

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWSTEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blurton, Stoke on Trent

LEA area: Stoke on Trent

Unique reference number: 124017

Headteacher: Mrs. P. Jones

Reporting inspector: G.W. Cooper
23647

Dates of inspection: 26th February – 1st March, 2001

Inspection number: 188003

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Waterside Drive,
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Blurton,
Stoke on Trent
Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. A. Irving

Date of previous inspection: 05/11/1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23647	Mr. G.W.Cooper	Registered inspector	Science	How high are standards?
			Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
			Religious education	What sort of school is it?
			Equal opportunities	What should the school do to improve further?
8982	Mrs. K. Berry	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22740	Mrs. M. Leah	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	
			Special educational needs	
			Mathematics	
			Geography	
			History	
21910	Mr. G. Longton	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
			Art and design	
			Design and technology	
			Information and communication technology	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Newstead Primary School is a community nursery, infant and junior school with 30 children attending the nursery full time and 183 boys and girls in the main school. This is about average for schools in England. The school serves the Blurton area to the south of Stoke on Trent. The area is one of high unemployment. More than 50 per cent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal. This is well above the national average. Almost all pupils are from a white British background. English is the home language of all pupils. Forty pupils (including 7 children in the nursery) are identified as having special educational needs, which is about average for schools in England. Of these, seven pupils have a statement of special educational needs and this is typical of other schools. Most pupils with special needs have moderate learning difficulties. When children enter the nursery, attainment is well below that which could be reasonably expected. The acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is below average when pupils enter full time education. The school is part of an Educational Action Zone (EAZ). There have been no significant changes in the characteristics of the school since the previous inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Newstead is a very effective school. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with the standard expected nationally but significantly better than the average of similar schools. Pupils' personal standards are good. Teaching is consistently good and often very good and excellent. Many aspects of leadership and management are excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Except for English in year 6, attainment is in line with the standard expected nationally, and above and mostly well above the average for similar schools.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good; this has a strong and positive effect on the progress pupils make.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent; the school's procedures for self-evaluation and the development of teaching have been instrumental in significantly raising standards.
- It is characteristic of the school that there is a high quality of commitment, enthusiasm and relationships among all adults; this characteristic has a profound effect on the good provision the school makes for its pupils through the level of care given, the provision for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and the school's partnership with parents.
- The provision made by adults has a significant effect on the personal standards achieved by pupils, who behave well, show great commitment to their schoolwork and enjoy very good relationships with adults and other pupils.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English in Year 6 are below the national standard.
- Insufficient use is made of pupils' growing confidence in their literacy skills to enhance their learning in history, geography and religious education.
- Although attainment is in line with the expected standards in information and communication technology, insufficient use is made of these skills to promote learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils do not use their handwriting and presentation skills sufficiently consistently.
- Within its very good provision for the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, more needs to be done to promote an understanding of the multi-cultural nature of society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in March, 1996 when it was judged to be failing to give its pupils a satisfactory standard of education. As a result the school was inspected in November, 1998 to judge its improvement against the key issues of that inspection. It was then judged to have made

good improvement and to be no longer in need of special measures. That improvement has been capitalised upon and excellent improvement has been achieved: standards have been raised, the quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly, pupils' personal standards through behaviour and relationships have risen substantially, the curriculum has been improved and is now good and the school has raised parental and community awareness of its rising standards. The improvement is the result of a strengthened teaching and management team, raising the expectations of all concerned with the work of the school; pupils, teaching and support staff, members of the governing body, parents and the local community. The school is justifiably proud to have been identified as one of the one hundred most improved schools nationally. Given the quality of management and the commitment of all staff, the school has good capacity to make further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. The levels of the National Curriculum tests are awarded a point score. The average point score is the school average of the total of all pupils' scores divided by the number of pupils taking the test in each subject. Letter grades are given for national comparisons: A* is the top five per cent, A 7 – 25 per cent, B 26 – 40 per cent, C 41 to 60 per cent, D 61 to 75 per cent, E 76 – 95 per cent, E* lowest five per cent. This is a more discriminating method of assessing the standard of the school against the national standard.

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

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The table gives an indication of how standards have improved in the past four years for the oldest pupils. The school's trend of improvement is greater than the national trend of improvement. Although the attainment of Year 6 in English in the work seen during inspection is still below the national standard in writing, attainment in English throughout the rest of the school is now at the level expected. Mathematics standards have improved more rapidly and are now successfully at the national standards in the work seen in all year groups throughout the school. Standards in science have improved from year to year and in the work seen standards are at the level expected nationally. This is better than the National Curriculum tests for 2000. The improvement has been gained through an increasing emphasis on practical and investigative work that promotes thinking skills. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Standards are in line with expectations in all other areas of the curriculum. Standards for seven-year-olds have also risen rapidly, and were above the national standard in writing and mathematics in 2000. The school believes, data from monitoring of attainment indicate and the inspection team agrees, that the difference between the years lies in the attainment profile of the differing groups of pupils. In the work seen during this inspection, standards are in line with the expected level in all subjects of the curriculum. The school compares very favourably with schools of a similar background. In the year 2000, National Curriculum tests indicated standards in English and mathematics well above the average of similar schools and above the average in science. For seven-year-olds in the same year, test results in reading and writing were very high compared with similar schools and well above average in mathematics. The school sets itself very challenging targets for attainment. These targets were exceeded in 2000. Targets are a little lower for 2001 and these targets are realistic in the light of prior attainment data collected and analysed by the school. Pupils are on course to achieve the targets set. There is a strength throughout the school in the intensity with which pupils listen. This is a product of the good behaviour they show in lessons and of the teachers' skill in focusing pupils' attention at key moments in lessons. This strength is a significant factor in the good progress pupils

make during lessons and over time. Taking the school's context and attainment on entry to school, pupils achieve well. However, the school is not complacent in its standards and recognises that further progress is necessary in English, particularly in the use of writing skills and in the number of pupils throughout the school achieving higher than average levels of attainment. When children enter the nursery their prior skills and understanding are well below what could reasonably be expected. They make good progress. By the time they enter full time schooling they have made significant progress. Overall, their attainment remains below that of children of similar age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and are very interested and involved in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The vast majority of pupils behave responsibly and sensibly. A few have difficult behaviour and receive additional adult support from the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships among pupils are very good. Pupils have few opportunities to practice the skills of independent study through research and investigation.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Although there have been several years of improvement, attendance levels remain below the national average. This is despite the fact that parents say pupils like coming to school and the school's rigorous procedures for promoting good attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching of English and mathematics is good and this has raised pupils' expectations of their work and enhanced the progress they make. In the best lessons, teachers manage pupils well, have very clear and specific targets for learning that they share with pupils, take lessons at a brisk pace keeping pupils well motivated and concentrated as they learn. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually good and this helps lessons to be taught confidently, maintaining pupils' interest. Rarely there are occasional gaps in teacher knowledge. Many teachers have a good sense of humour that cements relationships and makes learning fun. There is a particular strength in the design of tasks that match the needs of different pupils. Teachers use resources well and there is a very good working relationship between teachers and learning support assistants. The latter raises the quality of work of support assistants and brings considerable learning gains to the pupils they support, especially pupils with special educational needs. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well established and teachers are adept at teaching the skills involved. Where lessons are satisfactory rather than good, the pace of the lesson is sometimes not as brisk and learning objectives are not as clearly established and shared with pupils. On rare occasions there are gaps in teacher knowledge. Where this happens pupils are less enthusiastic and involved in their learning with the result that the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding is not as rapid. Insufficient use is made of pupils' growing confidence in their literacy and information and communication technology skills across all aspects of the curriculum. Forty-eight lessons or parts of lessons were seen during the inspection. All were satisfactory or better. Twenty one per cent of lessons were very good or better and this includes two excellent lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is thoroughly planned through policy, scheme of work and teachers' detailed preparation for lessons. Not enough use is made of the skills pupils acquire in literacy and information and communications technology. Statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There is thorough provision of individual plans for pupils' learning, through tasks specially adapted to their needs and through the support given to pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. All staff are consistent in the provision made for spiritual and moral development. Strategies for enhancing social skills are well established. More could be done to promote an understanding of the diverse nature of society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school is deeply committed to the care of its pupils, through its knowledge of their pastoral needs and through its well-developed systems for the assessment and promotion of progress.

The partnership with parents has been considerably improved since 1998. The very positive response of parents to the inspection questionnaire shows how much they appreciate this.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. High quality leadership and management have been the key to the rapid improvement made by the school over the past four years.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. All statutory requirements are fulfilled. Governors are deeply committed to school improvement and well informed about its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school is well aware of its strengths and its needs. This has been an important tool in the improvement achieved.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has an adequate number of skilled teachers. This is well complemented by good provision of learning support assistants. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory in the support they give to the work of the school.

The school applies the principles of best value well. Spending decisions are evaluated. Standards are carefully compared. The school is quick to seek expert advice and opportunities for external evaluation. It continually challenges its standards and provision in endeavouring to seek improvement.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That their child likes school and makes good progress• That teaching and leadership and management are good• That the school has high expectations of children and helps them become more mature and responsible• That parents can approach the school easily and they are well informed about progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the range of activities out of school time• the provision of homework; a minority of parents think there is insufficient homework

The inspection team fully agrees with the very positive views of parents. The range of activities provided out of school time is similar to that provided by most schools. The parents expressing a concern were mostly parents of younger children. It is most usual and appropriate in primary schools that this provision is for older pupils in the school and the inspectors judge the provision to be satisfactory. Some parents think there is insufficient homework. Although there are ways in which improvements can be made, all children do get homework on a regular basis and inspectors believe that the provision is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards of attainment in the work seen during inspection week are generally in line with the standard expected nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. Only in English in Year 6 is this not the case. Standards here are below the expected level in writing. There are some differences between inspection findings and the results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000.
2. In the tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, attainment in reading was in line with the national average, while attainment in writing and mathematics was above average. When results are compared with those of schools in a similar context, standards in reading and writing were very high and well above average in mathematics. The term 'very high' indicates that the results were in the top five per cent of results throughout similar schools in England. The profile of school improvement since 1997 is dramatic. Results have gone from well below the national average in all areas tested, to up to and beyond the national average. There are no significant differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls, although there are small variations between subjects and from year to year. In 2000 part of the measure of the school's success was that while most pupils achieved the national standard in the areas tested (indeed all pupils did so in mathematics) a significant number of pupils are now achieving the higher levels possible at this age.
3. In the tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, attainment in English and science was below the national average, while attainment in mathematics was in line with the national average. When results are compared with those of similar schools, standards in English and mathematics are well above average and above average in science. Again, the school has made dramatic progress over four years. In 1997 results in all areas tested were well below average. National data for all schools shows that the school's rate of improvement is above the national rate of improvement. Results for boys and girls show very little difference between subjects or from year to year. The school is becoming very successful in ensuring pupils' progress towards the standard expected nationally. However, fewer pupils achieve the higher levels possible than in most schools.
4. In the work seen of seven year olds, attainment is in line with the standard expected. This is not as good as the results of national tests in 2000. There is less evidence of attainment higher than the national standard. There is a particular strength in speaking and listening and this is a strong factor in the progress pupils make. The situation is similar in mathematics. In science, teacher assessments have shown standards to be average. In the work seen, pupils achieve standards in line with expectations. Although the work done by pupils is based on practical experiences, insufficient is done to promote scientific vocabulary and methods. Although the work seen in history, geography and religious education is of a satisfactory standard, there is little written work. The school is aware of the fact that having improved standards in literacy, it now needs to develop strategies to support pupils' use of literacy skills across the curriculum. Information and communication technology standards are as expected when pupils are seven. However, not enough use is made of the skills pupils learn. Pupils acquire satisfactory skills in lessons where the subject is taught directly and there is good use of the school computer suite for this. Standards in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education are satisfactory.

Year 1 pupils exceed the expected standard in dance. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectation of the local syllabus.

5. In the work seen in English of eleven year olds, attainment is in line with the standard expected, except for pupils in Year 6 where the standard in writing is below the standard expected. Year 6 pupils do not achieve sufficiently well. This reflects the standards achieved in national tests in 2000. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills. Most read competently and many read well for their age. Pupils are making good progress in the acquisition of writing skills. Only in Year 6, where there continues to be a residue of underachievement, standards are below average in writing. Standards in mathematics are in line with the national standard. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy has raised pupils' expectations of their ability to handle numbers and there is an atmosphere of growing confidence in this. Standards in science are at the expected level. This is rather better than recent National Curriculum test results where standards have been below the national average. Factors in improvement are a greater emphasis on practical and investigative work with better use of scientific vocabulary, close tracking of pupil achievement to ensure further progress, the rigorous implementation of a good scheme of work and insistent teaching of scientific methods. Standards in history, geography and religious education are satisfactory. As with the younger pupils, so with older pupils the volume of work is slim. However, discussions with pupils show that they are acquiring the skills expected for their age in these subjects. Insufficient use is made of their literacy skills to research and report in these subjects. The same can be said for skills in information and communication technology. Pupils acquire valuable skills in the lessons in the computer suite. There are few opportunities for them to use these skills to support learning in other subjects. Standards match expectations in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Some of the work seen in art shows that pupils appreciate the style of famous artists such as Monet. On display around the school are ingenious artefacts, which demonstrate pupils' competency in design and technology. Standards in music and physical education are satisfactory. Standards in both these subjects are enriched by opportunities for pupils to extend their playing and singing skills in music through choir and instrumental lessons and through opportunities to compete at a higher level in different sports. Attainment in religious education is in line with expectations of the agreed syllabus. Given that pupils enter school with below average knowledge and skills, they make good progress and attain well against their prior attainment.

6. Children enter the nursery at the age of three with a range of skills and experience that is well below expectation for their age. Assessment on entry to school indicates that they have made good progress through their time in nursery and most are on the way to achieving the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage by the time they enter Reception classes. Although their attainment is still below average by the time they enter Year 1, they achieve well. Some are very secure in their acquisition of the Early Learning Goals. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2. They achieve well and make significant learning gains and achieve national standards in their work. Progress is maintained through to Year 6. Although pupils in Year 6 do not achieve the national standard in writing, they make good progress in terms of their prior attainment when in Year 2. These pupils had standards in writing that were well below average when they were in Year 2 and are now achieving standards in line with expectations except in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets on their individual plans for learning. The progress they make is in line with their prior attainment in all areas of the curriculum.

7. The school has good strategies for the use of its pupil performance data. The progress of pupils is carefully checked. This enables very accurate and challenging targets to be set. Targets were exceeded in 2000. Targets for 2001 are not as high but the school believes that they are realistic in the light of prior attainment. The inspection team agrees with this. Pupils are on course to achieve their targets for 2001. The National Strategies for literacy and numeracy are well embedded into the work of the school. Basic skills are well taught and this is a major factor in the achievement of pupils. However, the school is not sufficiently successful in using the literacy skills pupils acquire to promote higher attainment across the curriculum. There is some good use of numeracy skills in other subjects. This is particularly noticeable in science where pupils do a good deal of handling of number to support their investigations. Given attainment on entry to school, the progress of individual pupils that the school can identify and the school's rapid improvement in standards over 4 years, achievement is good. In terms of the progress pupils make, standards are high enough, although the school is not complacent and recognises that it needs to promote the learning of higher attaining pupils even further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. For the vast majority of pupils, attitudes to school and to lessons are never less than good. The good teaching and support of all staff help them to build on the commitment to learning, indicated at the last inspection, by providing activities they enjoy and can readily become involved in. Their interest and enthusiasm are strengths of the school. The learning activities provided are often fun creating a relaxed atmosphere where good progress is made. Over 95 per cent of parents replying to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate their children like school. Parents feel that their child makes good progress in all areas of their development. This is borne out in inspection findings. Pupils display a keen sense of loyalty to the school. They are committed to their own education.
9. Behaviour is good across the school and on occasions very good. There are a few pupils whose aggression is very near the surface but they receive the support they need to help them feel part of the school community. There were no exclusions in the last academic year. Pupils respond to the school rules well. They are well aware of the consequences of any transgression but enjoy the praise and rewards received for their positive endeavours. Pupils are learning to work together. There is rarely any oppressive behaviour towards each other. This is a major step forward in their development. Relationships are a strength of the school and form the corner stone of good behaviour and positive attitudes. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are becoming mature young adults. They show sensitivity and responsible attitudes to younger pupils. These attitudes are effectively demonstrated through the 'buddy' system where they take on the care and support of infant children at lunch times and at break. Older pupils take it in turns to help around the school, taking milk to the classrooms and preparing the hall for assembly. Younger pupils take turns to help in the classroom where they have to set an example to others. Where opportunities to show initiative are built into curriculum, pupils are more than capable of rising to the occasion. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to study independently, except in their homework tasks.
10. Although it is clear pupils enjoy school it is not reflected in the attendance and sometimes their punctuality. Despite recent improvement in attendance rates, school statistics show that attendance is below the national average. Pupils do try hard to attend regularly and on time, particularly when attendance and punctuality projects are running.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. Overall the quality of teaching observed during the course of the inspection was good. During the inspection, 48 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and the majority of teaching was good or better. In ten per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory, in 69 per cent it was good; in 17 per cent it was very good and in four per cent it was excellent. This represents a vast improvement since the 1996 inspection when a high proportion of the teaching was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is now a major strength of the school. All subjects of the curriculum are taught effectively. There are strengths in the teaching in all year groups of the school.
12. Teaching was good overall throughout the school. One of the major strengths of teaching at Newstead Primary School that was observed in all lessons is the teachers' skill in establishing excellent relationships with the pupils. An industrious atmosphere pervades the school and this encourages good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Parents' response to the pre-inspection questionnaire shows that 98 per cent agree that the school expects pupils to work hard. The same sentiments were very strongly repeated at the parents' meeting.
13. The introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies has been well managed throughout the school. These lessons are well structured. This has resulted in much more effective teaching in both subjects. Teachers have trained and worked hard to implement the frameworks and to adapt their teaching methods successfully. New appointments have also helped to improve the quality of teaching. Over the past four years the professional development of teachers has been very well led by the headteacher. All staff have benefited from opportunities to attend training courses and their subject knowledge in almost all areas of the curriculum is now good. Teachers' subject knowledge in information and communication technology and in design and technology has particularly improved. There are some gaps in teachers' knowledge of the curriculum for religious education.
14. Teachers make clear to pupils what is to be learnt, giving a strong focus to the lesson. They often conclude lessons with a review session to assess learning, tackle any misconceptions and to congratulate pupils on their successes. This helps boost the pupils' self esteem. Lesson preparation is good. Carefully chosen resources are organised and are readily available. Pupils' books and other resources are always to hand and classroom routines are well established. The result is that maximum time is used for learning and this makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. The Year 6 teacher makes very good use of the digital projector and interactive white board to improve presentation of work to the class and make lessons exciting. In Key Stages 1 and 2, skills in literacy and numeracy are sometimes used to extend learning in other subjects, for example, in science, history and geography, but the practice is patchy and this important area is not sufficiently integrated into planning. Pupils have few opportunities to practice and extend their competence in writing.
15. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or who may be experiencing learning difficulty is good throughout the school and enables them to make good gains in learning. The requirements of individual education plans are built into daily activities and designated teaching and support staff provide intensive, targeted sessions to meet individual and group needs. As a result, all pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school community and that all develop good levels of self-confidence.

16. In the foundation stage teaching is consistently good. The Early Learning Goals for children in this stage are taught well. There is a very effective partnership between teachers and support staff. This is a considerable influence on the learning gains made by children. Organisation and management of children is good. Tasks and activities are thoughtful and appropriate to children's needs.
17. At Key Stage 1, classroom organisation and management is highly effective and efficient. For example, the Year 2 teacher introduced a history lesson on Highwaymen by reading a story expressively, which held the pupils' attention. As a result, pupils were ready to learn quietly. An important feature of the teaching is the constant level of interaction that results in valuable feedback and assessment, good levels of support and the setting of new challenges. When pupils are working in groups, work is planned to cater for their differing levels of prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, either with adult support or tasks designed especially to help them meet their learning targets. In some lessons at the end of Key Stage 1 more able pupils are insufficiently challenged. There is a suitable emphasis on teaching the basic skills, including phonics. Teachers are skilled in leading oral work and in extending pupils' thinking. They plan a good balance of practical and recorded activities to provide a rich level of experience, for example in a Year 1 geography lesson pupils discussed their journey to school before working in pairs to identify good and bad features in their locality.
18. At Key Stage 2 direct questioning is used well to involve all pupils. Oral contributions are valued and handled sensitively, for example in a Year 5 religious education lesson the teacher valued the pupils' explanations why they believed the artefacts they had brought from home were very precious to them. Teachers often set tasks that allow pupils to ask their own questions. A commendable feature of teaching for older pupils is the challenging pace of lessons and the development of mental agility. For example, in a Year 4 numeracy lesson, individual pupils used their number cards to show the teacher answers to mental questions. This resulted in all pupils being keen and eager to react quickly to the challenge set. Year 4 pupils are very fortunate to have a two teachers who work very well as a team and are giving the class much needed systems for working which improve behaviour and build up the pupils' self esteem. Although parents indicated some concern about the progress pupils made in the past the head teacher and governors have taken effective steps to solve the problem. The progress this class is making now is at least equal to any other in the school. Opportunities for independent learning are sometimes included in lessons, such as when Year 3 were provided with a range of books and given a set time to research Egyptian jewellery before designing their own examples, though this area of learning is insufficiently developed. Teachers' planning and an analysis of pupils' books show insufficient emphasis on the use of writing skills when studying other areas of the curriculum. For example there are missed opportunities for pupils to recount events in history or to use explanatory texts when writing about geographical phenomena or retell stories in religious education.
19. Homework is used effectively to support the work in classrooms. It is effective in promoting the development of reading and mathematics. Most parents are happy with the amount of homework given, although a minority expressed some concern in the parents' questionnaire.

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

20. The quality and range of the curriculum is good. All statutory requirements are met. The subjects of the National Curriculum are well planned for through policies and schemes of work. The school teaches religious education according to the locally agreed syllabus. Sufficient time is allowed for each subject of the curriculum, although current initiatives in literacy and numeracy have reduced the time available for other subjects. Within schemes of work and policy, there is good and supportive guidance about the direction subjects should take. The work is well planned to take account of the learning needs of all pupils. There is frequent added challenge for higher attaining pupils. The work of lower attaining pupils is well supported through tasks that meet their needs. Where pupils are identified as having special educational needs, individual plans for their learning are very clear about what they need to do to make progress. The curriculum for these pupils is well supported through the work of teachers and learning support assistants. A strength of the school lies in the way it makes sure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with particular talents and gifts are successfully identified and provision is made for them. For example, a group of pupils with the potential for very high attainment in mathematics are receiving special support. Potentially gifted players and singers in music receive support and encouragement. Similar provision is made for those with sporting potential to compete beyond school level. The school has implemented national strategies in literacy and numeracy well. These strategies are well embedded into the school's English and mathematics curriculum. They have been a considerable influence in raising standards in recent years. Policies and schemes in history and geography are new and this has resulted in some backlog in the provision made for pupils.
21. There is good support for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Some of this support comes through elements of the curriculum for science and some from specific PSHE lessons including 'circle time'. In 'circle time' pupils sit in a circle and take turns to discuss things that are important to them. The school successfully covers requirements in sex education and drug abuse awareness. In 'circle time' pupils have good opportunities to discuss important aspects of their personal and social experiences. The school is very involved in the community. There is a very good link with the adjacent community centre. There are links with businesses. The work of the Education Action Zone is supportive of the school's links with the community. The school encourages the pupils to be involved in community opportunities in performing arts and sport. There are very good links with partner institutions. Again, the work of the Education Action Zone has been supportive of these links. The school has positive relationships with its cluster of primary schools and very good links with the local secondary school and community colleges. The link with the secondary school is instrumental in providing a good link for Year 6 pupils as they prepare for the next stage of education. Additionally the school provides very good work experience opportunities for students from a number of different institutions. These opportunities include trainee teachers, nurses, nursery nurses and high school students. The school gives high quality work experience. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular opportunities is provided for older pupils in music and sport.
22. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. It is a significant factor in raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This helps them to approach their school life and their learning tasks with enthusiasm and interest.

23. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Spiritual development is well promoted through the aims of the school. There is positive teaching and good opportunity for reflection in collective worship. Good attention is paid to the statutory requirements for collective worship. Pupils are encouraged systematically – through notices displayed in school and through teaching in assembly, to reflect on and consider what they have done recently that they can be proud of and what they might make better. Well chosen stories, some of specifically religious content and others with a teaching and learning message, complement the content of assembly. Spiritual development is supported by lessons in religious education where pupils are given good opportunities to learn life lessons from what is being taught. All staff are supportive of the school and consistent in the promotion of its aims. Provision for moral development is very good. Adults have a consistent approach to the provision for moral development. Pupils are taught what the school rules are and help develop suitable rules of their own. There is a clear hierarchy of rewards and sanction. The school's position on behaviour and discipline is well communicated to parents. As a result, pupils get consistent messages about moral issues.
24. Provision for social development is good. Staff are aware of the need for pupils to work together in pairs, groups and teams. They provide good opportunities in lessons so that this can happen and give strong teaching to support the opportunities provided. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility – both in their class work and around the school. 'Buddy' systems increase social awareness. Opportunities for pupils to be more independent, for example, in getting involved in personal research, are not as good. The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have a wide range of books to read introducing them to different styles of writing. They learn about past civilisations in history and develop their understanding of contemporary society at home and abroad in geography. They learn about a range of faith groups in religious education. Some powerful pupil work in art shows that they have a good understanding of the style of famous artists. Pupils are encouraged to listen to music to appreciate its qualities. The school is less skilled at promoting an understanding of cultural diversity in a multi-ethnic society. There were some notable exceptions to this: in geography where pupils learned about village life on the Indian sub-continent and in a music lesson where the teacher skilfully linked the content of the lesson with teaching about the slave origins of blues music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

25. The school's provision in this area is very good. A lot of effort is put in to pupils' personal development in order to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Individual entries into local competitions have been successful in the past four years. These have been a great boost both to pupils and the school. The school achieves great success in the way it cares for pupils, particularly its determination and teamwork when implementing whole school policies. As a result the care and guidance provided are consistently very good in quality. Pupils feel happy and relaxed, safe in the knowledge they are valued and their health and welfare are important. The arrangements for child protection are well established and thorough. Teachers know their pupils well and cater for individual needs through sensitive, informal monitoring and support. The promotion of good behaviour, free from harassment and bullying, has been particularly successful. The school is a pleasant place to learn. There is always a consistency of approach to discipline, so all pupils are quite clear where the boundaries lie. The steady improvement, particularly in relationships, has been instrumental in raising standards and allowing pupils to make good progress. Improving attendance is a constant struggle. The school is always trying new initiatives to instil enthusiasm, for example, through certificates and rewards. The

school frequently highlights the need for pupils to attend regularly. Despite the effort to raise awareness, attendance rates are still unsatisfactory although they are improving gradually year by year.

26. Since the previous inspection, the school has made major improvements in procedures and arrangements for assessing pupils' academic attainment. Assessment of pupils' work is now of very good quality. The headteacher, staff and the governing body have a clear understanding of the need for assessment and how to make very good use of the information it provides. Attainment is assessed well in all subjects on a regular basis. Careful analysis of the responses pupils make in the national tests assists the school to tackle areas of particular weakness in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers make good use of tests on entry to full time school, tests which enable comparisons with other schools to be made and a range of tests to check on pupils' progress. Teachers record results in their assessment files that are passed on to the next teacher as pupils move up through the school. As a result of these records, teachers know their pupils well and set them demanding learning targets that are well matched to their attainment. Assessment is used to good effect in guiding lesson planning. Planned lessons are modified because of this assessment analysis.
27. The day-to-day assessment of the work of special educational needs (SEN) pupils is good. There is a good system for the regular review of progress towards the targets on plans prepared for the specific learning needs of these pupils. Good processes are in place for the review of the work of pupils with a statement of educational needs to ensure that their provision is maintained. Individual plans for learning are detailed and clear. The targets are broken down into small steps so that they are sufficiently challenging but manageable. Reviews of progress are of good quality. There is a very thorough process for the annual review of provision for pupils with statements of need. Parents are involved and new targets set.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

28. Most of the parents who responded to the questionnaire hold the school in high regard. Many of the strengths they identified through the questionnaire and pre-inspection meeting are confirmed through inspection findings. The openness and accessibility of staff and the home/school liaison link have been particularly valuable in strengthening the partnership with parents. Parents feel confident in approaching the school with any difficulties and concerns, and are assured they will be dealt with effectively. This confidence extends from the nursery onwards. Parents feel welcome and well informed. They have regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress at open evenings as well as receiving an annual report. There are opportunities to view the curriculum on offer to their children on fun days where parents are encouraged to try the 'hands on' approach and be involved. There is regular communication about school events and a newsletter edited by the pupils makes interesting reading. The most exciting development is the involvement of parents on courses organised by the school with the help of additional funding. These courses have proved to be extremely popular and have been instrumental in the development of confidence amongst parents and their increasing involvement in their children's education. Some parents are still reluctant to be full partners in the education of their children, despite the school's best endeavours. The school is committed to parental involvement and does not miss any opportunity to invite them to support the efforts of their children wherever possible. An annual talent show where pupils perform has proved very popular, as was the entry into a song writing competition where the school enjoyed great success and recognition in the wider

community. Initiatives like these have raised the profile of the school and promoted the sense of belonging. This strengthening partnership between home and school has a positive impact on pupils' development and increases their capacity to succeed.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

29. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff of the school are excellent. It is this quality of leadership and management that has enabled the school to make such rapid improvement over the past four years. All aspects of the work of the school have improved – some quite dramatically. The direction taken by the school has been single minded and purposeful. School aims are well expressed and well communicated. All staff are committed to them. It is very clear to everyone involved in the work of the school what is valued most: good teaching to promote improving standards, a high degree of care for pupils and determined commitment to parents and the community. There is a unity of purpose that stems from the head and key staff and pervades through all adults whether working in the classroom or unobtrusively behind the scenes to ensure effective and calm day-to-day management. There are good strategies for sharing management responsibilities and clear guidelines for what has to be done.

30. Another area of school improvement is in the role of the governing body. They are well informed and committed. An efficient committee structure supports the establishment of meaningful policies. Governors are directly involved in the strategic planning and budget setting processes. They cover their statutory responsibilities effectively. As their role grows, they are becoming more confident. They are still quite dependent on the expertise of the headteacher in some of their functions, for example, in preparing their annual report for parents. However, they have a strong influence on the decisions made for the work of the school.

31. The school budget is well balanced. A deficit budget in the previous year has been converted in a small surplus budget. All budget headings have an appropriate sum of money. Efficient systems are in place for monitoring what is spent but also for evaluating what value has been gained for the school through that spending. Spending is very carefully linked to the school development plan. Where a specific grant is earmarked for particular developments, it is clear how that money has been spent. All staff and members of the governing body have an involvement in the preparation of the development plan. Priorities are very carefully identified. Evaluations during and at the end of the plan make it clear whether or not the school has been successful in meeting its targets and what value has accrued to the school's provision. Very good systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place, especially to develop the quality of teaching and learning. The school has been highly successful in this regard. The headteacher lays down challenging standards for teachers and they rise well to the challenge. The quality of teaching and learning has improved dramatically. This is a school which sets itself targets in all aspects of school life: targets to raise standards of attainment, to improve teaching and learning, to support curriculum development, to enhance the care given to pupils and to raise the profile of the school with parents and the community. Consistently targets have been met and exceeded. This success has only been possible because there is determination, professional relationships of high quality and teamwork where all are set on success. Strategic planning for special educational needs is good. Special needs matters are included on the school development plan.

32. School resources are satisfactory. There are sufficient well-qualified teachers and it is significant that they are very skilled. There is good provision of learning support assistants. They work very closely with teachers and their work is of a high standard, considerably adding to classroom provision. The accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms are large. A spacious field and good hall add to the provision. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. There is no library in the school and it is significant that while pupils have the understanding necessary to find information from books, their understanding of the use of the library is not well developed. There is good provision of computers. Good use is made of new technology in school administration. Good use is made of the computers in the school computer suite to teach pupils the necessary skills. Insufficient use is made of pupils' skills to promote learning across the curriculum.
33. This is a school determined to improve. It challenges its own standards persistently. It is quick to consult where expert advice is necessary. It compares its standards and provision with other schools. Evaluation is a constant theme; this has added impetus to the improvements made. It is a very effective school providing very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

34. The headteacher, governing body and staff of the school should capitalise on the improvements made over recent years by:

- Improving standards of attainment in English for Year 6:
 - Ensuring that pupils make better use of the skills they learn in literacy lessons;
 - Seeing that higher attaining pupils are challenged further;
 - Providing more opportunities for independent study using reading and library skills:
(Paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 7, 14, 18, 45, 53)
- Making better use throughout the school of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects:
 - Examining the way the time for literacy can be used to support learning in history, geography and religious education;
 - Providing more writing opportunities across the subjects of the curriculum;
 - Investigating what shared reading books can be provided for use in literacy sessions to promote learning in other subjects;
 - Providing more opportunities for independent study using reading and library skills:
(Paragraphs 4, 5, 7, 14, 18, 53, 79, 103)
- Making better use of the good provision of computers to enhance learning across the curriculum:
 - Giving pupils opportunities to develop their study skills using computers for research in science, history, geography and religious education particularly;
 - Providing more opportunities to use computers for writing assignments;
 - Using computers to support the recording and analysis of data in science;
 - Using computers more in mathematics on a day to day basis:
(Paragraphs 4, 84, 90, 95, 103)
- Developing a school standard for attractive handwriting and good presentation in pupils' books:
(Paragraphs 51, 61)
- Develop a school strategy across all areas of the curriculum to promote pupils' understanding of the nature of a multi-cultural and diverse society.
(Paragraph 24)

The school has already identified many of the areas of the key issues for action and has included them in its improvement planning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	17	69	10	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	183
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		110

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	33

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	11	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	11
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	20	20	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (90)	91 (83)	100 (90)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	10
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	20	22	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (90)	100 (90)	95 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8	14	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	5	5
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	17	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (64)	82 (64)	86 (80)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	5	5
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	17	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (64)	82 (76)	82 (88)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	160
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8
Average class size	23.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	14
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	388,706
Total expenditure	379,170
Expenditure per pupil	1,832
Balance brought forward from previous year	-7,462
Balance carried forward to next year	2,074

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	213
Number of questionnaires returned	91

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	20	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	31	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	46	7	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	38	13	1	3
The teaching is good.	73	24	1	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	35	8	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	20	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	25	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	40	5	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	59	34	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	41	3	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	30	18	8	10

Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by a significant number of parents.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

35. Since the last inspection, the school has followed national guidance to incorporate the nursery and reception classes into the foundation stage of education. The nursery and reception staff provide a well-organised curriculum that is securely based on the six areas of learning suitable for this age group and forms part of the whole school schemes of work. There is a high emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The particularly good teamwork between all staff in both classes contributes considerably to the quality of learning and the good progress made. Specific initiatives, such as the Early Writing Project, are used effectively to extend the curriculum and promote progress. The foundation stage prepares children well for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
36. At the time of the inspection, there were thirty children, almost all full-time, in the nursery and nineteen full-time children on roll in the reception class. Children join the nursery at the age of three. Standards on entry to the nursery are varied but are generally below those expected for this age. This is especially so in the area of language development, particularly in listening with understanding. The majority of children achieve well due to the consistently good teaching throughout the foundation stage, and are on target to attain the early learning goals in all areas by the time they start in Year 1. The provision for children with special educational needs is good. Nursery staff are particularly alert to identifying children who need support and to meeting their needs where possible. There are currently seven children on the special educational needs register.

Personal, social and emotional development

37. Teaching is good and reflects the high importance accorded to this area. In the nursery, expectations of good behaviour are prominently displayed in the entrance hall so that parents and children are clear about standards, and quickly become part of the nursery community. All adults in nursery and reception provide good role models and foster caring attitudes. They build a relaxed and safe environment where children grow in independence. The children's ideas and work are valued and positive feedback freely given. This approach enhances the children's self-esteem and motivates them to do well. Children respond positively to the quickly established routines and the adults' high expectations. In the nursery, children play alongside each other and with adult help, share equipment and take turns in whole class and small group activities. They are learning to care for living things and are particularly enthusiastic, for instance, to bring carrots for the guinea pigs. In both the reception and nursery classes, children are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They usually sustain interest in a particular activity and concentrate for a considerable length of time without direct adult help. Through listening to stories like Noah's Ark, reception children learn about religious beliefs and the different ways Bible Stories can be interpreted. They show respect for the world around them and delight at the daffodil flower emerging from the bud. In both nursery and reception, children are confident to select a task from the range provided, but there are few opportunities for children to extend or plan an activity for themselves.

Communication, language and literacy

38. Teaching is good. Staff plan activities carefully to build up skills and knowledge over time. Particular attention is given to the development of speaking and listening skills throughout the day in all activities. Time is taken for children to express themselves, to ask and answer questions and to extend their vocabulary, in a wide range of tasks, as well as to listen to adults and to each other. In the nursery, the short focus sessions and story times are used purposefully to develop these skills, which are carefully consolidated in informal group and individual tasks. In the reception class, elements of the National Literacy Strategy are employed successfully to promote language development. Children communicate well with each other in informal role-play. Although children frequently appear to be listening, their response indicates that they have not always fully understood what the teacher has said. Nevertheless, children throughout the foundation stage become increasingly confident to join in a range of rhymes and jingles, to express themselves ever more clearly, to listen and enjoy stories and to follow instructions. All adults convey enthusiastic attitudes to literature and this is reflected in the children's enthusiasm and the careful way in which they handle books. Nursery children retell familiar stories following the pictures. With help, they read their own name and captions around the room. Children in the reception class recognise some letters by shape and sound. They know the names of characters and some words in the first reading books. There is a very wide range of attainment. Higher attainers read simple texts fluently with good sight vocabulary. They sound out regular three-letter words. Lower attainers tell the story from the pictures, but do not yet recognise any words or letters. Both reception and nursery children are keen to write in informal play situations. They take down messages, for instance, in *The Vets*, or write shopping lists, using increasingly legible letter shapes. Reception children are beginning to think about and use the correct initial sounds for their own words. Nursery children make up a caption for their picture from 'New shoes' to 'My new top is red', which adults write down for them.

Mathematical development

39. Teaching is good. Lessons have clear objectives and are closely matched to the children's needs. Staff use language precisely so that children understand clearly. For instance, when placing numerals on the counting line, there is much discussion for example, about which number comes *before* or *after* 3, or *between* 2 and 4. Questioning skills are used effectively to check on what children have learnt, as well as to extend the children's understanding. Resources are accessible and well organised so that children can learn practically by handling equipment. In the nursery, staff provide a wide range of informal activities to reinforce and consolidate skills of counting, sorting and matching. Most children are competent in sorting small equipment by colour and shape. The majority count objects to 5 and recite numbers to 10. They recognise number patterns on dice and show them with their fingers. They are beginning to copy repeated patterns although some children need support when sequencing. Children in the reception class recognise and order numerals to 20. They are keen and accurate in spotting when one is missing. They count reliably and use language appropriately to describe the positions of the numerals. They recognise several 2-dimensional shapes and use them to make pictures and patterns.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

40. Teaching is good. Staff provide a wide range of interesting first-hand experiences that encourage children to be curious about the world around them. Children use their senses to explore. Particular attention is given to the careful observation of

living things. Good use is made of the school garden. Nursery children carefully observe their pets, guinea pigs and birds, and know they need food, water and care to stay healthy. They are interested in how the carpet cleaner works and are becoming familiar with the use of electricity at home and school. They know that some household items need electricity and others do not. They are aware of the dangers of electricity. They consider the best type of home for a pet, reflecting on the suitability of a basket for a cat. In the reception class, children have a sense of wonder at the patterns of the seasons and new growth 'peeping out' in the garden now. They consider which clothes are suitable for hot, cold or wet weather, as well as gaining a sense of the past in noting changes in bathing suits from long ago to today. All children make good use of information technology to support their learning and most are competent and independent in using the mouse to move objects on screen. In nursery and reception classes, children use construction kits purposefully. Most have a good idea of how to fit things together to carry out their purposes. Effective intervention by adults with skilled questions frequently helps children to extend their ideas.

Physical development

41. Teaching is good. No outdoor play was seen during the inspection due to inclement weather. However, the school has adequate resources for nursery and reception children and an attractively marked out playground where children can learn to use space. The curriculum is further enhanced by the provision of swimming lessons in which the children are very successful, and good home/school links are developed. Staff organise and manage hall sessions well. They use praise to encourage children and develop their confidence. Clear instructions and the use of demonstrations ensure children know what is expected. Nursery children respond to music to walk, skip or march with enthusiasm. However, they are not always challenged to practise to improve their movements. They control their bodies to stop and change direction with an awareness of space and of others. They appreciate the effect of exercise on their bodies by feeling their increased heart beat. Throughout the foundation stage, children show increasing control over tools such as scissors, and they are making good progress in manipulating small equipment like construction toys or jigsaws.

Creative development

42. Teaching is good. The well-organised opportunities for role-play are a strong feature of this curriculum area and successfully promote imaginative responses. Staff intervene thoughtfully to raise the quality of the play and to extend the children's ideas. There are appropriate opportunities for children to explore a wide range of materials such as clay and paint but sometimes activities are too prescriptive, for instance, colouring in or using templates, and do not always provide sufficient challenge for children to develop creatively. Children enjoy singing a range of songs from memory, and responding to music in dance. Reception children are aware of changes in pitch and in dynamics.
43. Home school links are fostered carefully and liaison between staff and parents has a considerable beneficial effect on the children's progress. The nursery manager, with support from the local college, leads successful family numeracy and literacy courses, which reflect the school's commitment to working closely with parents for the benefit of the children. Assessment procedures are thorough. Children are tested on entry to nursery and again on entry to the reception class. The information gathered is used carefully to identify particular needs and to plan future work.

ENGLISH

45. The 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds show that the pupils' achievement in reading is in line with the national average and writing is above average. When compared to similar schools the pupils' attainment is very high. The 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds show that the pupils' achievement in English is below the national average. When compared to similar schools the pupils' attainment is well above average.
46. In speaking and listening pupils' attainment is above national expectations when pupils are seven and eleven. This is an improvement to that found at the previous inspection. All pupils listen very carefully in assemblies and are keen to answer questions and contribute to discussions. By the time they reach the age of seven, pupils answer questions sensibly and contribute well in class. Year 2 pupils read a poem with their teacher and answer questions about it with enthusiasm. At the end of the lesson some pupils read the rhymes they have written while the remainder of the class decide if they have succeeded in their task. Pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and this helps them to make a confident start to their activities. Teachers make very good use of carpeted areas in classrooms. Pupils are arranged well on the carpet to make it easier for them to listen attentively.
47. By the age of eleven further improvements in speaking and listening have been made. Higher attaining pupils are fluent and have developed a mature vocabulary. Average and lower attaining pupils speak clearly in conversation. In a religious education lesson in Year 5 pupils were keen to show the class the artefacts they had brought from home and were able to explain why they were precious to them. A group of pupils in a Year 6 lesson prepared for a debate about television and enjoyed presenting their results to the whole class who listened attentively. A group of Year 6 pupils were very articulate when telling an inspector how much they had enjoyed their residential experience at Coven Outdoor Education Centre.
48. Teachers have worked hard to improve the standards in reading. Inspection evidence indicates that by the time pupils are seven, standards in reading are broadly in line with the national average and most pupils make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils in Year 1 are confident, fluent readers with good expression. They can discuss the books they are reading and can predict what might happen next. By the time they are seven, pupils' confidence has improved. Above average pupils can retell in detail the story they are reading. Less able pupils read more slowly, though with accuracy.
49. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in reading in Years 3 to 6. Higher attaining pupils in all year groups are confident readers. A pupil in Year 6 had read all the Harry Potter books and could discuss them in detail. Most pupils have favourite books and authors and are keen to discuss them. Less able pupils can read simpler books confidently. Although most pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and understand the use of contents and index pages their library skills are weak and few opportunities for independent research are provided. Classroom assistants give lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, good classroom support. Classroom support has a good impact on their interest in reading and on their reading skills. The school tries hard to encourage parents to assist their children in learning to read by regular practice at home.
50. Pupils' attainment in writing is less well developed than their reading but by the age of seven it is broadly in line with the national average. Attainment is not as high as in the previous year as the school identified a difference in the quality of the year group.

Higher attaining pupils occasionally lack sufficient challenge. Most pupils make good progress in their learning. More able pupils in Year 1 write in simple sentences using capital letters and full stops with most spellings correct. Other pupils write sentences with help from their teachers and support staff. Year 2 pupils write new lines to a poem based on the Grandpa Brooking Poem. They enjoy reading their writing to the remainder of the class.

51. Although pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress in their written work, the attainment at the end of the key stage is still below the national average because they start from a low baseline. In Year 3, the pupils' writing becomes more organised as they compare two types of instructions and know what the differences are. Pupils in Year 4 understand how to make their writing more interesting by using a thesaurus to improve words in sentences. In Year 5 pupils understand the active and passive voice and think of connective words to improve their writing. Year 6 learn how to present an opinion identifying the main message in a summary of a book about the Aborigines. For these year groups there is some evidence that the school's focus on spelling is having a beneficial effect and standards are beginning to rise. Handwriting of the more able pupils is clear and legible but, overall, the presentation of their written work is not good enough.
52. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are at least good and often very good in all English lessons. They are always ready to begin lessons on time and are very enthusiastic. Pupils enjoy the challenge of new language and work hard to apply their learning to written tasks. They easily recall what they have learned earlier. When writing, pupils generally concentrate well and sustain this until the end of the lesson. Pupils' enthusiasm and good behaviour are significant factors in promoting their good progress. There is a pleasant caring attitude in all classes. In several lessons, when a pupil or a group was congratulated on a piece of work the whole class broke out into spontaneous applause.
53. The literacy hour has been successfully implemented in the school and the quality of teaching observed was good in both key stages. In the seven lessons observed, the standard of teaching in three lessons was very good with the remainder being good. This has a direct link with the improving standards of work seen in the school since the last inspection. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use this very effectively to plan and prepare lessons. Expectations are high; consequently the pace of learning and the work prepared for them challenges pupils. Careful planning ensures that tasks are matched to pupils' prior learning and are well set at different levels. Excellent relationships are established. As a result pupils are attentive, understand what they have to do and work hard. Resources are used very effectively to support pupils' learning and time is never wasted. Pupils who have special educational needs are well taught in their groups and in classrooms. They make good progress. Literacy is taught well and there is a strong emphasis on the use of specific language in other subjects especially in mathematics and science. However planned opportunities to practice writing in other subjects are often missed.
54. The headteacher, English co-ordinator and senior staff manage the drive towards higher attainment in English very well. Effective observation of what happens in the classroom has ensured an improved quality of teaching and learning. There is a dedicated literacy governor and the subject is thoroughly discussed at full governing body meetings. Detailed, accurate analysis of pupils' test results shows what the pupils know and what they need to learn next. This enables the accurate setting of targets to ensure that the pupils make good progress. The success of the strategy is seen in improvements in attainment since the previous inspection as the school has been identified as being among the one hundred most improved schools in England.

Resources are satisfactory overall though there is no school library to allow pupils opportunities for developing independent research skills and library skills. However all classes have reading corners containing a satisfactory selection of fiction and non-fiction books.

MATHEMATICS

55. When pupils are seven and eleven they attain the standards expected for their age in numeracy, and in all areas of mathematics, (number, algebra, space shape and measures, and data handling). Given attainment on entry to school, they make satisfactory progress.
56. In the 2000 national tests for 7-year-olds, the school's standards were above those of most schools. The slight drop in current attainment reflects in part the nature of the year group, in particular the smaller proportion of pupils working towards the higher level. In the 2000 national tests for 11-year-olds, the school's standards were in line with those of most schools. Standards at 7 and 11 are well above average when compared to schools with similar backgrounds.
57. The school has been very successful in raising standards, from a low base, over the last four years. Since 1997, there has been a steady increase, at above the national rate, in the proportion of 7 and 11-year-olds that reach the expected levels in national tests. However, a smaller than average proportion of 11-year-olds reach the higher level. This indicates some underachievement. The school is beginning to implement strategies to provide greater challenge for its more able pupils. These are not yet fully effective throughout the school.
58. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
59. The thorough implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is enabling the vast majority of pupils to achieve well. In particular, since the last inspection in 1998, pupils' ability to calculate mentally and manipulate numbers in their heads has improved through the effective daily practice sessions. By the age of seven years, most pupils count forwards and backwards in 2's, 5's or 10's and are beginning to appreciate patterns and sequences, for instance, in odd and even numbers. Whilst they are beginning to understand what a digit in a longer number is worth, their knowledge of numbers beyond 100 is insufficient. Most pupils are becoming fluent in their recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10, for instance, when shopping, although a few sometimes have difficulty in choosing an appropriate method when dealing with problems. Almost all pupils are confident in describing common 2- and 3-dimensional shapes. They measure with some care in standard and non-standard units although they are not always accurate. Most pupils, with help, collect information, and record it in block graphs. By the age of eleven, many pupils are good at working out complicated problems in their heads. They are quick to add, subtract, multiply or divide, when using a set of numbers to reach a given total. They are confident to choose and explain their own strategies. They collect and use data methodically and explain their findings with appropriate language, for example, range, mode, median and mean. Their knowledge of shapes, including symmetry and area, is reliable.
60. In mathematics lessons, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of using and applying mathematics. Most teachers adopt a lively problem solving approach, which engages pupils very well and creates considerable enthusiasm for the subject. For instance, learning is fun in Year 2, when the pupils explore square

numbers by trying out their own ideas in diagrams to find suitable examples. However, apart from in science, where good opportunities are created to use data handling and measuring techniques, there are insufficient opportunities to use mathematical skills across the curriculum. Although pupils in Year 6 used their skills to identify favourite sandwiches, drinks, etc. in preparation for the Christmas party, the use of mathematics to solve real-life problems is underdeveloped. There are also insufficient planned opportunities for the pupils to use information technology to support their work in mathematics. These factors limit the opportunities for independent learning and slow progress for some pupils, especially the more able. Extracurricular activities support learning effectively, for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Some of these pupils are having difficulty achieving the targets they are capable of. Some higher attaining pupils are being challenged to achieve their potential.

61. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school has improved greatly and is now good. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is consistently good. In Years 3 to 6, teaching varies from satisfactory to excellent. Throughout the school, teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and of the pupils, to plan interesting, relevant activities. Lessons have clear objectives, which are usually explained to pupils so that they know how to succeed. Clear demonstrations and the use of practical equipment help pupils to learn concepts thoroughly. For instance, the pupils in Year 3 experimented with pictures of different coloured coats, jackets and shorts in order to find out how many different combinations they could make. Through first-hand experience, they learnt the need to be methodical in their selection. They transferred this knowledge to their paper and pencil tasks. Teachers use questions skilfully to assess and build on what pupils already know. Group work is well organised and is usually well matched to pupils' abilities so that all pupils can study well. Tasks do not always, however, provide sufficient challenge for the more able. In all classes, pupils are managed very effectively with praise and encouragement and a purposeful place to learn is created, where pupils co-operate and work together successfully. Staff work closely as a team. Support staff are very well deployed and make a considerable contribution to successful learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs. There is an occasional lack of pace and sometimes opportunities are missed for pupils to use their initiative. For instance, in one class where pupils had learnt to convey information in a variety of graphs, they were largely unaware of the need to choose the most appropriate one when recording particular information. Timed tests are used effectively to promote concentration and agility in mental processes. Scrutiny of work in books indicates that not enough attention is given to standards of presentation and pupils do not always set out their work clearly so that they can readily identify the processes they have used. Where teaching is very good or excellent the teachers' personal expertise and enthusiasm for the subject, as well as their high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour, harnesses the pupils' energies so that they make particularly good progress. Activities clearly make the pupils really think for themselves, and develop a methodical, logical approach to solving problems.
62. Assessment is carried out carefully and used to set individual and group targets, which are used consistently to promote progress. Through careful monitoring of teaching and learning, the curriculum co-ordinator has a clear overview of the school's performance. The co-ordinator's clear vision for the future, and relevant action plan is helping staff in a concerted effort to drive up standards. A thorough analysis of national test results is used to identify areas for development.

SCIENCE

63. Attainment in science is in line with the standard expected nationally when pupils are seven and eleven. Standards have improved a great deal since the previous inspection. There are some differences between inspection findings and the results of teacher assessments and National Curriculum tests results for 2000. Teacher assessments for seven year olds in 2000 indicate attainment above the national average. Significant numbers of pupils achieved the higher levels possible for seven year olds. In the work seen during inspection, there is limited evidence of pupils working to this higher standard although most are working at the expected level.
64. Test results for eleven year olds in the same year indicated attainment below the national average. The evidence of the work in pupils' books and their work in the classroom is that they attain the standard expected for their age. Contributory factors in this improved standard are an emphasis on the use of scientific methods and vocabulary, opportunities for investigation and a well-developed scheme of work that strongly promotes continuous progress. Neither in the work seen, nor in the results of standard tests are there significant differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls. Much improvement has been made in standards in successive years. In the previous full inspection standards were low and pupils described as underachieving. This is no longer the case. Although there has been an intractable legacy of underachievement in Year 6 until recently, the pupil performance data available to the school shows rapid progress. The school's results are above the average of schools in a similar social and economic context. Given attainment on entry to school, pupils achieve well and make good progress.
65. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy a good range of experiences across the science curriculum. They learn about life and living things, study materials and their properties and investigate physical processes. Pupils in Year 2 discuss life cycles. They know that different creatures go through different stages as they mature. Pupils successfully identify stages in the life cycle of butterflies, birds and tadpoles. Although most pupils use everyday language, one or two use terms such as 'larvae' and 'pupae'. Pupils are allowed to make mistakes and to learn from them. Pupils in Year 1 were very disappointed when their first idea for melting chocolate was a disaster – they put it directly into hot water and quickly realised that they were not going to be able to change the chocolate back as required. It was a good learning experience for them and confirmed in their minds better ways of melting the chocolate so that it could be used for chocolate biscuits. Good support is given to personal, social and health education in science. Pupils benefit from a good range of practical learning experiences. They are beginning to use literacy and numeracy skills to record their observations. However, in the work seen, there is little evidence of the early stages of the use of scientific methodology. Although pupils observe and record, their work does not reflect the full range of scientific methods such as predicting, understanding fair testing (ensuring that investigations are conducted in a controlled scientific fashion) and arriving at logical conclusions based on the evidence available.
66. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on their early experiences. They discuss scientific ideas such as predicting and hypothesising, fair testing and controls and variables, becoming comfortable with the basic principles of scientific investigation. Year 3 pupils are very motivated by the teacher's thought provoking introduction to data handling. They quickly come to understand that the graphs and tables they have been given contain the same information. They put the tables and graphs to different uses finding which presents the information best for different circumstances. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy the practical nature of their work. They understand that they need to

measure time accurately and present data in a logical way. However, they are impatient of the detail and some of the measurement is insufficiently accurate and this compromises the validity of the investigation. However, there is consistent evidence that pupils in this age range are learning a logical scientific methodology in the investigations they conduct.

67. The teaching of science is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use sound methods. However, not all are confident about practical work and teaching scientific methods. The school has identified these elements as an area of priority development. Lessons are usually brisk and lively, characterised by clear targets for learning. Teachers discuss these learning objectives with the class. This is helpful to pupils, as they understand what they need to know and find out. They can focus very clearly on what they are learning. Tasks are well designed and interest pupils. There are good strategies for involving all pupils in their work. Questioning is good, challenging the thinking of all pupils. There is good support given to those who struggle with their learning. Pupils are well behaved and most need little teacher management. This is a strong factor in learning and the progress pupils make. Where there is an occasional inclination to lack of focus, teachers have good pupil management skills.
68. The policy and scheme of work have been well designed to ensure the step-by-step build up of skills and experience of pupils. Resources are sufficient to support the curriculum. They are conveniently stored for ready access. The subject is efficiently managed. Good use is made of assessment data to check attainment so that progress can be monitored and supported. Some lessons have been observed. Standards are monitored through this and through occasional sampling of pupils' work. There is little evidence that computers are used to support learning in science. Pupils make adequate use of literacy skills to record their observations and findings. Some effective use is made of numeracy skills in recording practical work.

ART

69. Few lessons were planned at the time of the inspection. Evidence upon which judgements are based was obtained from an analysis of pupils' work, interviews with teachers, lesson observations and an analysis of work on display. When pupils are seven and eleven they reach the national standards expected for their age. This is a significant improvement to that found at the previous full inspection.
70. Year 1 pupils draw faces, making a link with their science lessons. They use paper and glue to create a three dimensional effect. Year 2 pupils experiment with colour to make different shades. Year 3 build on this knowledge to produce warm and cold scenes, beginning to understand the power of colour to produce different effects. Art is used well in Year 4 to improve the pupils' attitudes to each other as they work in pairs to produce portraits of one another. Year 5 experiment with squared paper to develop pictures of reflection in the style of Monet. In this lesson the teacher was able to utilise the excellent skills of the class learning support assistant who is an artist in her own right. Year 6 pupils study surrealist paintings using Rene Magritte as their inspiration.
71. In the few lessons observed it was noted that teachers plan their lessons carefully and provide pupils with good quality resources to work with. Teachers manage their pupils well and try to create a calm working atmosphere that enables them to concentrate and produce their best efforts. Lesson objectives are appropriately shared with pupils at the start of each lesson so that they can focus on the skills they are meant to acquire. Insufficient use is made of new technology.

72. Pupils throughout the school respond well to their art lessons by listening very carefully and showing good levels of interest. They use their initiative and work independently where there are planned opportunities to investigate and develop their ideas. This was particularly noticeable in the excellent lesson in Year 3 when pupils researched Egyptian jewellery from books before starting to make their own examples. While working on a picture using perspective Year 5 worked steadily with total concentration chatting quietly to each other in a friendly way about the task in hand. Pupils in both key stages enjoy their art and many place art as their favourite lesson.
73. The co-ordinator gives good support to staff. There is a policy and a scheme work. Resources are satisfactory and the school benefits from having areas outside classrooms that can be used for art. Assessment is well organised and used well to plan future work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

74. It was only possible to observe one lesson in design and technology although several art lessons included elements of this subject. Looking at finished products, talking to teachers and pupils and reviewing teachers' planning it is obvious that the school has made good progress since the last inspection and pupils of all age groups reach expected standards.
75. Where possible teachers link design and technology very effectively with other subjects. Due to good planning and the systematic approach to improving designing skills, pupils throughout the school generally make good progress. For example, Year 2 use switches and batteries to produce a lighthouse and in Year 6 pupils design and make traffic lights that actually work, reaching a good standard using circuit control mechanisms. Year 5 design and make Tudor houses while Year 4 incorporate design and technology into their history topic making Viking shields and studying suitability of purpose as they investigate Viking footwear and link it to their own styles. Year 3 again make a link with their science work producing very good models which work with air pressure. In their topic about healthy eating pupils design a plate of food using a variety of materials and techniques to produce the desired effect.
76. In the Year 6 lesson observed the teaching was very good. The pupils were very interested as their teacher explained what they would be doing in the next few weeks. They watched a video with excitement as they saw how cars are designed to absorb forces in crashes. They began to understand how important this was and thought carefully how they would tackle this problem as they made their own models. The teacher took the opportunity to discuss forces with particular reference to safety in cars reminding the pupils of the importance of using seat belts. There was good development of technical language, pupils becoming familiar with such terms as acceleration and deceleration, impact and energy. A very good worksheet tested the pupils' powers of observation and their understanding of the scientific principles involved. The pupils were thrilled with the prototype the teacher had produced and were suitably challenged to design and make a car at least as good if not better in future lessons. Looking at models in all classes the final products demonstrate well the skills and care entailed in their making.
77. The scheme of work for the subject allows steady build up of designing and making skills as pupils move up through the school and assessment opportunities are built into the scheme. Resources are satisfactory, well stored and readily available on a trolley for use in all classrooms.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

78. The majority of seven and eleven-year-olds are working at similar standards to those found in most schools. This is an improvement on the underachievement reported in the 1996 inspection, although there is still work to be done in developing consistency throughout the school. The generally sound standards noted in the 1998 report have been maintained.
79. Policies and schemes of work in geography and history are now in place and provide for steady progress in the acquisition of skills and knowledge as pupils move from class to class. Scrutiny of pupils' written work and discussions with pupils indicates that there are some gaps in the pupils' learning resulting from a less rigorous curriculum in the past. Little work is recorded especially in Years 4 and 5. Progress over time was therefore uneven in both history and geography, but is improving as the effect of the fuller curriculum is felt. In almost all of the lessons observed during the inspection, progress was good. This reflects the high standard of teaching now taking place.
80. In geography lessons, pupils in Year 1 and 2 are developing secure knowledge of the locality. They know their own addresses and make simple maps of the journey to school. They are aware of buildings such as houses, shops, community centre, as well as open spaces like the park, and show them on their plan. They are beginning to form opinions about good and bad environments. Their knowledge of locations beyond their own is not well developed. In discussions, Year 2 pupils had difficulty identifying significant facts about other locations or making relevant comparisons.
81. Pupils in Year 3 use aerial photographs to study land use in the local area. They identify key features and represent them on their own plan. Skilled questioning by the teacher enables them to realise the need for a key. They are aware of changes over time. Pupils in Year 6 are learning about mountainous areas of the world. Whilst most can locate the particular mountain ranges they are currently studying, their general knowledge of the world map is not well developed. They use given statistics to compare weather in contrasting locations, and are becoming aware of patterns of differences and similarities between regions.
82. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing a sound sense of the past. In Year 2, the pupils consider transport long ago. Through listening to a story of a highway robbery, and well-led discussion, they gain a good picture of the social and physical conditions at that time, and make relevant comparisons with today.
83. In Year 4, the pupils make careful observations of artefacts to find out about the past. In an interesting approach that caught their imagination and motivated them well, pupils were encouraged to be historical researchers in the future, examining a training shoe of 2001. They then applied the same techniques to examine a 'Viking Sandal'. They are beginning to understand how evidence is collected to answer questions about the past. In Year 6, pupils display sound knowledge of the hardships of working class life in Victorian society. They investigate aspects of child labour from set texts. They are becoming aware of the need for reform and of the role of some prominent Victorians like Lord Shaftsbury and Dr Barnardo.
84. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good teaching in geography in Year 3. Lessons are lively and interesting and pupils are enthusiastic to learn. Group work is well organised and ensures that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. Teaching assistants provide very good support for the pupils with special educational needs. Good use is made of resources, for instance, the electronic

whiteboard, to display an image of the world downloaded from the Internet in geography and artefacts to support learning in history. The practice of keeping history and geography worksheets in a large file with work from other subjects makes it difficult for pupils and teachers to assess the progress being made over time. It does not encourage pupils to take a pride in their work and sometimes results in careless presentation. Whilst there is a good emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills in role-play, debate and discussion throughout the school, opportunities to extend pupils' writing through history and geography topics are missed. Insufficient opportunities are provided for older pupils to carry out their own research using library or information technology facilities to produce an in-depth study. There are few educational visits to bring the curriculum to life, apart from in Year 6 where pupils visited Stoke in connection with their work on Victorians, and their annual residential visit. In the very good teaching, the teacher's knowledge of the children and of the subject were used particularly well to build up skills and knowledge systematically as the lesson progressed. The well-organised problem solving approach and the teacher's own enthusiasm motivated pupils so well that they did not want the lesson to end.

85. The curriculum co-ordinators monitor standards efficiently through sampling pupils' work and teachers' plans. They have action plans ready to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. At present there are no opportunities to develop the subjects further. Geography and history are highlighted in the school's long-term plan later in the year.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

86. Attainment for pupils aged seven and eleven is in line with national expectations and there are significant strengths in their achievements. This is a vast improvement from the last inspection when standards were judged to be below national expectations.
87. Year 1 pupils examine a soft toy and understand how instructions that make things work. They know about switches and batteries and draw and label the toy accurately beginning to understand the mechanism and link it with toys of their own. By the end of Year 2 pupils can draw pictures using a computer program. They enter simple text directly on to the screen retelling the Story of the Three Bears. They represent data they have gathered in pictograms about how pupils in the class come to school and begin to understand that it is easier to understand information when it is presented pictorially. Year 3 write poetry using different fonts, size and colours. They are justly proud of their finished work. By the time they are eleven pupils demonstrate satisfactory word-processing skills. They use the keyboard to enter text and use appropriate facilities such as spell check, highlighting or "copy and paste" in order to enhance their work. Year 6 pupils produce graphs and pie charts from weather reports and act as editors for the school newspaper, which is produced on a regular basis
88. The quality of teaching is good. Since the last inspection the teachers have improved their subject knowledge and built up their own expertise in the subject. New members of staff have brought high skills to the subject. One of the main strengths of teaching is the good quality planning that reflects their good subject knowledge. Learning objectives are explicit and usually shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. Excellent use of good quality resources enhances learning, for example, the digital projector and the interactive white board are used in Year 6 to enable the teacher to present the work in an exciting way that sustains the pupils' interest. Teachers are skilful in questioning techniques and offer confident explanations of the subject.

Lesson preparation is thorough with all resources organised and ready for immediate use. All pupils are engaged productively throughout the lessons and there is no time lost.

89. The curriculum covers all areas of learning and the school has reviewed its policy and scheme of work to include all recent national developments. The computer suite has been very well used enabling whole class teaching of the subject and this has had a very positive effect on pupils' learning. The school arranges introductory courses in information and communication technology for parents who can then support their children in a positive way.
90. The subject is well led and managed by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator ably supported by the whole staff. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Good use is made of the assessments to provide work for pupils well matched to their prior attainment. Resources are very good with good use made of the school's technology suite. During the inspection the school received more equipment, which will allow access to the World Wide Web and allow pupils to use information and communication technology more in other subjects across the whole curriculum and allow pupils opportunities for independent learning.

MUSIC

91. By the time they are seven and eleven, pupils attain standards that are similar to those expected nationally. The school has maintained the standard established at the previous inspection. Given that attainment on entry to the school is below average, pupils make good progress and attain well. The gains made in learning are a product of their very enthusiastic attitudes to lessons, their good behaviour and strong teaching. Few lessons of music were seen. Judgements are secured on the lessons seen, extra-curricular musical activities, work in music seen incidentally, for example, in assembly, scrutiny of school documents and discussions with pupils and teachers.
92. In the work seen, pupils achieve standards that are similar to those expected nationally. Pupils in all year groups sing well. They have clear diction, have a good sense of pitch and sing out enthusiastically. Pupils develop a good understanding of correct breathing to sustain tone and understand how to use dynamic to give meaning to the words being sung. This is because they are well taught. The work of a visiting musician is well complemented by the knowledge and skills of class teachers. Pupils know a good range of songs including songs for assembly. They sing in parts. Pupils are given the confidence to sing solo and in small groups. They learn the skills of using an audience for performance. They know how to project the voice for an audience. During lessons, they use instruments to accompany songs, to underline the mood of a song or to pick out its rhythm and beat. Pupils listen to music on a regular basis. They listen to good quality music appreciatively in assembly. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils enjoyed the 'blues' music at the beginning and end of the lesson that set the tone for the rest of the lesson. These pupils were quick to identify the main instrument and the style of the music.
93. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They know the demands of the curriculum and have a good understanding of what needs to be said and done to promote the development of musical skills. The consistent strength of the school in management of pupils is reflected in the intensity with which teachers and pupils work in music to make best use of the time available. Music lessons are productive and satisfying. Teachers give all pupils – including pupils with special educational needs - opportunities to sing and play, structuring those opportunities to

take account of prior learning. As a result pupils are enthusiastic about what they are learning and make good gains in their learning. They behave well because the content is made interesting to them. They are lively and involved in the lessons because teachers are confident in what they are doing.

94. The school teaches the full music curriculum with opportunities for pupils to listen, play, compose and perform to an audience. The school has a policy of holding concerts on a regular basis and this is a further encouragement to the quality of performance. There are strategies for identifying and supporting the needs of talented musicians. For example, some have instrumental lessons. A school choir practises regularly and performs to a high standard. Those pupils with a particular aptitude are encouraged to develop their skills beyond the provision of the school. Music enhances the provision made by the school for personal development. For example, there are frequent opportunities for working together in groups. Pupils have good opportunities to gain satisfaction from performing – for each other and to wider audiences. Opportunities are taken to enhance wider cultural understanding, for example, when a teacher skilfully and sensitively introduced the origins of 'blues' music through reference to the degradation and oppression of the slave trade.
95. Management of the subject is sound. Plans are seen to ensure coverage. Satisfactory arrangements to assess progress are used. There are no current opportunities to improve the quality of teaching through observing lessons. An audit of resources establishes what is needed and the co-ordinator prepares an action plan so that development planning can take place. Provision of resources is adequate for the needs of the curriculum. There was no evidence during inspection week of computers being used to support learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96. Standards of attainment in physical education are in line with those expected nationally of pupils when they are seven and eleven years of age. Standards of dance in Year 1 are good. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Given below average attainment on entry to school, pupils make good progress and achieve well. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. The school identifies pupils with particular sporting talents, makes opportunities for them to compete against other pupils in the local area and where possible to compete at higher levels than school level. This ensures that higher attaining pupils get the opportunities they need to develop their talents. The learning gains made by pupils are supported by the sensible attitudes pupils have to their lessons, to the broad range of opportunities provided by the school and to good teaching.
97. Discussions with pupils indicate a broad range of experience across the physical education curriculum that matches the plans made by teachers. Year 1 pupils move very freely and thoughtfully to music in a dance lesson. They use the floor space well and extend their limbs expressively to interpret the music and the characters in it. Pupils demonstrate good practice to each other and discuss how their performance can be improved. Year 4 pupils make a series of shapes, joining different parts of their activity into a sequence. They explore balances at different heights and discriminate between shapes that are symmetrical and those that are not. Pupils in Year 3 benefit from the enthusiasm and expertise of professional coaches from a local soccer club who take football coaching with the support of their class teacher. This is a lively session, full of fun. Girls receive it as enthusiastically as by boys. The activities are challenging, and, as a result, pupils make good gains in the skills they develop. They listen and respond well, enjoying the jokes about different football teams but joining in vigorously at the same time. This is good

enhancement to the curriculum and a good opportunity for teachers to see good practice. There is a great deal of emphasis on individual and small group work that ensures that pupils are intensively engaged at all times.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is well enhanced by the school's policy of getting involved in local coaching opportunities. There are good links with both Stoke City and with Port Vale Football Club. Not only does this enhance the games curriculum pupils experience, but also the activities reinforce the opportunities provided by the school for learning to co-operate and compete in a sensible atmosphere and extends pupils' confidence building and raises self-esteem. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this, allied to their good management of pupils, enables them to take lessons at a good pace. As a result, pupils make good learning gains. They listen well, work hard and find the work demanding and enjoyable. Occasionally pupils with special education needs have difficulty meeting the standard expected of them in lessons. However, they get good support, both from teachers and from learning support assistants.
99. The subject is very well managed by enthusiastic co-ordinators. A good policy and scheme of work ensure that all staff know what is expected of them in their lessons. The school has adequate resources – some accumulated by special events and projects. A large field and good hall complement the work in physical education. Planning is monitored, although monitoring of teaching and learning has not been a recent priority. All staff have had specific training for the subject in the past. There are plans for further training in 'top sport' activities in the future.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

100. Standards of attainment are in line with the expectations of the local syllabus when pupils are seven and eleven years of age. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Given prior attainment on entry to full time school, pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well. However, much of the work they do is through discussion and role-play and they make insufficient use of their literacy skills. The progress pupils make is due to the interest they show in what is being taught and the emphasis by teachers on what pupils can learn from the study of faith communities and stories with a religious background.
101. Pupils in Year 1 discuss what they do on a day that is special to them. They quickly associate their special day with the special day of a different faith community, in this case, those who profess to Judaism. The notion that different people follow different faith practices is new to them. They learn that Shabbat is a special day to Jews and begin to understand how important this day is to Jews. Pupils in Year 2 get a very good sense of what messages lie behind the story of the Prodigal Son. They discuss Jesus' teaching with confidence and reflect on themes such as forgiveness, repentance and jealousy in very mature fashion. Pupils in Year 5 follow a series of lessons on 'special times' and discuss this in relation to objects they have brought from home. Year 6 pupils begin to learn about important features of Islam. They know that the Qu'ran is to be handled with great reverence and that ritual washing takes place to ensure that devotees are prepared for prayer.
102. Teaching and learning is good in the lessons seen. The school's strengths – well-prepared lessons taught at a good pace with good control of pupils – are characteristic of teaching in religious education. This ensures that pupils make good learning gains. They are involved in discussions and enjoy putting their point of view. Occasionally, teachers are a little hesitant in teaching material new to them but the

thoroughness of planning carries the lesson through. Pupils listen very well and this is a great support to their learning.

103. The subject manager is new to the profession. It is appropriate that a senior member of staff is supporting her as she comes to terms with her responsibilities. She has good subject expertise to bring to curriculum policy and the scheme of work. The school has improved its provision since the previous inspection where the curriculum was not fully covered. Teaching in the subject adds a great deal to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Curriculum content is supplemented by themes taught in assembly. The resources available to the subject are satisfactory but not generous. The school has few religious artefacts to support pupils' learning. There are some books to support learning across a range of religions and religious themes. However, there is no library where pupils can take part in independent research. There is no evidence that computers are used to support learning.