous inspection. This is an improvement in standards and reflects effective developments in the subject. Pupils have a good understanding of the use of computers to organise data and to research and communicate information in other subjects. In religious education (RE), standards of attainment at the end of the key stage meet the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. There was insufficient evidence at the time of the last inspection for a judgement to be made of standards.

1.Pupils' attainment on entry to the school has been broadly average but the standards of attainment of pupils entering the school are rising year-by-year. Pupils make generally satisfactory progress over time, and the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 has also been rising steadily overall over recent years. In 1998 they were above average in English and mathematics. In that year, the levels of higher attainment matched national averages in English and mathematics, but this is not always the case in end of key stage tests and in the work seen in school. The progress pupils make in lessons across the curriculum is mainly satisfactory. Often it is good. Progress is usually in line with the quality of teaching; good teaching usually results in good progress by pupils within the lesson. A few parents feel that their children's progress is slow, and this is evident in the case of some higher attaining pupils.

2. In English, pupils make satisfactory progress. In many lessons it is good as a result of the good teaching and where work is matched effectively to their individual needs. The progress made by higher attaining pupils has improved since the last inspection, and the planning procedures of the National Literacy Strategy are supporting this. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Work is linked carefully to the precise targets in their individual education plans. The school has recently initiated a programme of effective additional language support for some pupils that makes a good contribution to pupils' progress.

3. In mathematics, standards of attainment on entry have been rising and pupils make satisfactory progress towards the end of Key Stage 2 results, which have also been rising. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has increased attention to mental calculation and to developing problem solving strategies across the school. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is good in relation to their prior attainment. The pupils of above average ability are not always sufficiently challenged by the work provided and their progress in lessons is sometimes below what could be expected.

4. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress. They make progress in their understanding and appreciation of an increasingly complex scientific vocabulary and, as they move through the school, teachers help pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding and to learn more complex scientific ideas. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good as a result of the work provided and the support they receive. In some lessons, work is not consistently well targeted to meet the needs of more able pupils and to help them make sufficient progress.

5. In IT, pupils' of all levels of attainment, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress. Their progress in lessons when they are given group instruction is at least satisfactory but when working on computers independently they show their above average skills and confidence. In RE, pupils of all abilities make overall satisfactory progress through the school. In some of the lessons seen, they made good progress in the particular work under way.

1. Pupils' make satisfactory progress in art, design and technology (DT), and history. Attainments in these subjects in the work seen are in line with the expectations for pupils at different ages across the school. In art, some of the work is of a particularly good standard. In music, and in dance and swimming within physical education (PE), pupils make good progress and the standards of attainment are above expectations. In the games aspect of PE, attainment and progress in the work seen was appropriate. It was not possible to arrive at judgements on attainment and progress in geography as no geography was being taught at the time of the inspection.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

1. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good and appear to be at least as good as at the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their parents recognise this enthusiasm in their children.

2. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. They settle quickly and with enthusiasm to their tasks, and work purposefully and with concentration for good periods of time. They are keen to succeed. Pupils listen well to teachers' explanations and instructions, and they listen respectfully to each others' views. They contribute sensibly to discussions and share their ideas openly. The response of pupils with special educational needs is good. They have positive attitudes to work and their behaviour is good.

3. Pupils' behaviour is good. They behave well in class and in small groups in school, moving around the building and in the dining hall and on the playground. Parents appreciate the good standards of behaviour and acknowledge that attitudes and values that the school promotes have a positive effect on their children. Inspection evidence confirms the parents' view. High expectations of courtesy, relationships and behaviour, are set and pupils respond to these. The high standard of behaviour influences attainment because the pupils are able to work, free from anxiety and distraction, and little time is wasted on discipline. Pupils treat the premises, school resources and each others' property with care and respect.

4. Pupils form very good relationships with one another and with adults. Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They mix very well together in lessons and out of the classroom. Boys and girls, and all pupils, work well together, sharing ideas and equipment and helping one another. Pupils have mature attitudes and show interest in people. They listen to adults carefully, as well as to each other. In religious education, and personal and social development lessons, pupils show that they respect the views and beliefs of others and know that it is important to consider other people's feelings.

5. Pupils become more confident and independent as they progress through the school. They make sensible choices when selecting resources and materials. Increasing responsibilities in class activities and assemblies enable pupils to gain confidence, and they learn about making decisions in personal and social education lessons. They develop their social awareness well as they take a lead in planning and carrying out raising money for charity. Residential activities successfully help them develop their understanding of personal responsibility and to work together in unfamiliar settings.

Attendance

1. Overall attendance is good. The level of attendance in 1997 - 98 was broadly in line with the national average. In the last year however, levels of absence dropped and were lower than the previous year's national average. There is almost no unauthorised absence. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

2. Pupils arrive at school punctually and this prevents any interruptions to lessons, which start promptly and efficiently.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

1. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teaching methods, the good pace of lessons and the management of pupils in particular make a substantial contribution to the pupils' attainment and progress. The teaching in 95 per cent of the lessons seen was at least satisfactory, and in over half of all lessons, the teaching was good or, on a few occasions, very good or excellent. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory in more than one lesson in five and was good in one out of four lessons. Improvements have come about partly because in English and mathematics lessons the skills and content, including the match of work to the needs of different pupils, are systematically planned through the use of the national literacy and numeracy frameworks. The work in these subjects has been monitored and evaluated by the headteacher, and teachers have received effective feedback on their teaching.

2.The effect of the good teaching is that pupils often make good progress in those lessons. Teaching is not yet, however, consistently good enough to lead to overall good progress across the school towards significantly higher standards in all subjects. The teaching in one lesson in twenty is unsatisfactory. In some other lessons, although the teaching was judged satisfactory overall, the learning of some pupils was limited when the same task was set for all pupils and there was no opportunity for pupils to go further if they were able to.

3.Teachers have good subject knowledge that is evident in the thorough teaching and discussions, for example, when explaining the functions of the human skeleton, illustrating how language has changed over time, explaining equivalent fractions, or discussing the use of rotary, linear or levered movement in a design and technology lesson. This results partly from the use of the good guidance for all subjects which is now in place. The shared team approaches to planning also help all teachers to be familiar with the material they are teaching.

4.Teachers usually set realistic expectations of what the pupils can achieve, helping the sense of purpose in the classroom. Expectations are appropriate in the lessons which are based on the literacy and numeracy frameworks, and the work is usually matched to the needs of different pupils. However, there are occasions when expectations are not sufficiently challenging for the higher attainers. There are sometimes no extension activities and all pupils complete the same piece of work. On one occasion, an appropriate mathematics task was planned for the higher attainers but not actually set. These higher attainers completed a lower level task, but showed they could well have tackled the more challenging work originally intended. Occasionally, teachers give too much interpretation of the material that prevents pupils from thinking for themselves, or do not allow enough participation by the pupils.

5.The quality of planning is generally satisfactory through the school. Teachers prepare careful half-termly plans that set out a clear progression of content and learning intentions based upon national guidance, particularly for English and mathematics. The weekly plans for other subjects identify learning objectives but these are seldom varied for different pupils within the class, although groupings of pupils are included in the planning.

6.Teachers use methods that encourage progress. They explain new ideas well, using well-chosen resources to establish understanding, such as artefacts and pictures in religious education, history and English. Teachers give good direct teaching; describing, explaining and instructing well, for example, when teaching about the use of a computer to control traffic lights. They emphasise the correct technical vocabulary in a range of subjects.

7.There is much good questioning which probes pupils' understanding or provokes thoughtful answers from the pupils, who also listen well to each other. Often the questioning is effectively targeted towards pupils of different attainments within a whole-class activity. As pupils work, teachers often check on their understanding and progress and make thoughtful interventions with a good combination of questioning and further individual teaching.

8.Teachers' management of the pupils is good. Lessons are well organised. Teachers establish an orderly, working atmosphere and pupils know what to do. Relationships are very good and boys and girls are treated equally. Pupils are given praise and feedback on their work and they respond with positive attitudes.

9.The use of time and resources by teachers is good. Lessons start promptly and nearly always proceed at a lively and brisk pace. This maintains pupils' attention and interest. Only occasionally is the pace too slow generally or governed by the rate of the whole class. As a result, pupils lose focus on the work in hand or questioning is unchallenging for some pupils.

10.The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is unsatisfactory. Teachers make evaluations during the course of lessons that inform their immediate teaching and help them to know the pupils well. In general, however, they keep very few notes of day-to-day assessments to inform further planning and teaching and this is reflected in the shortfalls in the weekly plans. No planned assessment opportunities are identified in teachers' planning. Most teachers carry out an evaluation of the week's work and record comments, in some cases, about how individual pupils have performed. However, there is no evident use of the information, as future plans often show broad learning intentions for the whole class and teaching is often not adapted to the needs of different pupils. A result of this is that the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the tasks set. The exception to this is most work in English and mathematics.

11.Pupils' work is not marked consistently. Very few comments are written as to how pupils may improve, although teachers often discuss points directly with the pupils in class. The teachers follow the school's assessment policy and procedures for recording pupils' attainment in the longer term. The results of tests are used well to monitor the longer-term progress of individual pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.

12.A carefully timetabled programme of homework has been established and is used well to support and consolidate work done in school. This work is checked consistently and marked as appropriate.

13.The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and takes full account of their individual education plans. At the last inspection this provision was judged to be effective and, since then, it has evolved well to provide now for seven pupils with statements of special educational need. Previously there were none. The number of pupils on the other higher stages of need has also increased. The special needs support teacher and teaching assistants for pupils with special educational needs play a full part in the work in classrooms and contribute very effectively to pupils' learning.

The curriculum and assessment

1.The school provides a curriculum that is broad and covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. This reflects the findings at the previous inspection. The curriculum also includes sex education that is delivered through the science curriculum, but drugs awareness education is more limited. The balance of time spent on the subjects of the curriculum is appropriate when measured over the period of an academic year. However, the practice of providing concentrated periods of learning in some subjects, particularly in history and geography, and, to a lesser extent in art, hinders the regular consolidation of skills in these subjects across the school year. There is no evidence that this leads to unsatisfactory standards, but good standards are evident in IT, music and PE, which are taught continuously through the year.

2.The content of the curriculum is carefully monitored by the head teacher and by subject co-ordinators. Time spent on each subject overall is appropriate and pupils' learning experiences are satisfactorily promoted by both the academic curriculum and through the incidental opportunities provided by extra-curricular activities. The school supports pupils' personal and social development well and they are well prepared for the next stage of education. The statutory requirements for the teaching of the subjects of the National Curriculum are fully met.

3. Equality of opportunity to maximise progress within the curriculum is not always assured for all pupils. While teachers plan appropriately for pupils of average and lower ability the challenge provided for those of higher attainment varies. In some subjects, such as English and mathematics, it is more secure through the use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, although there are some weaknesses. In other subjects, challenge is provided for all pupils when activities are open and allow pupils to work independently, such as in the use of computers, and in art and some investigations in, for example, RE. At other times, the same task and expectations are set for all pupils, for example, in some history and DT lessons.

4. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the co-ordinator, teachers and support staff who work closely and effectively as a team. Support takes place appropriately in classrooms and teachers are conscious of the needs of individual pupils. Annual reviews for those with statements of special educational needs are carried out appropriately, and areas for improvement are accurately identified and progress measured. Provision for these pupils is good and a strength of the school.

5. Policies have been developed for all subjects. These outline broad principles for teaching and contain appropriate detail and guidance. Schemes of work or other guidance are also in place and the school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Framework and the National Numeracy Strategy. These developments have successfully addressed a key issue at the last inspection. The planning and teaching of literacy and numeracy is carried out in a consistent way across the school and is often of good quality. Planning in other subjects identifies, each week, the learning objectives and the activities for the class. The learning objectives are often shared to good effect with the pupils. However, planning, apart from that for English and mathematics, does not routinely include work to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. This was a weakness identified at the last inspection and was a key issue. The needs of lower and middle attainers are usually met satisfactorily, but the needs of higher attainers are not provided for in a consistent and secure way. The school has a marking policy but this is inconsistently applied and does not contribute sufficiently to raising standards.

6. Parents appreciate the opportunities for pupils to get involved in more than just their daily lessons and the inspection confirms that the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. They are well organised and effectively enhance the curriculum. Sports clubs such as athletics, netball, football and cricket help to promote pupils' physical development. A choir, recorder playing, chess, maths and art clubs contribute to pupils' educational and cultural development. Older pupils benefit from the opportunity to participate in a residential visit. A few parents feel that the extra-curricular activities do not meet the needs of their children, but inspectors find that the very good range provides something of interest for the majority of pupils.

7. The school has satisfactory procedures and systems for evaluating and recording pupils' attainment. Testing of pupils' learning is regularly carried out and the results are recorded. Information from statutory testing is analysed and areas of weakness in teaching and learning are identified. These systems are becoming more sophisticated. However, teachers' planning contains little reference to assessments of pupils' progress and planning on a day-to-day basis and is not yet sufficiently reactive to what different groups of pupils within a class learn. Portfolios of assessed pupils' work have not yet been developed to guide teachers in accurately determining levels of attainment. Assessment is not seen as an integral part of curriculum planning by teachers and secure links between assessment and the planning of future lessons are not present in planning documents. This reflects a weakness identified at the last inspection. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good and meet the needs of the regular reviews.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

1.Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and that for social development is very good. The quality of provision is at least as good as it was at the last inspection and that for social development is an improvement. There is a sound policy in place to support teachers in this aspect of the school's work.

2.Pupils' spiritual development is good. During the inspection, on those occasions when pupils had opportunities for collective worship, the use of contemporary stories, song and music and opportunities for personal reflection contributed to pupils' spiritual development. In lessons, pupils are given good opportunities by teachers to reflect on their own lives, attitudes and feelings. Work in religious education extends their understanding and respect for their own and others' religions.

3.The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. It promotes good behaviour and mutual respect by setting clear and consistent expectations. The school's behaviour policy, which places emphasis upon positive rewards and praise, makes a good contribution to promoting pupils' moral development. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. The school is a calm and orderly community. There is a strong work ethic and all pupils work well, including when not directly supervised. Staff provide positive role models, demonstrating respect, courtesy and care for others and commitment to their work.

4.The school makes very good provision for the social development of pupils. Teachers and all other adults set good examples to the pupils through their work as a mutually supportive team. In all classes, pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to take on responsibility which they accept willingly. They are encouraged to work collaboratively. The recent establishment of a programme for pupils' social and emotional development is making a most effective contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem and social maturity. During this activity pupils' demonstrate genuine sensitivity, kindness and care towards, and for, one another. The school actively participates in both local and national events that encourage the pupils to think about the community they live in as well as those of others within the wider world. For example, during the week of the inspection pupils participated in the Children in Need fund-raising event, organising and managing a variety of stalls during lunchtimes. The close and mutually caring relationships of adults and pupils make an important contribution to the ethos of the school. The provision for pupils' social development is a strength of the school.

5.The promotion of pupils' cultural development is good. Through the work they undertake related to national charitable events, they have the opportunity to learn about and genuinely reflect on life in other cultures and countries. In religious education pupils develop an understanding of other cultures and their faiths. Pupils make visits to places of interest, including museums and the local church, and there are visits to the school by theatre groups and visitors. These contribute to a sound development of their knowledge and understanding of both their own and other cultures. During the inspection, the school arranged for a visit by an exponent of Indian dance that enabled all pupils to expand their knowledge and understanding of this culture. Extra-curricular activities such as music and art and craft also enhance their cultural understanding.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

1Arrangements for the support, guidance and welfare of all pupils are good. The quality of the arrangements has been maintained since the last inspection. As a result, pupils feel that they are well supported and are confident in approaching staff with any problems. The regular monitoring of

pupils' overall academic progress and personal development makes a good contribution to the educational standards they attain. Liaison with a wide range of specialists from the Local Education Authority (LEA), social services and other agencies are good and benefit the development and support of pupils.

2 There are good procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour. The school's ethos and the high expectations of staff play a successful part in this. The school has a very effective behaviour management policy. The school has a positive attitude towards dealing with any incidents of bullying. None were seen during the inspection and the good relationships promoted in the school are an effective approach towards ensuring that such incidents are rare.

3 Attendance is monitored and promoted well. Registers are completed accurately at the beginning of each session. The school encourages parents to take holidays outside term time, but so far has had little impact on improving the attendance levels of some pupils. The school follows up any unexplained absences with parents and any concerns are discussed with them. There is good liaison with the educational welfare officer, who provides a good level of support.

4 Child protection arrangements are very good and the school has a clear policy which complies with requirements. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and has been appropriately trained. There are very good arrangements with outside agencies. Staff and parents are aware of the procedures to be followed in the case of any concerns. Day-to-day management of health and safety matters is good and teachers take care to teach and emphasise good practices in lessons. They are successful in ensuring that pupils understand the need to behave and act sensibly for the safety of themselves and others. The headteacher is responsible for health and safety and the school has appropriate policies. The arrangements for providing first aid are good and there are three members of staff with full first-aid certificates. Pupils are looked after well both within the school and in the playground. Procedures for dealing with accidents, for carrying out safety checks and fire drills are all satisfactory.

Partnership with parents and the community

1. The good partnership with parents and the community has been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of information provided for parents by the school is good. Regular newsletters are sent out, giving details of dates and events. The information on the curriculum is good and the majority of parents feel that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught. Inspection findings confirm this view. Parents indicate that they are generally pleased with the quality of the reports of their children's progress. The inspection shows that annual written reports are satisfactory and set out clearly what pupils can do. Some parents feel they do not get enough information but there is no evidence to support this concern. Many parents feel that it is easy to approach the school with any questions or problems, and the inspection shows that the school is well aware of parents' concerns and considers them carefully. However, there is a need for the school to ensure that all parents feel that their concerns are handled well.

2. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved appropriately in the regular reviews of their children's needs and kept informed of their progress.

3. Many parents are happy with the amount of homework that is set for their children, but some parents are not satisfied with the arrangements. Their concerns often relate to the flexibility, suitability to individual needs and the fixed amount of homework set. Inspectors find that the homework given is generally helpful in supporting children's progress. Parents make a valuable

contribution to their children's learning by hearing them read at home and by supporting the programme of other homework. A small number of parents help out in the classroom on a regular basis, and help on school trips and with supervision on transport to the swimming pool. Many parents come to performances, sports day and charitable events. These opportunities are valuable in involving parents in the life and work of the school. Parents feel encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school and the inspection confirms that this is the case.

4. Links with the community to support pupils' learning are generally good. A number of visitors come into school and contribute positively to the children's learning experiences. Visits are made into the community, such as to the local church, and pupils relate to the needs of others beyond the school through activities such as charitable collections. Effective provision is made for clubs before, during and after school, these clubs are well supervised and contribute positively to pupils' learning. There are effective links with infant schools, from which pupils transfer, and with the secondary schools that pupils go on to. Links with the local business community are satisfactory.

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

1. The headteacher and the governing body give good leadership to the school. They provide a good sense of purpose and the positive leadership has been maintained since the previous inspection. The headteacher sets good expectations for the work of the school, with necessary developments appropriately planned for. Weaknesses, as they are identified, are addressed. The attention given to those pointed out at the last inspection has been largely successful. There is a focus on clear and consistent practices, such as for curriculum planning, the use of time and expectations of pupils' behaviour and personal development.

2. The work of the governing body is well organised through its committees, and these contribute well to the identification and monitoring of priorities for development. Governors keep informed through formal and informal visits to the school, informative reports from the headteacher and the work of the committees. Useful reports are made by some governors of their visits to inform the governing body. The deputy head and senior teacher play an appropriate part in the leadership of the school through leading the work of teams of teachers and by being an effective part of the senior management team. The overall quality of leadership is ensuring that systems to plan developments, and to monitor the work of the school and the performance of pupils over time are good.

3. The support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development are sound. There has been an effective focus on the implementation of the literacy strategy, monitored in classrooms by the headteacher. Monitoring of the implementation of the numeracy strategy has begun. Teachers with subject leadership responsibilities have prepared schemes of work based on national guidance, scrutinise and comment on teachers' planning, see samples of pupils' work and contribute to team evaluation meetings. The focus of the monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms is currently, and appropriately, English and mathematics. Co-ordinators for English, mathematics and ICT have been suitably involved in drawing up detailed action plans for these priority areas in the school development plan. Test results are analysed carefully and appropriate targets are identified for individual pupils and for particular year groups of pupils.

4. The aims of the school focus on the quality of the environment and ethos for learning, and the learning skills and attitudes to be promoted. The implementation of these aims and values is good, and they are reflected in all the work of the school. There is less in the way of commitment to the highest possible standards but this is implicit in the school's concern to monitor how pupils are performing and

the setting of targets.

5. Development planning is satisfactory overall. The plan mixes major and minor priorities, and this reflects a weakness identified at the last inspection, but it is nevertheless a generally effective programme of development activity which is on schedule. It extends appropriately beyond the current year and identifies priorities for the future. Curriculum priorities focus well, and in detail, on English, mathematics and IT, and action plans include strategies for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the plan. The governing body has discussed the draft plan and, through its committees, monitors its progress appropriately.

6. The leadership and management contribute well to the good ethos in the school. The school is committed to equal opportunities, which is evident in much of the work of the school and in the experiences of pupils, although there are some weaknesses in the consistent match of work to the needs of all pupils. Individual needs are addressed well in the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs. There is a concern to support higher attaining pupils although it is not fully reflected in some aspects of teaching. Relationships between pupils, and between adults and pupils, are very good and play a large part in setting a good atmosphere for learning.

7. The management of special educational needs provision is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), the special needs support teacher and teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' needs and the provision required. Class teachers are well briefed and receive appropriate training on the needs of these pupils. The introduction of the literacy hour, including training for teachers, the provision of information for parents and the monitoring of its implementation have been planned and managed effectively. The school has prepared appropriately for the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy at the start of the current term. Numeracy lessons have been monitored by the headteacher, and monitoring by the mathematics co-ordinator is scheduled for the next term.

8. A satisfactory action plan was drawn up after the last inspection. It addressed all the key issues and also paid suitable attention to other weaknesses identified in the report. Actions were prioritised and linked to make the response as efficient as possible and this has been generally effective. There is now guidance in place for all subjects to support progression in pupils' learning. Developments in science have been sustained and standards of attainment in the subject have risen. Standards of achievement are now being monitored closely. Where action has been less successful, the challenge of work for pupils of different abilities is not yet sufficient, although there have been improvements. The school's response to the last inspection has been mainly effective and it has a sound capacity for further improvement.

9. The school meets statutory requirements for the curriculum, for pupils with special educational needs and for collective worship. All requirements for the management and administration of the school are met, including the provision of information for parents and the governors' annual report.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

1. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall and are similar to the situation at the previous inspection. The school has sufficient and well-qualified teachers with substantial primary experience. In addition there is an appropriate number of classroom assistants who support individual pupils with special educational needs effectively. Some teaching assistants also provide a good programme of additional language support for some pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants discuss the planned work together and this enables them to play a full part in the work in classes.

2.All teachers have a management role that supports the work of the staff team. Their work is guided by clear job descriptions that are regularly discussed and re-negotiated to reflect priorities in the school. Subject co-ordinators are given non-contact time in order to manage their subject areas, and this has included some monitoring of classroom practice as appropriate.

3.The school has an effective induction and mentoring policy and system in place that makes a good contribution to the smooth running of the school, curriculum development and effective teaching and learning. All members of staff are fully aware of both their own and others' roles and responsibilities. They are well deployed to make the most effective use of their skills and knowledge. Arrangements for the support of newly qualified teachers are appropriate and effective.

4.Arrangements for the appraisal of staff meet requirements and appraisal is used to inform the management of teacher's professional development needs and to meet the needs of the school's curriculum development programme. Teachers attend a wide range of training out of school as well as participating in the school's own professional development programme. Teaching assistants take part fully in the school's in-service training programme where appropriate. They receive appropriate training and guidance to ensure they carry out their roles effectively, especially in relation to pupils with special educational needs.

5.Accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms in the main building are of a satisfactory size. The school also has four temporary classrooms, three of which do not have a utility sink for use by the pupils and staff, nor pupil toilets. However, good organisational and management strategies have generally overcome these limitations. The school hall is adequate in size to meet the needs of the curriculum but is under some pressure when the whole school meets together. The school makes the most positive use of all spaces for the central storage of resources. The whole school is bright, clean and visually attractive and good use is made of displays, including those of pupils' work, to enhance the environment. Displays both celebrate pupils' achievements and contribute to ongoing work. Posters made by teachers that support pupils' learning are used effectively, for example, posters giving information to support literacy skills.

6.The school buildings and its surroundings are well maintained. Because of the increase in pupil numbers the hard play area is only just adequate in size to meet the needs of pupils during breaks and lunchtime. At present, the grassed area is not large enough to provide a pitch for organised games, although negotiations are currently underway to acquire more space.

7.Resources for English, design and technology and history are good; those for all other curriculum areas are satisfactory. Resources in classrooms are readily accessible to pupils. Pupils' learning and English skills are supported effectively by the well-stocked class libraries and the central fiction and reference library.

The efficiency of the school

1.The overall efficiency of the school is good, and the quality of this aspect of the school's work has been maintained since the last inspection. Financial management is good. There are effective regulations to ensure proper control by the governing body, in conjunction with the head teacher, administrative staff and the local authority. Expenditure is monitored carefully, and the school plans effectively for the long term, taking account of the continuing growth in the number of pupils. The school has accumulated a budget surplus with the planned intention of improving the accommodation, particularly to support the teaching of music and information technology, and to provide space for some teaching of pupils with special educational needs.

2.The school makes good use of the available funds to improve the level of resources and the quality of teaching. Budget priorities are based securely on the school development plan. The evaluation of financial decisions generally has improved since the last inspection, and the school also has access to the spending patterns of similar schools to compare their own expenditure. The allocation of funds to subject areas is done carefully, and subject co-ordinators identify current and future needs for consideration by the senior management team and the governors' finance committee. The recent introduction of target setting for pupils has the potential of providing the governing body with additional information to measure the achievement of priorities in the development plan. Earmarked funds for staff training and for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively, and this has a positive impact on the progress that the pupils make.

3.Overall, staff, accommodation and learning resources are deployed and used well to promote learning. Teachers and classroom assistants are committed and work effectively to support pupils.

4.Day-to-day financial control and administration are good. Financial administrative procedures are in place and the recommendations of the recent positive financial audit have been implemented. Members of the administrative staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. Lunchtime assistants and site maintenance staff all make a positive contribution to ensure that the school is an orderly and pleasant place, conducive to learning.

5.The money which the school receives for each pupil is in line with the national average. Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress and their attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. The quality of education is good overall. Taking account of these factors, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science

English

1. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the national average and reflect standards identified at the previous inspection. In the 1999 tests, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level, level 4, was broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was below average, although it had been average in the previous year. However, in comparison with similar schools, the performance of pupils was well below average, in relation to the percentages attaining both level 4 and level 5.

2. Results over the three years from 1996 to 1998 show the average performance of pupils has risen steadily and broadly in line with the rising national average for all schools, with school scores being above the national percentages. The average results of boys and girls over this period have been broadly similar and above the national average. In 1999, school results continued to rise slightly but the national figure rose more sharply, and school results are now in line with the average.

3. The inspection findings overall reflect these average standards at the end of the key stage. On the evidence of the lessons observed and the scrutiny of pupils' work, most pupils are on course to attain in line with national expectations and a minority will exceed national expectations.

4. Standards in speaking and listening are above the national expectation. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and other adults and make appropriate responses. They are most eager to participate in whole-class and group discussions, and express themselves clearly and confidently. They show sensitivity to the needs and ideas of others when making responses. By the end of Year 6 they show an appropriate understanding of formal language structures and can take account of different contexts when making their responses.

5. Standards in reading are above the national expectation. Pupils listen to a variety of stories, poetry, non-fiction and textual extracts attentively and respond appropriately to questions about plot, events, characters, meaning, punctuation, and vocabulary and make mature, personal responses to ideas expressed. This was particularly noticeable in shared reading activities. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils read a variety of texts fluently and with enjoyment. They can identify the central meaning, giving evidence from the text to support their judgements. They use appropriate technical terms with understanding when discussing texts and demonstrate a sound understanding of grammar and sentence structure. Pupils scan texts for information accurately and select information appropriately in order to make judgements. They read aloud with good expression and intonation that takes account of punctuation and demonstrates understanding. By the end of the key stage the more able readers use a good range of strategies to read unfamiliar words including word recognition, letter sounds and contextual clues. Pupils have well-developed skills for finding information from books and from other written sources, and use these skills appropriately across the curriculum.

6. Standards of writing match the national expectations overall. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and in a range of styles, in English lessons and in many other subject lessons. They write in an appropriate range of styles, including stories, personal accounts, poetry, reports, instructions, and letters, and make lists, notes and labels. Pupils learn how to plan and draft written work, and to

produce a suitable finished copy. The quality of expression and use of vocabulary is generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils across the school and at the end of the key stage. Standards of spelling are varied, and are unsatisfactory overall. The school has adopted a spelling strategy that encourages pupils to take responsibility for their spelling. Pupils were not seen using the school's spelling strategy nor checking their work for accuracy, but the use of the approach at home is encouraged. Common words are often mis-spelt and a knowledge of spelling patterns is not always used. Punctuation is erratic. By the end of the key stage, most pupils can produce fluent cursive handwriting when required and many are beginning to develop a personal style. Pupils write carefully and present their work well when it is closely monitored and teacher expectations are made explicit. For example, drafted written work edited and presented for classroom wall displays was of satisfactory quality with well-formed letters of consistent size. However, there were occasions when work in books and folders was carelessly presented.

7. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Progress in speaking and listening is good, and in writing it is satisfactory. In many lessons, progress is good as a result of the good teaching and where work is matched effectively to their individual needs. The progress made by higher attaining pupils has improved since the last inspection, and the planning procedures of the literacy strategy are supporting this. Their attainments are generally satisfactory in the work seen, although the proportion attaining at a higher level is not always clear. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of these pupils and link the work carefully to the precise targets in their individual education plans, using good, well-matched materials. The school has recently initiated a programme of effective additional language support for some pupils. The work is well planned and organised, and the teaching assistants make a good contribution to the sound progress made by the pupils involved.

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are well behaved and always apply themselves with good concentration, purpose and interest to the tasks, including when they are not directly supervised. Their response in the lessons seen was always positive and lively as, for example, in a Year 6 class where pupils concluded the week's work on Shakespeare by performing their own versions of an excerpt from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Their interest in the work they had undertaken on both the text and the dramatist during the week was revealed in the quality of their work and by the number of pupils who were reading other plays by Shakespeare or stories drawn from his work, at home.

9. The quality of teaching is good. The good teaching often leads to good progress by pupils, and has the potential to lead to good progress overall across the school and to higher standards. All teachers have a secure understanding of the subject. Planning takes full account of the National Curriculum programmes of study and the National Literacy Framework. Cursive handwriting is taught regularly and systematically throughout the school. In all classes an appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of reading skills. Lessons are delivered with appropriate pace, and are well managed and organised with a range of appropriate activities and choice of resources that maintain pupils' interest. In shared and guided reading activities, teachers use good questioning to support and promote pupils' understanding.

10. Teachers use information from standardised tests to group pupils, and their good knowledge of pupils, gained from the daily literacy hour activities, ensures that they are usually challenged appropriately with activities matched to different groups. However, there is no formal system in place for making on-going assessments to ensure that this process is consistent and recorded. Good records are kept of pupils' reading development and a draft writing record has recently been completed. Whilst the school's literacy marking policy clearly details how errors in a piece of work are to be dealt with there are inconsistencies in practice across the school. The school's marking policy with regard to spelling is inconsistently applied. As a result, pupils do not receive consistent information on the quality of their written work and how to improve it.

11.Homework is used effectively to support learning in school. All pupils take books home and teachers give guidance on selection where appropriate and monitor pupils' home reading. Parents receive information on the purpose of reading at home and guidance on effective strategies to use. Pupils take spellings home to learn and are regularly tested on these. Other English assignments are set in line with an overall programme of homework.

12.The school has successfully implemented the literacy hour as part of the National Literacy Strategy. This is making a good contribution to raising standards. Teaching is supported by an enthusiastic and well-informed co-ordinator. There is no portfolio of pupils' levelled work for teachers to refer to in order to compare standards. Teachers and pupils have access to good resources, and the school also makes good use of visiting authors and other visitors to stimulate further pupils' interest and learning.

Mathematics

1.The results of the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils reaching at least the expected level, level 4, was in line with national averages. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 was below average.

1.Over the three years from 1996 to 1998, the school's average results rose faster than the national trend, and in 1998 the performance of pupils at both levels 4 and 5 was above average. The school's results in 1999 have risen slightly again but a significant increase in the national average means that the school's performance currently is not ahead of the national average. In comparison with similar schools, however, attainments in 1998 were below the average and, in 1999, are well below average. During this time, girls performed a little less well than boys in the tests.

1.The inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is average across the school and at the end of the key stage. This is similar to the findings at the time of the previous inspection. When pupils enter the school, their attainments have been broadly average and there are indications that attainment on entry is rising. They currently make satisfactory progress towards these end of key stage results which have also generally been rising in recent years.

2.By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils are developing their own strategies for problem solving, giving clear expectations why they are carrying out certain operations. Pupils record their findings accurately and are able to apply their knowledge and understanding to practical contexts. A good example of this is in history, where pupils develop an understanding of the mathematical aspects of chronology. They extend their mathematical vocabulary and understand terms such as 'positive and negative' when applied to numbers, 'vertical and horizontal axes' in graphing and 'numerator and denominator' in fractions. Most pupils have a good understanding of place value in numbers over 1000, with many pupils confident in writing and reading numbers to one million. They apply the four rules of number to thousands, hundreds, tens and units confidently and accurately. Although pupils have strategies to calculate multiplication facts, these are not yet sufficiently well known by all pupils to provide instant recall.

3.Pupils' knowledge and understanding of fractions and decimals are good. They measure perimeters and areas of shapes accurately and recognise shapes that have line and rotational symmetry, recognising the link between shapes and the number of lines of symmetry. Pupils confidently and accurately calculate co-ordinates and understand the use of the x and y axes. They construct graphs using appropriate scales, and collect and record data on block and line graphs,

assessing the information they require effectively and accurately. Pupils investigate shapes and understand their properties and construct triangles from given measurements accurately. Mathematics is used in some work in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils were making careful measurements in design and technology, interrogating statistics and using negative numbers in science and recognising tempo in music.

4. Progress is satisfactory across the key stage. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has increased teachers' awareness of the importance of mental calculation and of developing problem solving strategies across the school. Progress in this area of the curriculum is more effective where the session is well planned and the pace of the work is brisk. There is less evidence of progress in pupils' development of secure problem-solving strategies across the school. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is good in relation to their prior attainment. The pupils of above average ability are not always sufficiently challenged by the work provided and their progress in lessons is sometimes below what could be expected.

5. Pupils' attitudes are good and sometimes very good. They are never less than satisfactory. The majority of pupils listen attentively and respond eagerly to questioning. Most show good application to their work and persevere even when tasks are difficult. A small number of pupils, especially amongst the younger pupils, find it difficult to settle to their tasks and to concentrate for an appropriate length of time. This is often the result of lessons which are not sufficiently focused and where the pace of the lesson is slow. Most pupils demonstrate the ability to work co-operatively on joint tasks and work comfortably on their own when required to do so. The quality of presentation is variable across the school and insufficient attention is given to this in some classes.

6. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is also much good teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6. There is no portfolio of pupils' assessed work for teachers to use in grading the quality of the work in progress. Where teaching is good, the planning contains detail on each section of learning to be covered and is closely related to the National Numeracy Framework, which the school is using appropriately. The teacher shares with the pupils what they are going to learn during the lesson, provides clear direct teaching and assesses what the pupils have learned. The development and assessment of pupils' mental strategies is purposeful. Teachers' questioning is effective and encourages all pupils to try hard. The lessons are characterised by the provision of tasks designed to encourage pupils to apply their knowledge to new situations. The needs of pupils of differing abilities are planned for and work is set at appropriate levels. For example, in a lesson on fractions, questioning to the class was adapted to the understanding of different pupils and the tasks that were set helped pupils of different attainments to practise what they had learned. In a lesson on shapes, pupils were given outline shapes, if they needed them, to help them translate the shapes to new positions on paper. In the majority of lessons teachers show good subject knowledge, provide sound explanations and manage pupils well. Most lessons have a sound pace, but in less successful lessons pupils are allowed too much time to complete tasks, and the pace and effectiveness of the lesson falls. Resources, which are satisfactory, are used well. Teachers develop their own materials and supplement this with commercial materials to support and reinforce learning effectively.

7. Most teachers mark pupils' work appropriately with ticks and crosses. Occasionally, some teachers provide detailed comments that give further help to pupils to evaluate and improve their work. Assessments are carried out at the end of each year and regular testing of pupils' learning is carried out during the year so that teachers can gauge pupils' progress and identify targets. Homework is consistently provided to support the work of pupils in the classroom. The recent introduction of the numeracy strategy is making a positive impact on the planning, balance, range and quality of lessons.

8. Teaching is supported by good quality guidance in the policy for the subject and by a knowledgeable

co-ordinator who works hard to develop the subject. Mathematics development is a high priority within the school and teachers are receiving additional training to meet the challenge of the new approaches. The headteacher has carried out initial monitoring of the implementation of the numeracy strategy and, in the term after the inspection, the co-ordinator is scheduled to undertake further monitoring and evaluation of numeracy lessons.

Science

1.Results of the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4, the national expectation, is above the national average and that those achieving level 5 is close to the national average. Pupils' overall results are average when compared with all schools nationally but are below average when compared with similar schools. Current inspection findings confirm these levels of attainment at the end of the key stage.

2.Over the three years from 1996 to 1998, standards of attainment have been close to the national average and, in 1999, they have exceeded the national rise in standards, although remaining overall broadly in line with them. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below average. There has been an overall improvement in pupils' attainment and, particularly, in the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5. The performance of boys and girls is similar.

3.A limited amount of science was seen being taught at the time of the inspection. Units of work were being taught in Years 3 and 4. Some recorded work from across the school was available for scrutiny. Discussions with pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed that they are introduced well to investigations and experimentation. By the end of the key stage, they are able to discuss and demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of a fair test and of how to set up and systematically record their experiments. Pupils use appropriate language when talking about their assignments and, across the school, they are encouraged to carry out scientific research both at school and at home. Older pupils have a good recall and appropriate knowledge of work on light, the structure and functioning of the eye and the different nature and effects of concave and convex surfaces. They can describe aspects of sound and know that it travels on waves, and have investigated the solar system, both at school and at home. The attainments demonstrated were all appropriate for the ages of the pupils as they progressed towards the end of the key stage.

4.In the lessons seen at Years 3 and 4, pupils' understanding of life processes was being developed satisfactorily through studying the human skeleton, and in their work on teeth and the need for a healthy diet. Pupils were able to name bones of the skeleton and explain their functions. Pupils develop a sound understanding of materials and of their properties, exploring for example, transparency, translucency and opacity. Most pupils were able to make observations, draw conclusions and explain the meaning of these characteristics, showing understanding and learning.

5.Throughout the school pupils make satisfactory progress. They make progress in their understanding and appreciation of an increasingly complex scientific vocabulary and have the knowledge and confidence to use correct scientific terms to describe and explain what they are doing. As they move through the school pupils learn more complex scientific ideas. For example, pupils in Year 4 carry out a study of light and can prove that light travels in a straight line. In Year 6 the work is developed and pupils study the sun as a source of light, and learn about reflection and how the human eye functions. Work is not consistently well targeted to meet the needs of more able pupils, and their attainments are limited. Their progress is broadly satisfactory but does not match the levels attained by pupils in similar schools. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good as a result of the good attention given to them and the work provided.

6. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are committed to the tasks and generally concentrate on them with enjoyment. They behave well, handling resources with care and respect. There are good relationships across the school between pupils, and between teachers and pupils. Pupils work well together and are able to discuss issues and agree on a course of action. The pupils are extremely courteous and helpful, and are keen to talk about what they are doing.

7. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is satisfactory overall and is done in line with a clear long term grid which shows when elements of the subject are to be taught. Pupils' numeracy skills are used and consolidated effectively in investigative work, when they make and use measurements and statistics. Questioning is used well routinely to encourage pupils to think and explain, although on a small number of occasions it lacked challenge and the expectations of the pupils were low. Pupils benefit from clear explanations; they know exactly what they have to do and how to do it and teachers consistently provide positive feedback and praise to the pupils for their efforts. In every lesson observed the appropriate resources were well prepared and accessible. Management of pupils is always good. Some experimental work in investigating the translucency of materials was particularly well managed; pupils' work was monitored and they were helped to overcome problems and to draw conclusions and relate them to their predictions. Such assessment within a lesson is good but there is a need for teachers to use such information more effectively to inform their planning of the following lessons in order to provide the best match of work to pupils' levels of attainment. Assessment opportunities are not identified in teachers' day-to-day planning.

8. There has been a marked improvement in the standards achieved at the school since the last inspection. This is the result of science being given a higher focus within the school and the provision of training for teachers. This has improved teachers' confidence in the subject and they show satisfactory subject knowledge in their planning and in the teaching in lessons. The co-ordinator took responsibility for the subject after the last inspection, when weaknesses in standards were identified, and has worked closely and effectively with teachers and with advisers to develop provision for science. The attention to science has also led to a closer match between teachers' assessments and test results, although there are still differences, with a change from teachers' overall assessments being above to being below the test results, but with greater precision at level 5.

Information technology

1. Pupils' attainments are generally above the national expectations and above those found at the time of the previous inspection. This is an improvement in standards and reflects effective developments in the subject.

2. In discussions with pupils and through direct observation during lessons, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the use of computers to research information, organise data and communicate information. They use the mouse and the keyboard confidently, and are familiar with a good range of skills in using text and graphics. They understand how to load, save, edit and print and many are capable of operating the computer independently. Pupils in Year 4 show a good understanding of technical vocabulary and are beginning to compose music using computer programs. Other pupils use CD Roms to research, for example, the planets surrounding our sun as part of their science work. Pupils become increasingly independent because of effective teaching, together with the practice opportunities they receive both in school and at home. Many pupils have a good understanding of the main functions and use of the computers to support their work in other subjects. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology applications in every day life is well extended. This is seen well, for example, when pupils in Year 5 learned to write a program to control traffic lights and alter the delay between changing colours.

3. Throughout the school, pupils' of all levels of attainment, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress. Their progress is lessons when they are given group instruction is at least satisfactory but when working on computers independently they show their above average skills and confidence. This was well illustrated in a lesson in which pupils demonstrated good understanding of logical questioning to create commands to control the computer.

4. Pupils' attitudes and response to the subject are good. Most pupils are well motivated and show good interest in the subject. Higher attaining pupils are especially enthusiastic and make good use of their own home computers to consolidate and increase their own skills and knowledge. There are times when these pupils are not sufficiently challenged due to constraints of equipment and materials. They often work independently and are considerate about each other when working in pairs and small groups.

5. The quality of teaching is good. The teaching of key skills takes place mostly during specifically identified lessons each week. In addition to this, computers are used regularly in classrooms to support the other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils use computers independently at various times, leaving other activities to do so. Often this is appropriate, but occasionally it is inappropriate for them to leave the work the class is doing. The effectiveness of some of the teaching seen was hindered by limited availability of computers but overall the teaching is purposeful and productive, and has many good features. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are familiar with the software being used. They demonstrate good techniques and the learning objectives are related to available resources. Appropriate assessment records are in place, although the use of day-to-day assessments is insufficiently developed to focus teaching for individual pupils. The management of pupils is good. Careful attention is given to the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and their learning is promoted well through the use of computers.

6. The leadership of the subject is good and the two co-ordinators work hard to ensure effective use of information technology equipment in the school. The use of a good range of programs has been explored to enhance the learning in other curriculum subjects. This has proved effective. The policy and scheme of work have been well implemented. There is currently sufficient equipment for class teaching and resources are well maintained and organised. The school is working to update and enhance the resources.

Religious education

1. Standards of attainment by pupils at the end of the key stage meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. There was insufficient evidence at the time of the last inspection for a judgement to be made of standards. Religious education (RE) includes the study of the Christian and other faiths. By the end of the key stage, pupils have studied the principal beliefs and customs of Christianity, Hinduism and the Jewish faith. The subject also addresses the importance of individuals, relationships, the natural world, spiritual experience and morals.

2. Teachers make effective attempts to relate ideas, which are sometimes profound, to the child's own experience. Stories from the Old and New Testament are used, as well as those from other religions and cultures. In all aspects, the school places particular emphasis on pupils' own response to the issues raised. Pupils in Year 6 were learning about the wisdom of Solomon and were given good opportunities to search for meaning in the story. Pupils were also developing concepts about temples as places of welcome and safety.

3. Pupils of all abilities make overall satisfactory progress through the school. In some of the lessons seen, they made good progress in the particular work under way. They think about the meaning of Biblical parables and reflect on their own feelings when others do hurtful things. Younger pupils were beginning to appreciate the significance of Hindu deities, handling statues and pictures with respect and interest. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning stories from the Bible and learn some features of the life and culture of India as a basis for understanding some aspects of Hinduism

4. The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils. One example during the inspection was the presentation made by a visitor, who explained well and demonstrated Indian dances, illustrating both the cultural and spiritual aspects of the movements. The quality of that experience and also of the lessons, where teachers establish a thoughtful and reflective atmosphere, and encourage pupils to talk and work together, reflects and contributes to a good ethos for personal development.

5. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They show interest and are keen to contribute to discussions. They listen well to each other, and are respectful of the feelings of others and of the comments of pupils of other faiths.

6. Teaching seen in the subject was good overall. The good teaching in most cases led to good progress by pupils in those particular lessons. Teaching is not, however, consistently good enough to lead to good overall progress by pupils across the school. Lessons are satisfactorily planned and resources are prepared and used well. Teachers are confident and have a generally good understanding of the subject. They often use good questioning to get pupils to think and share ideas. Work in the subject often usefully consolidates and extends reading and writing skills. Teachers are now making good use of an effective scheme of work drawn up by the Local Education Authority (LEA) that provides the Agreed Syllabus. Planning does not, however, identify any differing expectations for pupils of different levels of attainment. There is a useful record sheet for noting the attainments of pupils each year but there is no guidance on making assessments, nor are opportunities for assessment identified in planning. Teaching is supported by an enthusiastic co-ordinator and a satisfactory range of resources, including a good selection of books in the library. Pupils have visited a local church, and representatives of other Christian groups make occasional visits to the school. However, the contribution of visits to other faith centres and of visitors to the school to enhance pupils' learning experiences, is not extensive.

Other subjects or courses

Art

1. Pupils' attainments are appropriate for their ages in their understanding and use of a range of media and in the development of their knowledge of art and artists. All pupils make satisfactory progress across the school and some of their work is of a particularly good standard. This broadly reflects the findings in the previous inspection.

2. Pupils use a variety of materials to record what they see, imagine and remember. They explore the use of paint, pastels, watercolours, paper and textiles and think about line, textures, colour and simple composition. This was evident, for example, in a variety of colour-mixing activities and the creation of patterns to present the range of shades, and in good drawings of shoes made from direct observation. These showed careful attention to the representation of detail and texture. Drawing, and the effective use of a variety of pencils, is developed and consolidated across the school. The use of paint and a range of brush skills is less well developed, and this reflects a finding at the last inspection.

3. Pupils have good opportunities to work from direct experience and to record what they see. Drawings by the youngest pupils show the ability to represent objects, such as house bricks, with a good developing sense of perspective. Drawings of rocks by pupils in Year 5 also show good observational skills. These skills are consolidated well in some activities in other areas of the curriculum, such as in science, where pupils have drawn good detailed pictures of the internal layout of torches. Imaginative work is promoted, for example, when pupils in Year 3 have produced appropriate wax resist pictures stimulated by listening to the music 'Danse Macabre' by Saent Saens. Pupils begin to learn about the work of artists, such as Picasso, Braque and Dali, and explore their methods and techniques, producing some good designs or reproductions based on their work. Simple pastel designs to frame pictures produced by pupils in Year 6 were completed carefully, and some of the work shows a good sense of pattern and visual rhythm.

4. The use of sketchbooks by pupils across the school is a potentially good strategy to help develop ideas and skills. Currently, they are used mainly by all pupils together to try out ideas presented by the teachers. They are not used much by pupils to record their own observations as reference material for later work or to explore and try out ideas of their own. The explorative use of sketchbooks is also limited by the timetable arrangements, so that there are half-term periods when art is not taught. This also limits the continuous development and practice of skills, and opportunities for pupils to use art as an option for recording ideas and responses at other times.

5. Pupils' attitudes to their work in the lessons seen were good. They work carefully and take pride in what they are doing. In one lesson they attempted well to find their own solutions to representing details and shading on human figures drawn from recall. They concentrate well in the good working atmosphere established in the lessons. The quality of much of the work on display around the school shows that pupils of all abilities are encouraged to work creatively and that they have taken care and worked with interest.

6. The teaching seen was satisfactory. Some of the teaching was good. The activities were carefully planned, and resources were prepared to stimulate ideas and productive work. Work across the school shows that teachers have provided appropriate learning opportunities for pupils but there is less evidence of work resulting from individual response or the independent use of a previously learnt skill. Where teaching was good, the challenge for pupils was based on a good knowledge of the subject and a brisk pace that encouraged concentration and achievement. Teachers record pupils' attainments carefully but there is no evidence of this information feeding forward into future work matched to the needs of different pupils. Teachers are supported by a suitable scheme of work that provides a breadth of experiences for pupils in drawing, painting, textiles and three-dimensional work appropriate for their ages. The work of well-known artists is used regularly to promote pupils' learning. The art of other cultures, such as India and ancient Egypt, is also studied. The development of pupils' skills is supported by an art club for pupils in year 4 and a creative textile club for pupils in Year 5. The work produced in these extra-curricular activities is of a good standard.

7. Teaching is supported by an enthusiastic coordinator who sometimes works alongside teachers to assist with a new technique being taught. The co-ordinator monitors the subject satisfactorily through seeing teachers' planning and pupils' work. Resources are satisfactory and include a kiln, but this is not used regularly.

Design and technology

1. During the period of the inspection no design and technology (DT) lessons were observed in Years 5 and 6 because of the way in which the timetable was planned. Judgements on attainment in these years is based on the scrutiny of work and through discussion with pupils and teachers.

2. Standards of attainment in the work seen are generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils and for the range of abilities. This reflects the attainments seen at the previous inspection. Pupils are given worthwhile experiences in making things and the opportunity to develop their skills in designing, making and evaluating. Pupils in Year 3 measured accurately and cut paper carefully to produce simple pop-up Christmas cards. Other pupils used examples and information to help them to design a Christmas card with a moving feature, and most did this successfully. Most pupils use tools accurately and with precision. They are able, for example, to discuss and sketch out plans to tackle the challenges that have been set, such as the designing of a torch. They evaluate their designs appropriately against agreed criteria.

3. Pupils make satisfactory progress. They learn appropriate skills and develop their understanding of the techniques useful in, for example, making a series of levers that work moving parts within the design of Christmas cards. Within lessons they make progress, for example, in learning about simple problems that are met at the construction stage. In one lesson, higher attaining pupils could have responded to an extended challenge within the task, but the overall progress by pupils of all levels of attainment is generally satisfactory.

4. Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good. They talk constructively in the groups that are assigned tasks. They are confident, work well together and most share observations easily within the group or with the whole class.

5. The overall quality of teaching, evident from planning and the work produced by pupils, is satisfactory, but that observed, particularly in Year 4, was mainly good. Teachers have suitable subject knowledge and have good relationships with their pupils. Planning is clear and usually includes specific learning objectives based on the currently non-statutory programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Teachers maintain a brisk pace in the lessons which encourages pupils to make the most of the time available. Teachers have appropriate expectations for the pupils who receive, when necessary, individual support during practical tasks. Lessons often provide good opportunities for pupils to use and practise numeracy skills, particularly in the use of measurements when designing. Teaching is supported by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, a scheme of work which provides good guidance, and suitable, well-organised resources.

Geography

1. During the period of the inspection no geography lessons were able to be observed and, because of the way in which the curriculum is planned, very little teaching of geography had taken place during the school year prior to the inspection. Some work from the previous year was available for scrutiny, but it was insufficient to make judgements on pupils' attainment and progress. At the previous inspection, standards of attainment were in line with national expectations.

2. The subject is managed by a co-ordinator who has only recently taken on this role. The policy statement is clear and sound, and a scheme of work and a system for keeping records of pupils' attainments are in the process of being developed. Resources are satisfactory. Teachers' planning is based around a map of units of work that provides an appropriate sequence of experiences for pupils.

through the key stage. However, the subject is taught only at certain times of the year, with substantial periods of time between units of work. For example, no geography is taught for about 14 months between Years 4 and 5 and this is unsatisfactory. The result of this planning means that subject skills are not routinely practised and consolidated, and this provides a greater challenge for teachers and pupils in promoting good standards.

History

1.Pupils' attainment in the work seen was appropriate for their ages and they make satisfactory progress. No judgements about standards were made at the last inspection as no history units were being taught at that time.

2.Pupils are gaining a good knowledge of different periods of history and of some of the key events and people. By the end of the key stage they can use timelines to organise information chronologically and know the significance of key dates. They understand the beliefs and behaviours of people living in different historical periods and can speculate on these using evidence. Pupils use a wide variety of sources to gain information and make judgements about the past. They recall knowledge from previous lessons and use this successfully to support new learning. They organise their findings to produce an appropriate range of written and oral accounts. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of literacy, in particular reading and the development of good study skills. Numeracy skills are usefully consolidated by work with dates and timelines.

3.Pupils' attitudes and response to the subject are good. They are interested and involved in the lessons. They listen well and are keen to offer ideas and suggestions in discussions. Pupils are well motivated and work well together when given the opportunity.

4.The quality of teaching is good. All teachers have good subject knowledge and plan appropriately with clear learning targets. Lessons are well organised and managed, and teachers use a variety of appropriate strategies to engage pupils' attention and interest. Explanations, such as of social classes and hierarchies in ancient Egypt, are clear and help pupils' to learn. Questioning is also effective in helping pupils to develop their understanding of, for example, the differences between Victorian and modern schools, and life in ancient Greece. On only one occasion, the teaching was not sufficiently focused to pick up on some confused ideas that pupils were showing about some aspects of life in the past.. The pace of lessons is brisk. Teachers have access to a good range of artefacts and books, and good use is made of visits to museums, other places of historical interest and of visitors to stimulate learning and foster empathy.

5.Teachers evaluate pupils' progress in key skills on completion of a unit of work. However, a weakness in teaching, including in those lessons otherwise judged as good, is the lack of the ongoing assessment of pupils' achievements to inform the planning of lessons, and to ensure that work is matched to the needs of pupils, particularly the most able pupils. In general, work is only varied for different pupils in terms of teachers' expectations of what individual pupils will achieve.

6.Teachers are supported by a knowledgeable co-ordinator and by a comprehensive policy that identifies the skills and ideas to be taught within the blocked units, which occur once a year, and twice in Year 3. This does inhibit the continuous development of subject skills, but standards in the work seen were satisfactory. Teachers' planning is monitored and advice and support are provided when appropriate.

Music

1.The standards of attainment by pupils of different ages across the school are good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were in line with the national expectations. Pupils sing very well. They know a wide repertoire of songs and hymns, and are able to respond to the musical moods of different pieces through the modulation of tone and volume. Their diction is good and they sing with good expression. Pupils are able to sing songs with complex rhythms in unison, and can sing rounds and part songs. They listen to a range of music by different composers and are able to make and describe their personal responses to the music. Using percussion instruments, pupils were composing and performing their own music and have the opportunity to record their compositions.

2.Pupils' make good progress and are acquiring a good knowledge of musical terminology. In lessons, they were learning to understand and recognise harmony, appraise musical performance appropriately, select instruments and sounds to match their intentions, and compose and perform simple pieces of music. Extra-curricular music activities include a choir and recorder clubs. These are very well attended and the work in them contributes well to pupils' overall learning and standards of attainment. The quality of the singing of a range of musically challenging songs by the choir is of a very good standard.

3.Pupils learn a range of songs, hear music, and use and learn about musical instruments from other cultures and this makes a good contribution to their cultural development. The opportunity to sing, hear a range of recorded music and reflect on music heard during assemblies and lessons contributes well to their spiritual development.

4.Pupils respond well to the opportunities to listen to music and to compose and perform their own music. Pupils enjoy all aspects of their music lessons and participate with lively enthusiasm. They enjoy singing and sing well in assemblies and in classroom lessons. They listen attentively to recorded music. When working with instruments they use them appropriately. They are able to organise themselves into groups when required and can negotiate aspects of musical composition. They make sensitive and thoughtful comments about each other's work.

5.The quality of teaching is good. Lessons proceed at a good pace and the subject knowledge of the teachers is appropriate. They give good explanations of, for example, syncopation, texture and harmony that raises the standard of work and the quality of performance. There are good interventions by teachers to promote pupils' musical understanding and to help them to respond to music they are listening to. Lessons are planned carefully with clear whole-class learning objectives and there is a good balance between instruction, discussion and activity. The match of work to the needs of different pupils is generally satisfactory, in that many tasks are open and allow pupils to take their performance forward and extend their learning individually. Resources are good and are used effectively. Suitable records are kept of pupils' overall progress but procedures for making assessments of pupils' work in lessons is underdeveloped. Those teachers and classroom assistants with particular musical expertise take a good lead in teaching the subject, including the choir and recorders, and their expertise is used to positive effect.

6.The newly appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has specialist skills and knowledge that provide good support for colleagues. There is a scheme of work, and published materials, that provide sound support for teachers without specialist skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Music is taught continuously through the year, and the regular development and consolidation of their skills contributes to the good standards of attainment. A small number of pupils receive effective instrumental tuition from peripatetic music teachers.

Physical education

1. Standards of attainment in the work seen were good in dance and in swimming, and were satisfactory in games. Pupils' progress in these aspects of the subject are in line with the attainments. The evidence in other aspects of the subject is limited as it was not possible to see the full range of the physical education curriculum during the inspection. The findings reflect those at the last inspection, where attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations.

2. In Year 3, pupils have appropriate skills in balancing, and make curled, stretched and twisted shapes well, linking them into good quality sequences of movement representing the movements of a machine. They discuss and evaluate their own and others' performances and suggest possible improvements. Pupils of this age are beginning to interpret musical accompaniment in a creative way to guide their actions. By Year 5, pupils have developed a good understanding of the exaggerated movement required in dance-drama, and move with control and attention to detail. When working with a partner they develop a good level of understanding as they move rhythmically to portray the life of working Victorian children. The pupils in Year 6 show good control of their movements and interpret the music skilfully, linking their own movements with those of others into a well co-ordinated performance. Pupils work purposefully and productively at a variety of heights and speeds, reacting to the tempo of the music.

3. Younger pupils practised their hockey games skills satisfactorily. They have a good understanding of the control skills required and could dribble a ball satisfactorily under close control conditions, stopping the ball and changing direction appropriately. They transferred these skills to small games, demonstrating an awareness of the space being used by others. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in these lessons and are fully integrated into the lessons working creatively with their peers in individual and group activities.

4. Pupils' attitudes to their work in PE are good. In some lessons they were very good. Most pupils listen carefully and react positively to teachers' advice on how to improve their skills and movement. In dance lessons, boys and girls work well together and with obvious enjoyment. They demonstrate their skills and listen to their peers as they evaluate their movements in a constructive way. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is very good and they practise and improve their work conscientiously. They sustain concentration well.

5. The quality of teaching varies but is good overall. In the good and very good lessons, teachers display considerable subject expertise and knowledge and set pupils appropriately challenging tasks. Planning for these lessons is good, particularly in dance where teachers link themes from other subjects such as history to dance and music. Lessons, especially those in dance, have good pace. Guidance and instructions are presented clearly. Demonstration and discussion are used well, involving good quality pupil performance to provide ideas and motivation for improvement. The satisfactory range of well-organised resources is used effectively and carefully by both teachers and pupils.

6. The curriculum is suitably broad and includes outdoor and adventurous games. Teaching is supported by a scheme of work that provides good guidance to teachers. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and provides a very good lead in the subject. Opportunities for her to work alongside colleagues are currently few and this limits the opportunities for the co-ordinator to support the promotion of higher standards. The school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular sporting activities open to both boys and girls. Pupils also participate in a variety of inter-school sporting activities, which help develop pupils' ideas of healthy competition and fair play.

Swimming

1.The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming which is reported below. Almost all pupils make good progress and meet the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 2. They are able to swim unaided, competently and safely for at least 25 metres. They develop confidence well and learn various means of propulsion, swimming on their front and back, using efficient strokes. Pupils also learn to float and rest in the water, and the basic principles of water safety. Many pupils go on to attain at a higher level, swimming continuously 25 metres on the front and 25 metres on the back.

2.Teaching is good. Pupils go to a local pool and are taught by professional instructors. The teaching is well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. In the lessons seen, teachers from the school assist with small groups of lower attaining pupils under the supervision and guidance of the instructors. In other lessons, teachers from school take the more advanced swimmers. Time is taken to ensure that pupils are confident and understand the work expected of them. The teaching ensures a good work rate by all pupils. Instruction is clear and challenging.

3.The response of all pupils to the teaching is very good. They work well and follow instructions closely. Non-swimmers are given a well-planned programme of activities to develop their skills in a roped-off area at the shallow end of the pool, and developing swimmers have activities matched well to their levels of confidence and competence. As a result, the majority have attained the National Curriculum standard by the end of Year 4. Those who do not achieve the expectation continue to have swimming lessons into Year 5.

4.The curriculum is based on a good progression of activities planned by the organisation that provides the instruction. This is well laid out in a policy and practice document. There is a good sequence of pre-swimming skills for pupils to work through. Subsequent attainments are recorded by a series of awards for attaining different levels of performance, starting with swimming a few strokes, then half a width, and then swimming increasing distances with and without floats. The stages are appropriate. Attainments are used to plan the teaching by identifying the groups pupils will work in. Final attainments in Years 3 and 4 are noted on a record sheet covering all aspects of the PE curriculum.

5.Swimming is provided from Year 3 to take the earliest opportunity to teach pupils the essential skills. The allocation of time in Year 3 is flexible, depending on the size of cohorts and groupings. An increase in pool time in the current year is allowing greater access by pupils in Year 3. Most pupils in Year 4 have swimming lessons, and those who achieve the national expectation can continue to a higher level. Swimming provision does not continue in Year 5, except for a small number who have not attained the expected level. This has the disadvantage of taking these Year 5 pupils out of class but they do not miss key literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers have to manage this situation for those pupils. However, the overall approach to planning and providing swimming teaching is efficient.

6.Teachers and volunteer parent-helpers accompany all groups. Parents assist well with supervision to and from the pool but are not responsible for supervision at the poolside or in the water. One teaching assistant, under the supervision of a teacher, worked in the water with a pupil with special educational needs. The provision for this pupil was good. Pupils are taken to the pool by coach on a shuttle basis. The coach is punctual and this helps make the best use of time.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

1.The inspection was carried out by a team of six inspectors. A total of 20 days was spent in the school. Before the inspection, school policies and other documents were read and analysed by the team. Thirty-seven parents attended the meeting for parents with the registered inspector. The analysis of information from 114 questionnaires returned by parents and written comments from parents were read and considered by the team.

2.During the inspection all teachers were seen teaching and 80 observations were made of lessons or parts of lessons, totalling over 59½ hours. Observations were also made of registration periods, assemblies and extra-curricular activities. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in subjects were explored with them in discussions and in lessons. Pupils' current and past work was examined. Twenty-six pupils from across the school were heard to read individually and their reading discussed with them. Other pupils were heard to read in lessons. Recreational periods and lunchtimes were also observed. A little under 15 hours of discussions were held with members of staff, governors and parents. The records kept on individual pupils, teachers' planning, attendance records, governors' reports and minutes and budget papers were also inspected.

Data and indicators

3.PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full- time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y3 - Y6	355	7	42	21

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (Y3 - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5

Education support staff (Y3 - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week	135

Average class size

29.6

FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total income	542,191
Total expenditure	522,318
Expenditure per pupil	1,488.09
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,525
Balance carried forward to next year	76,398

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 355
 Number of questionnaires returned: 114

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	19.3	75.4	2.6	2.6	0.0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	40.4	52.6	4.4	2.6	0.0
The school handles complaints from parents well	15.0	60.7	17.8	5.6	0.9
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	25.4	67.5	5.3	1.8	0.0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	20.5	63.4	7.1	8.9	0.0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	21.2	63.7	10.6	3.5	0.9
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	22.8	62.3	9.6	5.3	0.0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	21.9	64.9	4.4	7.9	0.9
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	23.9	62.8	8.8	4.4	0.0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	24.8	64.6	7.1	3.5	0.0
My child(ren) like(s) school	42.9	50.0	3.6	3.6	0.0