

INSPECTION REPORT

ELM PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Winterbourne, Bristol

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 109117

Headteacher: Mark Freeman

Reporting inspector: Hugh Protherough
[8339]

Dates of inspection: 10th to 13th January 2000

Inspection number: 188091

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Nicholls Lane Winterbourne South Gloucestershire
Postcode:	BS36 1NF
Telephone number:	(01454) 866750
Fax number:	(01454) 866751
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. S. Baxter
Date of previous inspection:	26 th – 29 th February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Hugh Protherough	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Physical education	How high are standards?
		Special educational needs	How well are pupils' taught
		Equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
Andy Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Graeme Bassett	Team inspector	Information technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Mathematics	
		Geography	
		History	
		Design and technology	
Julia Elsley	Team inspector	Education of pupils under the age of five	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		English	
		Religious education	
		Music	
		Art	

The inspection contractor was:
 St Mary's, Strawberry Hill Inspection Unit
 Waldegrave Road
 Twickenham
 TW1 4SX

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The Registrar, Inspection Quality Division
 The Office for Standards in Education
 Alexandra House
 33 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Elm Park is a primary school, broadly average in size with 249 pupils of predominantly white ethnicity on roll. The school serves the village of Winterbourne, although in recent years the expansion of north Bristol has led to 15% of pupils attending school from outside the area. As a result the roll has risen, but is now stable. The area is socially mixed but most families have at least one parent in work. Only two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much lower than the national average. The school's baseline shows that the attainment of the pupils on entry reflects the full ability range and is broadly average overall. About a third of the pupils are included on the school's register for special educational needs, but most of these are at stage 1 and 2. There are two pupils with statements of special educational need. At the time of the inspection, there were 29 pupils in their Reception year. Of these, 20 were under the age of five. The eight oldest reception children are taught in a class with nineteen Year 1 pupils. The youngest reception children are taught in a separate class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school because there is clear and purposeful leadership committed to raising standards and improving the quality of education. The headteacher nurtures his staff team, checks the quality of their work and makes considered judgements about the training that they need. As a result, the quality of the teaching is good and still improving. The effect of this has been to lift standards so that by the age of eleven the pupils' performance is above average in English, mathematics, science, religious education and design and technology. Although the school's income is slightly above average, its overall effectiveness means that it offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of literacy and numeracy are above average. By the time the children leave the school, most are reading widely, writing accurately and carrying out mental calculations with confidence.
- Standards in religious education and design and technology also exceed the expected levels at the end of both key stages. Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average.
- The quality of the teaching is good because most lessons are demanding and build systematically upon what the pupils have learnt previously.
- The pupils' attitudes to work are positive. They behave responsibly and act courteously at all times.
- The leadership of the school is very effective because it presents a clear vision for the school's improvement. It sets challenging targets in many areas and checks progress rigorously.
- The headteacher, governors and senior staff consult widely, especially with parents. They listen hard to their views and incorporate these when forming policy.
- The quality of the information provided for parents is excellent. As a result, the school receives strong support and tasks such as homework are completed thoroughly.
- There is a very good range of extra curricular sporting, cultural and other educational activities offered by the teachers and governors.
- There are high levels of care shown for the pupils. Individual assessments are thorough and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, benefit from the targets set by the teachers, which tell them how to improve their work.

What could be improved

- Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 are not as high as they should be.
- The teaching of gymnastics is unsatisfactory.

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 last inspected four years ago. Since then the headteacher, governing body and staff have made concerted and effective efforts to improve the quality of education provided, by addressing conscientiously the previous report. For instance, standards have been improving steadily over the past four years, at least in line with the national trend. Standards of literacy and numeracy are now above average at age eleven, which is higher than at the last inspection. The information technology curriculum has benefited from considerable investment in new equipment and staff training. As a result, the teachers now make far more effective use of the school's computers and the standard of the pupils' work meets the expected levels. Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2 are generally much higher and there is far greater emphasis upon developing the pupils' abilities to carry out investigations. The teachers' assessments of the pupils' work in science at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate steady improvement since the last inspection, but these results continue to lag behind those achieved by pupils at similar schools. The inspection analysis of pupils' current work in science shows that standards are not as high as they should be when compared with the high levels of pupils' attainments in English and mathematics.

Standards have risen because the teaching has improved. At the last inspection, the teaching was generally satisfactory, but with a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. Most of the teaching seen during the current inspection was good and often very good. Part of the reason for this is the improvement in the use that the teachers make of their assessments of the pupils. A very good range of data is collected for each child and used effectively in setting subsequent targets for individuals and cohorts.

The School Development Plan (SDP) is now an informative and well considered document that sets out a brisk, but realistic programme of development. Decisions relating to expenditure are, whenever possible, closely linked to educational outcomes and are based firmly on best value principles.

The new headteacher has initiated a comprehensive and rigorous system for monitoring the teaching and learning and understands thoroughly the strengths and weaknesses of his key staff. He has gathered excellent documentary evidence of the actions taken to improve staff performance. As a result, the school is well placed to sustain further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	C	A	C	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	A	B	D	
science	D	A	A	B	

The table illustrates the steady improvement in standards at the school made over the past few years. In last year's national tests standards were well above the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. However, these results are less good when compared with those of schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school exceeded its target for English last year, but narrowly missed the target for mathematics. The inspection findings indicate that the current Year 6 contains fewer higher attaining pupils than last year. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels in English, mathematics and science continues to be above average and will be close to the challenging targets set for this year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The children behave very well and act in a mature and responsible manner at all times.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils relate well to their teachers, each other and visitors to the school.
Attendance	Good. There is very little unauthorised absence.

The school is an orderly, tolerant and hard-working community that reflects the values set out in the school aims.

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 is consistently good across most of the school, although there is slight variation in the middle of Key Stage 2. During the course of the inspection, the teaching was very good or better in almost 40% of lessons. It was good or better in three-quarters of the lessons seen and satisfactory or better in 93%. About 7% of lessons were unsatisfactory or worse and this mostly reflects the teachers' poor knowledge of how to teach gymnastics. Nevertheless, most lessons are effectively organised to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The teaching of English and mathematics is a particular strength because the teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced and reflects the current national priorities for literacy and numeracy. There is not enough time spent on science in Key Stage 1.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are effectively supported and make good progress in their work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The effective use of "Circle Time" and a lively school council means that the school makes very good provision for promoting the pupils' moral development
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The systems for monitoring academic progress and reporting to parents are particularly strong.

The very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the school's curriculum. Communication between the school and home is excellent so that parental involvement in their children's work is strong.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is building a new team of senior teachers most of whom are increasingly effective in managing the curriculum and checking standards across the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors work very effectively with the headteacher to guide the work of the school. They cover fully their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher, governors and senior staff have detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on secure evidence.
The strategic use of resources	Good.

The headteacher provides strong leadership so that the management of the school continues to improve. The governors work closely with the staff and are applying the principles of best value in all their budgetary decisions. The school has a good number of teachers and ancillary staff who are effectively deployed to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The school's accommodation is spacious and generally well maintained. Levels of educational resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. They are well taught and encouraged to work hard. • The school successfully promotes positive attitudes and values that are reflected in the pupils' very good behaviour. • Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to succeed and benefit from the targets they agree with their teachers. • There are very effective systems for recognising and celebrating the children's success. • The school's curriculum is broad and interesting. Many parents feel the school has a strong commitment to the arts. • The headteacher and staff are friendly, accessible and always willing to discuss the children's progress informally. • The arrangements for homework reflect the full and open consultation that was held with parents and pupils. As a result, these arrangements are working well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small minority feels that they would like more information about how their children are getting on.

The inspection team agrees with very positive views expressed by the overwhelming majority of parents, both at the pre inspection meeting and in the very large number of questionnaires returned to the Registered Inspector. The quality of information provided by the school for parents is excellent, as is the quality of the annual written reports outlining their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In last year's national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were well above the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. When these results are compared with those of schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards in science remain above average, in English are average, but in mathematics are below average.
2. The inspection findings indicate that the current Year 6 contains fewer higher attaining pupils than last year. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels in English, mathematics and science continues to be above average. The Year 5 cohort has a good proportion of pupils who are already approaching the levels expected of eleven-year-olds in all three subjects.
3. The tests held at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that standards in reading and mathematics are above average when compared with schools nationally, but average when compared with similar schools. Standards in writing are much higher and well above average in comparison with both schools nationally and similar schools.
4. It was evident from the inspection that the proportion of pupils in the current Year 2 reaching the expected levels is well above average in most subjects, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress because the achievements of those pupils entering the school are broadly average when judged against the school's approved system of baseline assessment. For instance, most of the Reception children will meet the national targets for the Foundation stage, but few will exceed them by the age of five.
5. The exception to this good progress in Key Stage 1 lies in science. Last year's teacher assessments indicated that although attainment was in line with the national average, standards were lower than those achieved in similar schools. During the course of the inspection, whilst talking to pupils and analysing their work it became clear that standards are not as high as they should be. **This is a key issue for action.**
6. Analysis of the results of national tests shows a steady improvement in standards at the end of both key stages over the past few years. Although levels of attainment have generally exceeded the national average, the rate of improvement has kept pace with the national trend.
7. The cumulative results of eleven-year-olds for the past four years show that boys have performed considerably better than the girls. Putting all the results of the girls together, they are slightly ahead of the expected level in English and about a term ahead in mathematics and science. In comparison, boys are two terms ahead in English and science, and more than a term ahead in mathematics. This is a very different picture from the one seen nationally and was therefore an area of intense investigation during the inspection. However, the leadership is clearly able to demonstrate that although there is marginal difference between the performance of boys and girls within each year group, there is no overall, significant imbalance. The teachers and governors are analysing the results carefully and checking the range of teaching styles and activities offered within classes. The inspection findings show no evidence of gender bias within the teaching; both boys and girls are working productively across the overwhelming majority of the curriculum.
8. Further evidence of the school's commitment to high standards lies in the challenging targets set for literacy and numeracy. In fact, every child has its own "target" which makes a significant contribution towards the school's very positive ethos. However, last year's results were skewed by the arrival during

the course of the year of a number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6. Nevertheless, the school exceeded its target for English, but just missed its target for mathematics. This year's targets are higher and appropriately challenging.

9. The standard of work seen during the course of the inspection confirms that the school's recent emphasis on developing the skills of literacy and numeracy is paying dividends. The strength of the provision for personal development means that the children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly into the routines of school. This is most evident in the way that they speak readily with their teachers and other adults. They listen carefully to instructions and join in discussions with confidence. They love listening to stories. They enjoy re-telling their favourite parts and discussing the characters. Most are already recognising a few words in print and all are developing a thorough grounding in the sounds of letters through the use of "Jolly Phonics." As a result of this good start, by the end of Key Stage 1 the majority is reading simple books with accuracy, whilst about a third is reading widely with increasing independence. By the time they leave school, most are accomplished readers who possess a good range of skills that enables them to retrieve information from books or screen and to justify their opinions about what they have learnt by direct reference to the text. A similar progression is also evident in the development of their writing skills. At the time of the last inspection the presentation of the pupils' work was criticised, but this has subsequently improved to an acceptable level. As a result, most exercise books are neat and the overwhelming majority of pupils leave school with a neat and fluent handwriting style.
10. The most obvious impact of the school's recent work in numeracy can be observed in the excitement and enthusiasm of the pupils for this subject. The teachers have worked extremely hard to improve their own knowledge of the subject and to increase the pace and demand of lessons. Consequently, the pupils' confidence in handling number is improving daily so that by the age of eleven most pupils have a good range of strategies to carry out quite complex mental calculations involving large numbers.
11. As a result of these initiatives, the quality of pupils' work in many other subjects of the curriculum has benefited. For instance, in science pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 manage to write quite detailed accounts of their work and express their predictions with increasing accuracy. Their competence with number enables them to measure accurately, record, collate and interpret their data with growing insight. The teachers' appropriate emphasis on encouraging a range of practical investigations ensures that the pupils are challenged to think hard about what they might deduce from their results.
12. A further significant development lies in the increasing use of information technology. Standards have improved and the pupils' achievements at the end of both key stages are now in line with the expected levels. This is because, on the one hand the necessary skills are being taught in discrete information technology [IT] lessons, whilst on the other hand the teachers own increasing confidence means that they are finding ways to use IT in other subjects. They include, for instance, recording results of science experiments on spreadsheets and the use of programs such as LOGO to explore the properties of triangles. In this instance, the work of the higher attaining pupils was very good indeed.
13. The school's curriculum reflects the importance placed on the thorough coverage of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. As a result, standards exceed the expected levels at the end of both key stages. The pupils have a good understanding of the key events and celebrations of Christianity as well as those of other important world faiths. The ability of many to talk and reflect about the meaning of their own lives and their place in the world is a significant strength.
14. The pupils work in design and technology is a further strength because they exceed the expected levels at the end of both key stages. They are recording their designs with great care and the project undertaken by Year 6 pupils with the local secondary school has resulted in some work of high quality.
15. The standard and quality of work seen in art, music, geography and history is in line with the expected levels at the end of both key stages.
16. In physical education the picture is mixed. The school achieves very high standards in swimming because all eleven-year-olds swim a minimum of twenty-five metres and most manage much further. The school's range of extra-curricular sport is also a significant strength with a good range of competitive

activities available to the pupils. However, the quality of the work in gymnastics is lower than the expected levels because some teachers lack the necessary subject knowledge to extend the pupils appropriately. **This is a key issue for action.**

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour and the relationships within the school are very good. Their personal development is also good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. Parents are happy with the high standards of good behaviour consistently achieved by the school.
18. The pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. The vast majority consistently demonstrates positive attitudes to their work. They are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and very keen to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, ask and answer questions, and willingly offer their own ideas and suggestions. Pupils of all ages quickly settle down diligently in class, are capable of maintaining sustained periods of concentration and stay on task. They enjoy their lessons and a large number of them take part in the very good range of extra curricular activities which the school offers.
19. Overall, the pupils' behaviour is very good. They behave very well and act in a mature and responsible manner at all times, moving about the school in a quiet and orderly manner. Their conduct in the classrooms is consistently very good and there is no disruption to lessons. During the inspection only one lesson was observed where the teacher did not apply appropriate management strategies and the pupils' behaviour was less than satisfactory. The same orderly picture was observed at breaks and lunchtimes and there were no signs of either bullying or isolation of individual children. There were 11 fixed term exclusions in the school year prior to the inspection involving 2 pupils. These were part of staged behaviour management procedures and have been very effective. There have been no exclusions this academic year to date.
20. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils of all ages are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They relate well to their teachers, to other adults and to one another. They collaborate well, sharing resources, taking turns and listening to each other. During assemblies, they show appropriate respect for the occasion. There is no deliberate damage to resources or school property and the pupils consistently demonstrate respect for their environment.
21. The pupils' personal development is good. They are learning a good range of social skills, which is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. The children respond well to the opportunities provided for taking responsibility for their own work in the classrooms. In many lessons, they were observed working independently, undertaking their own research and staying on task. Where they have opportunities to take on formal responsibilities around the school, for example, being members of the School Council, they respond in a mature and sensible manner. The children support local and national charities and make appropriate visits into the community.
22. Levels of attendance are good and above the national average. There is a low incidence of unauthorised absence. The pupils enjoy coming to school and their parents are very supportive in maintaining good attendance levels. The pupils come to school on time and lessons, assemblies, breaks and other activities start and finish promptly.
23. The high levels of behaviour, attendance and punctuality have a very positive impact on the academic standards achieved in the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection. On that occasion, it was generally satisfactory, but less so at the end of Key Stage 2. Now the quality of the

teaching is consistently good across much of the school although there is slight variation in the middle of Key Stage 2. During the course of the inspection, the teaching was very good or better in almost 40% of lessons. It was good or better in three-quarters of lessons and satisfactory or better in 93%. About 7% of lessons were unsatisfactory or worse and this figure mostly reflects the teachers' poor knowledge of how to teach gymnastics. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of lessons are effectively organised to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.

25. The teaching of English and mathematics is a particular strength. The leadership has spent a lot of time ensuring that the national initiatives for literacy and numeracy are introduced successfully. There has been plentiful training, frequent checks on planning and regular monitoring of the teaching by senior staff. As a result of their training, the teachers have a secure knowledge of what they need to teach. They are using the national planning frameworks effectively and an analysis of the plans alongside the children's work reveals that what is planned is being taught successfully. The teachers' plans are often annotated with comments about what works well and how lessons might be improved. A great deal of useful assessment information is also noted and stored within the teachers' assessment folders. It is clear that planning is being modified in light of the progress made during each lesson.
26. The inspection notebooks abound with good examples of exciting and effective teaching in these subjects. The children under five are already showing signs of developing a great enjoyment of literature because their teacher chooses books skilfully. The re-reading of "Kipper's Toy Box" shows that many children remember key points in the story including the "punch line" on the last page. Their subsequent energetic performance of "Jolly Phonics" reveals that they are already gaining a good knowledge of the sounds of letters. In Key Stage 1, one teacher's clever use of "post-it" labels enables the pupils to devise a range of entertaining thought bubbles that they attach to different pictures of Cinderella as her story unfolds. These pupils all show an ability to write empathetically with characters from fiction. In Key Stage 2, the demand of the opening whole class sessions is often intense. For instance the mental maths warm up sets a blistering pace that really helps the pupils to practise instant recall of important number facts. Even the lower attaining pupils are expected to practise in this way and they take great delight in testing each other by tossing large dice to set themselves problems. The teachers are also extremely skilled when introducing new concepts and fresh material. For example, in Year 3 the teacher, through careful explanation and shrewd questioning, quickly established how the pupils might use a map to provide route instructions. Thus, by the end of the lesson most pupils were confidently explaining how to work out left and right turns by turning their maps to decide which way they were facing.
27. The teaching of the other subjects of the National Curriculum also contains many more strengths than weakness. In science there has been a marked increase in the use of investigative work to help bring the pupils' learning alive. The teachers are far more confident in helping the pupils to set up experiments to discover what happens, for instance, when seeds are cultivated in different conditions or what material provides the best insulation for a warm drink. They manage these sessions very well. The resources and equipment are carefully prepared and accessible to the pupils. The children know how to behave when working practically because they have helped establish the class rules and they enjoy positive relationships with their teacher. As a result, the children in Key Stage 2 especially are beginning to think like scientists and develop a far better understanding of how to conduct a fair test.
28. A further improvement in the teaching is the way that information technology is being used far more frequently. The pupils are encouraged to word process, to collect and collate data and present their findings using the school's computers. They enjoy this and gain a sense of achievement when their work is printed out. The recent "DynamITe" training courses provided for the teachers and parents by a governor have had a significant impact upon the teachers' knowledge and confidence in this area.
29. Throughout the school, the teachers provide regular and helpful feedback to the children. Successful work and good effort are praised and rewarded both within class and in assemblies. The pupils' homework and written work are marked promptly. The type of written commentary provided, for instance in science in Year 5, gives the pupils a clear indication of what they need to do next. A further, major strength of the teachers' assessment of pupils' work lies in the way that their judgements are focussed into a series of brief targets for improvement that are shared with pupils and parents in the annual

report. These targets are regularly reviewed and updated. It is evident from conversations with children across the school that this makes a significant contribution to their ability to talk cogently about their work and their understanding of how it can be improved.

30. The effect of all this good teaching is clearly evident in the positive response of the pupils. They find most lessons exciting. They are stimulated and interested in what the teachers ask them to do and are eager to learn. Even on those few occasions when teaching is less effective, most still try hard to gain something worthwhile from the lesson. For instance, the teaching of gymnastics is poor because many teachers lack sufficient knowledge and guidance about how to manage these lessons. The pace of lessons is slow and the pupils have little opportunity to exercise vigorously and practise their skills in a systematic way. However they always work safely and are patient even when they have to queue before using apparatus.
31. The only other unsatisfactory teaching was in the middle of Key Stage 2. In these two lessons the teacher's planning was not sufficiently clear about what they expected the pupils to learn. There was a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils that led to a slower pace of work and a little unsatisfactory behaviour that was not properly addressed.
32. The leadership has developed some well-considered strategies to support improvements in the teaching. For instance, the appointment of two additional part-time teachers enables the large classes in Key Stage 2 to be split into smaller groups for literacy and numeracy each morning. This works well because it reduces the range of ability in each group and helps the teachers to match the work more closely to the pupils' needs. The children have quickly got used to the idea of changing rooms for different lessons and several parents said that they think this system has been a useful preparation for secondary school. A further consequence is that pupils with special educational needs feel very comfortable about those occasions when they are withdrawn from class for additional help.
33. In Key Stage 1, there has been a considerable increase in the number of general assistants. This has also had a positive impact in lessons because the teachers make sure that these additional adults are thoroughly prepared and know how to help support the children's work. For instance, in the class containing both Reception and Year 1, the nursery nurse regularly works with the youngest children to help them develop confidence in recognising and understanding their numbers. Elsewhere in the school, a general assistant makes a significant contribution to the teaching of information technology by working with small groups in the school library.

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

34. The curriculum provided throughout the school is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements. The quality of the vast majority of learning opportunities provided is good. The strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are particularly effective and this is reflected in the improvement in standards in English and mathematics. The time spent upon other subjects has been adjusted sensibly and realistically to allow for more time to teach literacy and numeracy. Even so, the school still finds time to ensure that in subjects such as religious education the pupils receive an interesting and stimulating curriculum. However, the time spent upon teaching science throughout Key Stage 1 is not sufficient. Although the links with other areas of learning are useful, the arrangement often impedes the teaching of the specific skills, knowledge and understanding that will help the pupils make better progress in science. The curriculum for the youngest children is carefully planned to ensure thorough coverage of all Areas of learning within the Foundation Curriculum for pupils under the age of five. One slight weakness is that the teachers do not consistently identify how learning in each area might be heightened through the careful use of structured play activities.
35. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is firmly established. It includes appropriate opportunities to provide sex education and raise pupils' awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs. Some very effective work was seen in this area during the inspection in science lessons and in "Circle Time". Outside agencies, such as the school nurse, the local doctor and the Old Vic Theatre Company enhance the opportunities for the pupils to gain a thorough understanding of these issues.
36. The school has strong links with the community. Visits to museums, educational workshops and a

residential visit for pupils in year 6, all make significant contributions to the pupils' learning. The links with other schools are good as the school hosts many sporting tournaments and matches. The year 6 pupils gain a considerable educational benefit from their visits to the local secondary school to pursue design and technology, and information technology activities.

37. The school's provision for extra curricular activities is a major strength. A wide range of clubs is organised after school by many of the staff and a governor. These clubs, such as those for computer, choir, gymnastics, sports and instrumental tuition, are well supported and considerably enrich the school's curriculum.
38. The school makes good provision overall for the pupils' personal development. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. All assemblies, whether they are whole school, key stage or held in the classrooms, comply with the requirements for collective worship. The themes, prayers and songs provide an appropriate focus for the pupils' spiritual development. However, the teachers' plans and the content of their lessons do not highlight sufficiently when the spiritual dimension of each pupil's development could be explored further in subjects such as art, music and science.
39. The provision for the pupils' social and cultural development is good and for their moral development it is very good. The pupils are aware of what is right and wrong. In all classes, the behaviour is very good and the systems in place, such as the agreed rules for the classroom and the reward scheme, have a positive impact on maintaining these standards. Through "Circle Time" the pupils learn that they should take turns and that someone else has the right to hold an opposing point of view. The pupils co-operate well together and on many occasions throughout the year they work closely in joint projects to raise money for charities.
40. The pupils' cultural development is planned effectively. Activities such as Morris and country dancing, visits to museums, the theatre and the cathedral are all significant factors in the development of the pupils' appreciation of their own culture. The pupils throughout the school can relate stories in detail from different religions and can draw upon examples, such as differences between food, housing, customs and traditions from other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. This is a strong aspect of the school's work and provides very good support and guidance for all the pupils. Starting in the reception class, the well-planned induction programme helps the children to settle quickly and happily into school. A strong feature of this programme is the high quality of the information provided for the parents. This helps them to feel confident in re-assuring their children as they take a first major step towards independence. The school's expectations for behaviour are explicit. The detailed consultation held with parents about home school agreements was felt by many parents to be unnecessary because behaviour is so good. Nevertheless, 80% of agreements have been signed and returned and conversations with the pupils reveal no concerns about bullying or intimidation. This is largely because they feel they have some influence in deciding what happens at school. For instance, the school council comprises representatives from every class from Year 1 upwards. It meets regularly with the headteacher to give serious consideration to current issues as well as the written suggestions left by other pupils in the box in the entrance hall. A good indication of the effectiveness of the school's approach to caring for its pupils is the way that the few pupils with behavioural difficulties, including some with statements of special educational needs, are successfully included within the school community.
42. All the teaching and support staff take the pupils' welfare very seriously, and the high level of care shown for the pupils makes a positive contribution to their learning. The school has good arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of its pupils at all times. First aid facilities and trained staff are on site. Everyone is vigilant and any safety hazards are reported immediately to the senior management. For example, at the time of the inspection two minor hazards were observed and reported orally to the headteacher. His thorough documentation indicated that action has already begun to address the issues.

43. The registers are properly maintained and attendance is checked assiduously. There is an appropriate policy in place for child protection and all staff are fully aware of the required procedures. A positive feature is the way that all new staff are fully briefed on this important aspect when they first start work at the school.
44. Much time and effort has been devoted to putting in place very effective systems for assessing and recording the pupils' attainment and progress. In the reception class, the pupils are formally assessed in the first five weeks after starting school and this gives the teachers a good indication of the children's personal and social development, linguistic and mathematical achievements. Other assessments of children's progress in their physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development are noted systematically through on-going observations that are subsequently recorded at the end of each school day.
45. As the pupils progress through the school, the teachers continue to make detailed notes on their individual achievements in all subjects, particularly literacy and mathematics. These assessments are sharply focused and used effectively in the teachers' subsequent planning. This information is used to provide all pupils with individual targets so that they know what they have achieved and where they need to improve their work. As a result, the teachers know the children very well and their end-of-year reports for parents are excellent. They are very detailed and give a clear, sharp account of what the children know, can do and understand. They also make it clear to parents where improvement is required, by including targets that are discussed and agreed at review meetings.
46. The school makes good provision for the pupils with special educational needs. The quality of the individual education plans is good because they contain clear targets. Most pupils make good progress because records show that once a need has been identified, the pupils move down as well as up, the different stages of the Code of Practice. The parents are regularly consulted and kept informed by meetings and discussions with the staff concerned. A strength of the school's approach is the way that all written assessments of the pupils with special educational needs are discussed and signed by their parents. Most parents are involved in helping their children at home with programmes of work. This helps the children to progress with the basic skills of spelling, reading and writing.
47. The school also makes effective use of a good range of national tests and other assessments to monitor both individual progress and that of different cohorts of pupils. The results of tests in English, mathematics and science have been scrutinised in order to highlight areas of weakness. As a result, the subject co-ordinators have looked at ways to improve results. For instance, at Key Stage 2 the weaknesses demonstrated that teachers needed to target the lower attaining pupils in order to raise them to Level 3/4 by placing a greater emphasis on punctuation in free writing, reading comprehension skills and justifying opinions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Relationships between the school and parents are very good. The school enjoys the active support of the vast majority of parents, who consistently expressed a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school. The headteacher and his staff are very approachable and parents were regularly observed talking to class teachers at the start and close of the school day. There are a number of committed parents and governors who regularly help in the classrooms and accompany the children on out-of-school trips. Parental involvement in their children's work at home is very good and there is strong support for home reading and homework. There is an active parents and friends association that organises events and raises funds for the school. Most parents feel that the school encourages them to play an active part in the life of the school and the vast majority of them say they would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems concerning their children.
49. Communication between the school and home is excellent. The school sends out regular informative newsletters and there are frequent communications to parents about specific events and activities. There are information notice boards containing curriculum information for all classes at the two main pupil entrances. The school entrance foyer is very welcoming with a large range of information on the

school, and on wider educational and community information. The headteacher consults the parents on all major educational initiatives, often by means of questionnaires, and consistently receives a very good response. There have been information meetings for parents, for example, on literacy and numeracy, and these were well attended. The school publishes a comprehensive and informative prospectus, and the governors hold an annual meeting with parents and issue an annual report. The prospectus and the governors' annual report contain all the statutory required information. The annual, individual progress reports written by the teachers are excellent. They indicate what each pupil can and cannot do, progress being made, where there are difficulties and the targets for improvement. Parents are offered appropriate opportunities to attend meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. A few parents commented that they were not kept well informed about how well their child(ren) was/were getting on. The inspection evidence did not support these parents' point of view.

50. Overall, the school's links with the parents considerably enrich its work and have a positive impact on the pupils' academic achievement and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The increasing effectiveness of this school is a direct result of the clear-sighted leadership of its headteacher and governing body. The school aims are brief and to the point, but they are clearly reflected in a school society that is friendly, orderly and studious in its pursuit of excellence.
52. Although he has only been in post a short while, the headteacher has rapidly assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the school with acuity. In order to achieve this he has consulted widely on a number of important issues and amassed a range of compelling data that have successfully informed both school policy and the development plan. For example, he analyses the results of national tests and other assessments to produce a detailed breakdown of the performance of each cohort of pupils in the school. Although there is clearly a strong divergence in parental opinion about the value of homework extensive consultation has ensured that the final policy meets with the approval of virtually all parents. As a result of this clear-sighted approach, developments at the school are frequently successful because decisions about actions are based firmly upon reliable evidence.
53. Above all the headteacher recognises the crucial importance of a united and effective staff team. Each member of staff has a clear and specific job description that outlines precisely their duties and responsibilities. This is further supported by very good evidence of the effectiveness of each teacher, acquired by the regular monitoring of the quality of lessons across the school. Teacher appraisal is carried out assiduously and the targets for improvement provide a clear focus for subsequent classroom observations.
54. A major strength of the leadership is the way that it seeks to provide all staff with management responsibilities at a level appropriate to their age and experience. New roles and responsibilities are carefully supported with appropriate training. For instance, a recently appointed General Assistant has benefited from attending courses on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The subject co-ordinators are encouraged to assume much greater responsibility by checking standards, monitoring the teachers' planning and observing lessons. This has been particularly successful in English and mathematics where senior teachers from both key stages and Reception have worked closely to produce a coherent view of the current state of literacy and numeracy across the school. Standards have improved and the teachers know how to improve them further.
55. There is further strength in the way that Newly Qualified Teachers [NQT] are inducted into their chosen profession. Each NQT receives plentiful support from the headteacher, senior staff and a mentor. Their training is based on an effective synthesis of their own record of professional development and the priorities of the school development plan. They receive regular non-contact time that is used effectively for consultation, planning and review of progress. As a result, both teachers are enjoying their new jobs and teaching effectively.
56. The school makes very effective use of the resources at its disposal. Since the last inspection the

governing body has improved significantly the quality of the school development plan. This document benefits from a simple format that is easy to understand. It provides a helpful synthesis of the priorities for improvement agreed amongst all parties involved with the school. The detail of what is to be achieved is summarised clearly along with details of the cost, time scales for action, those responsible and a helpful summary of the criteria against which successful completion might be judged. A further significant strength lies in the way that the school is beginning to judge its performance by applying the principles of best value. For instance, the leadership makes extremely effective use of the data provided by its local authority. It is monitoring the standards achieved within the school against those achieved by similar schools locally and sets realistic, challenging targets for improvement based on firm data. It has a good understanding of why the costs associated with staffing are currently low, but recognises that in order to make the most of young staff money has to be spent on support and training. Similarly, although the school buildings are large, the governors have made a number of significant savings in heating and waste disposal costs.

57. The additional funds provided for pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately and to very good effect. For instance, since the review of the provision for those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties there have been no more temporary exclusions so that the children have remained successfully within the school community and make good progress in their work.
58. As a result of its prudent financial management, the school benefits from good levels of educational resources. There has been recent significant improvement in the provision of computers, software and other items for teaching information technology, as well as increases in the range of books for teaching literacy. The school grounds are large and have been enhanced by a number of interesting projects that have created garden areas with pergolas, seating and attractive planting. However, the surfaces of some of the playground areas are beginning to degrade and become unsafe. **This is an additional issue for the governors to consider.**

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. **The Governors, Head Teacher and staff should continue to build upon the procedures already established to improve the quality of education by;**

Improving the standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1:

- Reviewing the amount of time spent on the subject (**paragraph 95**).
- Reviewing the school's arrangements for teaching the subject by making sure that all lessons build steadily on the children's scientific knowledge, skills and understanding of science and that the links with other subjects are subsidiary (**paragraph 6**).

Improve teachers' knowledge of how to teach gymnastics and movement (**paragraph 16, 123**)

60. Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- Develop the use of play with the children at the Foundation Stage in order to improve still further the children's skills and understanding across all the national targets for the foundation stage of education (**paragraph 70**).
- The addressing of the two health and safety issues reported verbally to the headteacher and chairman of the governing body (**paragraph 58**)

The headteacher, staff and governing body are aware of all of these issues which feature in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

60

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	37	33	18	3	3	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	YRec – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		249
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YRec – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		84

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	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.04
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	18	17	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	17
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	35	35	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (87)	100 (92)	97 (92)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	14	17
	Girls	16	11	15
	Total	34	25	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (92)	71 (90)	91 (90)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	18	19	37
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National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	17
	Girls	17	14	19
	Total	31	28	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (74)	76 (85)	97 (89)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	13	12
	Girls	15	14	14
	Total	25	27	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (70)	73 (85)	70 (82)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	216
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	11	0
Other minority ethnic groups		

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: YRec – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	31

Education support staff: YRec – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	157

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
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	£
Total income	412328
Total expenditure	405555
Expenditure per pupil	1636
Balance brought forward from previous year	18684
Balance carried forward to next year	25457

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	249
Number of questionnaires returned	153

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	35	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	37	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	40	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	43	4	1	1
The teaching is good.	65	30	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	37	10	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	20	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	55	37	6	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	66	29	2	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	28	5	1	3

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

61. All children start school at the beginning of the academic year in which their fifth birthday falls. There are 29 children in the foundation stage. Twenty-one are educated in a dedicated Reception class and eight older ones have been placed in a class with younger Year 1 pupils. Most have had some pre-school playgroup experience. The results of the assessment tasks that the children did on entry to the reception classes show that attainment is broadly average. At the time of the inspection, twenty pupils were still under the age of five.

Personal and social development.

62. The children have a very good start to their life in school. At this early stage of the second term the overall attainment in their personal and social development is above the expected level. This is because the teachers' major focus last term was fostering the children's skills in this area. Through the well-planned curriculum and daily routines, the adults demonstrate a strong commitment to developing the children's ability to accept responsibility. For example, all children dress and undress themselves independently for physical exercise or outdoor play. The children have established very good relationships with adults outside their family and gained experience of learning to work with other children in a group. They have learnt to listen to each other when giving answers to questions at group time and to show respect for each other's responses. They share amicably and ask politely when they want a book or a turn on the bicycle. The organisation of most activities allows them time to explore, enquire and discover for themselves the world around them and to gain the independence in their learning. For example, the children are given good opportunities to plan some of their own learning and report back on what they have done at the end of most sessions. This also reinforces socially acceptable behaviour.

Language and literacy.

63. The majority of the children are making good progress in the development of their linguistic and literacy skills, and most are on course to achieve targets set in the national guidelines by the time they reach their fifth birthday. Most children can speak clearly and confidently to each other and to adults when involved in group discussions. The adults' skilful and sensitive questioning of the children during group activities, such as the reading time in the literacy session, is fostering and encouraging them to provide extended responses. As a result, the older children are participating confidently in class discussions. For example, the teacher reads stories effectively and the children show that they have understood the key points and relate closely to the central character. As the teacher continues reading, most recognise key words such as, "noses", "tails" and "Kipper". Many have learnt the punch line at the end of the story and are eager to join in. The subsequent work on "Jolly Phonics" shows that all children are learning to grasp the sounds that letters make both individually and when combined with others.
64. Many children are confident in their early attempts at writing and are beginning to understand that marks, letters and words convey meaning. All the adults working with them pay good attention to handwriting and the formation of letters. For example, during planning time a group of children decided to do some writing. They wrote a letter, put it in an envelope with a name on the front. Spaces were left between their "words" and the name written on the front of the envelope. Upper and lower case letters were consistent in size and used appropriately. This shows that the work taught in the formal handwriting sessions is being transferred appropriately to other activities.

Mathematics

65. Mathematics is developed as children learn to match, sort and handle objects. The activities provided enable children, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress in their understanding of number. Most children are on course to reach the levels described in the Foundation

curriculum by the age of five. The oral sessions are well paced and involve all the children in counting numbers up to ten and back through carefully structured visual activities such as “Ten Little Teddies sitting on a Wall”. The children love this game, and as a result recognise individual numbers as well as their sequence. The higher attaining children are recording numbers to five in simple addition and this work is completed with an adult to ensure that they not only form numbers correctly but that they have also understood accurately how to add the numbers together. Most children tackle mathematical tasks confidently and competently with sustained concentration. The good use of mathematical terminology by staff in its appropriate context allows the children to acquire the vocabulary naturally and to use it in everyday situations as well as the specific tasks they are engaged in. This can be seen, for example, when they are handling money for buying and selling in the shop. When work is finished, both boys and girls tidy away before going on to the next task. There are no significant differences in gender response due to the high quality adult support.

Knowledge and understanding

66. Suitable foundations are being laid in science and computer technology. The adults are providing activities that enable the children to explore the world around them with increasing understanding. In one lesson, for instance, the teacher used good questioning skills to assess and then extend the children’s appreciation of the mechanisms of moveable toys. She fostered effectively the use of scientific terms, such as push and pull. The children could identify what happens to the wheels when the toy moves slowly or fast, and by the end of the session they were naturally using the terms push and pull in an appropriate context. However, the staff missed an opportunity to enhance this work in the outdoor learning environment by talking to the children about how they were using their moveable vehicles. Nevertheless the majority of pupils are achieving the outcomes outlined within the Foundation curriculum.
67. A further example of how play might have been used to extend learning was in the work on Florence Nightingale. Older children know a little about her life and had to draw a picture of her. Although the role-play area in the classroom is set up as a surgery, opportunities to use drama to explore the life of a Victorian nurse were not developed.
68. A good indication of the increasing improvement in the use of information technology is evident in the way that the children use the computer. They use a keyboard confidently and competently to carry out simple instructions and most are increasingly dextrous in their use of the mouse.

Creative development

69. The children are making good progress in creative activities, such as art, design technology and music so that most of them reach the expected learning outcomes and a few exceed these. This is because the effective teaching of the early skills is developing the children’s repertoire of approaches to expressing their thoughts, ideas and emotions. These are built upon when tackling new experiences such as, mixing paints, cutting, sticking, modelling with clay or playing an instrument. The children have confidence in the use of tools, materials and know how to use equipment safely. They enjoy the opportunities for free painting where they can explore and learn to mix colours independently. The children also enjoy their musical experiences. They sing rhythmically, remember words well and can keep a steady body pulse when performing action songs. The children confidently remember the names of some untuned percussion instruments when asked to select and play one. The children show increasing control of rhythm patterns, their intensity and duration, because of the careful way that the teacher plans these lessons. They are learning to distinguish between long and short sounds and the tunes they produce are musical.
70. The teachers recognise and value the importance of play as a medium for learning. However, this is not planned for sufficiently within the overall curriculum to enhance the children’s learning in a structured way. **This is an additional issue to be considered by the school that is included within the school development plan.**

Physical Development

71. The children's physical skills are being developed appropriately and their achievements are in line with those learning outcomes described in the Foundation Curriculum. They are using a good range of apparatus and other equipment. They handle tools safely, manage construction equipment and have been taught to hold a pencil correctly. They use malleable materials with imagination and good control. Most children enjoy setting themselves challenges and show pleasure in their achievements, for example, when climbing on the apparatus and balancing on bars, or when using the scissors to cut out a design. Very good support was given by one adult to help a pupil with special educational needs to understand the need to share, take turns and be considerate of other children's needs when they wanted to monopolise the bicycle. This was managed very successfully so that everyone had a turn.
72. All members of the staff team have a willingness and strong commitment to providing an appropriate curriculum for young children. The team is well led and managed. The assessment of the children's personal and social development and their academic achievements is very good. The children with special educational needs are identified quickly and given support to help them meet their targets. Parents and grandparents and other visitors are welcomed and given opportunities to become involved with school, and this helps to promote both their own and their children's learning.

ENGLISH

73. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' results in reading were above the national average and broadly in line with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Their results in writing were well above average in comparison in both contexts.
74. The results achieved by eleven-year-olds in last year's national tests show that standards were well above the national average and broadly in line with those achieved by pupils attending similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels was well above average. Analysis of the results for the past four years shows that the standards of literacy achieved by those leaving the school at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently above average in comparison with the results achieved nationally.
75. A significant feature of the analysis of results achieved by eleven-year-olds is that, contrary to the national trend, boys appear to have been achieving results that are even better than those managed by the girls. The school is fully aware of these data and has undertaken a thorough review of teaching to check for evidence of any gender bias in lessons. It has found none and the inspection evidence supports the school view.
76. The inspection findings confirm that the pupils' achievements at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with the results of last year's national tests in writing and that good progress has been made to raise the standards in reading to a higher level. At the end of Key Stage 2, the vast majority of Year 6 are achieving Level 4, but fewer pupils than last year are working at the higher levels. Nevertheless, although the average points score of each pupil may be lower, the school is still on course to reach its current, challenging target. A significant majority of the Year 5 pupils are already achieving the levels expected of eleven-year-olds and look to be on course to attain even higher levels by the end of Year 6.
77. The school has very effective and consistently applied approaches for improving literacy. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has involved the whole school and the key stage teams in careful planning that has ensured that skills in reading and writing build steadily and successfully on the pupils' prior learning. Time has been made for additional teaching of extended writing and this has been successful in enhancing the pupils' imaginative and factual writing experiences, particularly in Years 5 and 6. As a result of these developments, the teachers have also increased their awareness of the importance of incorporating aspects of literacy in the teaching of other subjects. Grammar and punctuation are well applied, for example, in history and geography projects. The skills of joined up handwriting are applied successfully across pupils' work in all subjects. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The presentation of written work is now generally of a reasonable standard and

in a few classes it is very good. The work within the school is strengthened by parents' commitment to supporting the pupils' work at home.

78. The pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is well above that expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Those with special educational needs participate and contribute equally well to discussions. This is because all the pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and show an interest and sustained concentration during lessons. They start school with an average vocabulary, which is further developed when they discuss books and other aspects of language with their teacher during the literacy hour. Their work is corrected by their teachers as and when necessary, but in a constructive and very sensitive way. The staff use high calibre questioning skills that allow the children to respond enthusiastically and confidently, to seek clarification to ensure understanding, and frequently to volunteer further information. The pupils' views, opinions and contributions are perceptive, building on others' responses and expressed clearly. Some Year 2 pupils for example, could explain confidently the use of speech marks. Their responses are highly valued by the teachers who place great importance on ensuring that both boys and girls in the class contribute equally to the class discussions. The pace of sessions is sharp and well focused by the majority of teachers.
79. The pupils' achievements in reading are well above that expected nationally at both key stages. This is due, in part, to the appropriate emphasis placed on the enjoyment of reading by both parents and staff. A good amount of time is devoted to reading each day, and the homework programme also helps to ensure that the pupils have a quiet time for reading and reflection. An additional strength of the teaching of reading is the way that teachers at Key Stage 2 encourage their pupils to make good use of the library and the computer to seek information to support learning, particularly in history and geography. By the age of seven, the children are reading accurately and fluently because they have developed a good range of appropriate skills that enable them to recognise common words and to tackle unknown words by using their knowledge of the sounds of letters. Those reading at higher levels also use the context of the sentence to help recognise unfamiliar text. The pupils love to read the same story over and over again; "I know what is going to happen next" said one pupil excitedly and talked animatedly about the main character.
80. At Key Stage 2, the teachers' analysis of the school's reading material has brought about the acquisition of many new books that successfully meet the needs of both boys and girls. These include adventure stories, humorous and classical texts that have stimulated a greater interest in reading particularly at the upper end of the school. The pupils discuss their favourite authors and refer to particular sections of a story to justify their reasons. For instance, during a religious education lesson pupils listened to extracts from "The Selfish Giant" and "Tom's Midnight Garden." They used good skills of inference and deduction to explain the situation that the main characters found themselves in. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils have acquired good skills in skimming and scanning text and competently record the information retrieved in note form. However, note taking in Year 4 was a new learning experience and due to the lack of clarity in the explanation of the teacher most pupils found this a difficult task to master.
81. The pupils with special education needs are making good progress in all aspects of literacy. This is because the additional teaching and classroom support is effectively deployed around the school. All these pupils benefit from precise and well-considered individual education plans. The targets are clear and most pupils understand very well what they need to do to improve. They respond positively to their lessons because the teachers are well organised and match the content of the lessons to the needs of the pupils.
82. The pupils' achievements in writing are above average in Year 6 and well above average in the current Year 2. The level of subject knowledge and expertise of the teachers in the teaching of writing for a purpose was good or very good in the majority of lessons observed. For example, the writing of a letter of complaint in a logical sequence was very well taught. The teachers' plans clearly specify what they want children to have achieved by the end of the lesson. From an early age, the pupils are encouraged to experiment with their writing and to practice spelling skills. They are given good opportunities to write for a range of purposes, including simple imaginative stories, recipes, appointment lists and letters. The children take pride in their achievements and sustain concentration when working on the task in hand. They enjoy working collaboratively and love to share their work at

the end of a session. By the age of seven, their handwriting is neat; the letters are joined legibly, consistent in shape and size and well formed. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are consistently and correctly used and they make appropriate use of word banks to record unfamiliar words.

83. Older pupils edit their written work, ensuring that the subjects and verbs agree and that the tenses are correct. The marking of work by the teachers is methodical and reinforced in lessons when repeated errors come to light. For example, in one Year 5 group the pupils had become very confused about “their, there and they’ re”. The subsequent lesson helped many pupils to become clearer about when each is used. Their good speaking and listening skills, their concentration and sustained interest in their work help the pupils to make good progress. The setting arrangement for extended writing at Key Stage 2 is also very supportive of progress. This enables specific support to be directed towards individual needs. For example, the higher achieving pupils in Year 5 are challenged within a group of higher attaining Year 6 pupils with creative writing experience. These pupils have a mature approach to their work and show initiative for personal study when given the opportunity., The teachers approach their lessons with a quiet rigour and the pace of work is always brisk. They reflect the needs of all pupils in their planning, and their assessment of the each individual’s progress in English is very good.
84. The subject is very well managed. The role of the co-ordinators has been strengthened and they go about their work efficiently and very effectively. There is a very clear plan of action in relation to the analysis of tests and the monitoring of the teachers’ and pupils’ work in order to sustain and improve on the current standards.

MATHEMATICS

85. In the national tests for mathematics in 1999, at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils’ standards are above the national average in comparisons with all schools. This is an improvement upon the tests of 1998. When compared to schools of a similar type, then the standards are in line with the average.
86. At the end of Key Stage 2, the results in the national tests in 1999 show that the pupils’ standards are above the national average for all schools. However a quarter of the pupils did not reach the expected level 4, so that the results overall are below the average when compared with schools of a similar type. The school fell just short of its target for 1999. However, results were skewed by the arrival during the course of the year of a number of pupils with special educational needs.
87. Over the past three years, the results at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the trend is for pupils to perform more than a term and a half in advance of the national performance figures. Over this period, the boys appear to be performing better than the girls. However, last year’s results show no major difference in the attainment of girls and boys.
88. These results for both key stages are confirmed by the scrutiny of the pupils’ work that was carried out during the inspection. It is clear from their work that the proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 on course to reach the expected level 2 is well above the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion on course to reach level 4 or above is above the national average. In both key stages, this is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with the national average.
89. The teachers throughout the school, under the good guidance of the two co-ordinators, have raised standards in numeracy significantly. They have established the teaching of the basic skills of numeracy effectively. The in-service courses organised within the school have rightly stressed the importance for the teachers to value the teaching of mental calculations. This they have done with rigour and determination, and these sessions in nearly every class are carried out at a very brisk pace, promoting quick responses from all pupils. For example, the pupils in mathematics group containing Years 3 and 4 were observed calculating confidently in their heads multiplication and division problems with numbers up to 1000. They were confident and accurate, and showed an agility of mind in a quick fire interaction with the teacher. The rapport between the teachers and the pupils in nearly all classes is very good and this helps to sustain the pupils’ concentration throughout the lessons. The introductory sessions of mental calculation are a very strong feature of most mathematics lessons, This very good development of the teachers’ skills has raised the pupils’ interest in mathematics and

sharpened their understanding of number substantially.

90. The pupils steadily build upon their previous learning and the amount of work completed so far this year is good. The quality of teaching, throughout Key Stage 1, is very good and almost all the pupils make good progress. Almost all of them have a good understanding of the place values up to hundreds, tens and units by the time they are seven years old. They can sequence numbers up to 100 and can count in multiples of 3,4,5 and 10 accurately and with confidence. They have progressed well to measuring in metres and centimetres and nearly all know and can describe the properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes. Most pupils have made very good progress in the uses of block graphs and tally charts, and have recorded in this way, for example, colours of eyes and their favourite foods.
91. The pupils throughout Key Stage 2 make good progress because of the good quality of the teaching. Most of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 make rapid calculations in their heads and many were observed rounding up and down to the nearest thousands or hundreds to help to work out their answers. They use approximations, halving and doubling very well. Nearly all have a clear understanding that there are many ways to arrive at a correct answer. The teachers give all pupils good encouragement and this brings about a high level of enthusiasm for mathematics and the confidence to 'have a go'. For example, nearly all pupils in Year 5, solve equations using brackets and have a very secure knowledge and understanding of mathematical ideas that exceed the expected levels for their age. The higher attaining pupils in year 6 were observed using computers to enhance their learning about scalene and equilateral triangles. The pace of work in this lesson was extremely brisk and the quality was excellent.. The very high standard of the pupils' work was a direct result of excellent teaching skills in a very well structured lesson. The high expectations of the teacher and the high level of challenge extended the pupils' knowledge substantially beyond the expected levels for their ages.
92. Throughout the school, the teachers' plans are carefully prepared and the activities are taught with imagination. The tasks are very appropriate and the pupils leave most classrooms buzzing with enthusiasm for mathematics. Their attitudes are extremely positive. The monitoring of the teachers' plans and the pupils' work has had a strong impact upon the teaching of mathematics throughout the school. The learning objectives set by the teachers follow the numeracy strategy and the activities are very well structured. This ensures that the work becomes increasingly more demanding and builds effectively upon previous learning to bring about a thorough understanding of mathematics in each age group. The ability grouping arrangements in Key Stage 2 have a beneficial influence upon the provision made for the pupils. Similarly, the arrangements made for the pupils with special needs are good with some pupils receiving additional support in small groups.

SCIENCE

93. The results of last year's national tests for eleven-year-olds show that standards were well above average both in the national context and in comparison to the results in similar schools. A particular strength was the very good performance of the higher attaining pupils. Almost a half of this cohort achieved beyond the expected level 4. Currently, there are fewer pupils in Year 6 with higher, prior attainment. Nevertheless their work indicates that more than four fifths of pupils are likely to achieve the expected level and about a quarter are on target to reach the higher level 5. Thus standards remain slightly above the national average. The highly effective assessment data collected by the school show that in 2001, the results may well return to the very high levels achieved in 1999.
94. Analysis of the national test results of the past four years shows that by the time the children leave school, the boys have been achieving levels about two terms ahead of their age and the girls about one term. The school is monitoring the performance of boys and girls in great detail. The inspection findings confirm the leadership's view that this discrepancy reflects an imbalance in the levels of pupils' prior attainment rather than any gender bias within the teaching.
95. The picture in Key Stage 1 is less rosy. Although the teachers' assessments of the pupils' work last year indicate that standards at the age of seven are broadly in line with the national average, these results are lower than those achieved by pupils attending similar schools. The inspection analysis of pupils' current work in science shows that standards are not as high as they should be when compared with the high levels of pupils' attainments in English and mathematics. Less time than usual is spent on science in Key Stage 1 and this is reflected in the small volume of work in the pupils' books. Lessons

cover all aspects of the science curriculum, but seldom in sufficient depth. **This is a key issue for action.**

96. The reasons why results in Key Stage 2 are so much better than those in Key Stage 1 lie both in the greater amount of time spent on the subject by older pupils and the way that the curriculum is planned. In Key Stage 1, science is incorporated within each term's topic or theme. Although this can sometimes help pupils make valuable links between different subjects of the curriculum, the work seen in children's books reveals a weakness. Although the teachers identify appropriate scientific learning in their medium term plans, the children's experiences are not developed systematically so that their knowledge, skills and understanding build coherently from lesson to lesson. For instance, some interesting topic work on the seasons includes consideration of how to keep warm or cool. Most children can identify which clothes are best suited to which type of weather, but few attempt to provide a scientific explanation. Other work on different types of materials such as fur, wood, cardboard and metal show that pupils can make simple classifications accurately, but there is little evidence of any extension to this work to investigate further their different properties. Nevertheless, the science lessons observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection were of good quality because the teachers had prepared thoroughly and were able to communicate important knowledge about drugs and medicines to the children. The teachers brought in a wide range of medicine containers and got the pupils to talk about the different types of medicine that they recognised. Messages about the dangers of misusing drugs and medicines were clearly stated and understood. In one lesson in particular, the learning leapt forward when those children with asthma shared their experiences of breathlessness and explained how they used their inhalers. In another lesson, the pupils used their newly acquired knowledge to prepare questions for the forthcoming visit of the school nurse.
97. There has been a considerable increase in investigative work since the last inspection, especially within Key Stage 2. Although these investigations continue to be teacher-directed, there is good evidence of work that is increasingly challenging and demanding. For instance, it is clear from the written explanations in the pupils' books that their understanding of friction has been enhanced by a series of tests carried out using a given mass surfaced with different materials. By releasing each sample down a drainpipe held at a constant angle and noting the time taken to reach the bottom, the pupils were able to arrive at some simple conclusions about the friction between two surfaces. Further work with model parachutes enabled the pupils to check their hypothesis that the greater the surface area, the greater the air resistance.
98. The improvement in this type of activity was also clearly in evidence in some very good lessons seen during the inspection. For instance, towards the end of one afternoon in Year 5, the teacher started an investigation into the properties of light. She captivated the pupils by a careful demonstration of candlelight and torchlight and through careful questioning began to get the children to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each. She had previously requested that the children bring in a torch from home so that subsequently, working in pairs, they might investigate the beam, looking at length, shape and brightness. This worked wonderfully well because the relationships in the class are extremely positive as result of the teacher's enthusiasm and commitment to getting the children to do their best. Thus, in a comparatively short space of time, the pupils began to collate a great deal of information about the length of their beam, the shape it makes when projected onto the wall and what happens to the diameter of this shape when the torch is closer or farther away. The reason they can do this is because the teacher plans the lesson carefully and knows exactly the sorts of open questions that get the children thinking and working productively. Subsequent conversation also revealed that the teacher knows precisely what she expects the children to have learnt during the next lesson. Similarly, in Year 6 the pupils are preparing investigations into the volume of water that best supports plant growth. These pupils understand the importance of a fair test. A strength of their work lies in the way that the teacher is encouraging them to record their results in a variety of ways. For instance, their predictions for growth are made graphically, but it is planned that actual growth from germination onwards will be recorded on a spreadsheet on the class computer.
99. The headteacher is currently the co-ordinator. He has a thorough appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the work in this subject, which is why the science curriculum is on the school development plan and will soon become a whole school priority. Nevertheless, the weaknesses in

investigative work identified in the last report have already been conscientiously addressed.

ART

100. Standards in art are in line with the expected levels at the end of both key stages. No teaching was observed during the course of the inspection at Key Stage 1. The following comments are therefore based on the evidence of work seen around the classrooms, the teachers' planning files and a portfolio of the children's previously completed work.. Together they demonstrate that a range of appropriate experiences is being successfully offered using a variety of materials, tools and equipment. The pupils have studied the use of colour in the work of Picasso, considered shape in the work of Kandinsky, made collages of autumn scenes, and created three-dimensional forms using clay and pulp. The involvement of a local artist has been particularly successful. The pupils designed their own shapes and he helped them combine these individual pieces into a large mural that now has pride of place on the wall near the front entrance to the school.
101. The pupils are very enthusiastic about art and enjoy illustrating their work in other subjects such as, literacy and history. For example, they have painted pictures of scenes from stories such as "The Three Pigs" and "Hansel and Gretel" that have been printed on material, collated and made into a large wall hanging in the style of batik work. One child in Year 2 has worked on pointillism in the style of Seurat and brought it to school to add to her own achievement portfolio.
102. At Key Stage 2, the pupils work demonstrates a breadth of experience that is further developed by opportunities to visit art galleries and attendance at an after school art club. The teaching is effective because the pupils' learning experiences ensure that a range of materials and resources are used appropriately, such as, pastel, paint, charcoal and pencil. In colour mixing, for example, the teacher has shown the Year 4 children how to develop a range of tints and tones from mixing two primary colours, and has taught Year 3 pupils to select colours that will give a sense of hot and cold climates. In a Year 6 lesson on close observational drawing, the pupils were constantly reminded of the need to look at the light and darker elements either on the skin of the banana or the pattern inside the kiwi fruit. In this instance, the pupils successfully experimented in their sketchbooks and then explored the use of charcoal to achieve the best effect under the guidance of the teacher. The pupils enjoyed the lesson, sustained good levels of concentration and produced work of good quality.
103. There is a newly appointed co-ordinator for art who is getting to grips with her role. She is collating a whole school portfolio of samples of artwork. This is helpful because the accompanying notes state why each piece is considered to be a good example of the development of techniques, skills, ideas and imagination. It is also giving her a clear view of standards. This will help her when she writes the school's new guidelines to meet the new National Curriculum Orders and when she plans in-service training for staff.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. No lessons were seen during the inspection. However, from the work on display around the school and examples in the pupils' books, it is clear that the quality of work in design and technology, at the end of both key stages, is above the expected levels.
105. Throughout the school, the teachers' planning is detailed and clearly identifies the opportunities both for designing and using a variety of appropriate materials such as textiles, food, stiff and flexible materials, clay and construction kits.
106. The work in Key Stage 1 shows that the pupils have acquired good skills in designing and making. Each pupil in year 2, for instance, has designed a mask. Prior to the making process, they discussed the design of their mask and prepared very good drawings which included details of what materials, colours, textures and shapes they proposed to use. The pupils' work demonstrates good standards of joining, fixing and combining different materials. Other noteworthy examples of work throughout the key stage include the making of a Christmas cake presented effectively in a decorated box. The quality of work with construction kits is imaginative and the pupils use basic wheels and axle mechanisms to construct a range of interesting models. The quality of the teachers' marking of work clearly has a good impact upon the pupils' attitudes and the finished items are of a high standard. It is an indication of good

teaching.

107. The work in Key Stage 2 shows that the skills being mastered build effectively and securely upon the work previously completed in Key Stage 1. The work on display, for example the doll's house that incorporates an electrical circuit, is of good quality. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the uses of stiff and flexible materials exceeds the expected levels at this stage. The Year 6 pupils visit the secondary school where they have had good opportunities to explore the uses of Computer Aided Design (CAD). Most have designed and made a plastic key ring and the finished article, in nearly all cases, is an example of good design.
108. It is clear that the teaching of skills is planned carefully in all classes. Themes are linked effectively to other subjects and in particular to art, numeracy and information technology. The tasks provide an appropriate challenge to all pupils, and these are readily accepted. It is evident from the finished articles that the pupils take a pride in their work.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

109. History and geography are taught in alternative terms throughout the year. Only a small number of lessons were observed in these subjects during the inspection. A scrutiny of the pupils' work throughout the school shows that the quality of work in both subjects at the end of each key stage is in line with the expected levels.
110. The detailed planning of the subjects ensures that the knowledge and skills being taught through a series of themes become more challenging as the pupils move up the school. The teaching focuses effectively upon the historical and geographical skills that the pupils need to master. For example, the pupils in Key Stage 1 were observed studying the similarities and differences between a modern hospital and those at the times of Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale. The well-structured lessons ensure that the pupils develop a sound understanding of the nature, causes and process of historical change over time.
111. The pupils in year 3 are inspired by the history of The Romans and wait in anticipation for the visit from the teacher who dresses up as 'a Roman lady' and talks about life in Rome two thousand years ago. The quality of the pupils' work in the lesson observed was well above the expected level for their age. Nearly all are beginning to understand that the past times are divided into periods. Many express their feelings of empathy towards the situation faced by the early Britons. This is a direct result of the impact of enthusiastic teaching, which fired all the pupils' imagination and interests.
112. In the two geography lessons observed at Key Stage 2, the teachers' knowledge was secure for the age range of the pupils being taught. The learning objectives were clear in both lessons, but they were not fulfilled adequately enough in one of them because of the unsatisfactory quality of the class management. The pace of the work was slow and the teacher's expectations were too low to achieve a satisfactory standard of work.
113. The other lesson centred appropriately and very effectively upon mapping skills. The learning objectives were supported very well with the use of information technology. The pupils completed a substantial amount of work during the lesson and their attitudes were extremely positive. This very good quality of teaching brings about a quality of work that is above the expected levels.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

114. Since the last inspection, the quality of the pupils' work at the end of both key stages has improved substantially and is now in line with the expected levels.
115. The school has improved the resources and the Key Stage 2 computers are linked successfully to the 'National Grid for Learning' through a school network. This has had a significant impact upon improving the teachers' skills and knowledge and in raising the standards of the pupils' work. For example, the Year 6 pupils were observed exploring Internet pages and competently downloading relevant extracts for use in their class discussions and work sheets. This they accomplished very effectively and expertly.

116. The quality of the teaching is now good; it has been influential in the raising of standards and in stimulating the pupils' interests. The teachers have agreed a policy for information technology and a list identifying the skills to be taught in each year group has been established. The teachers have a sound understanding of what needs to be taught to the pupils in their classes and are developing a record of each pupil's progress. This has already had a good impact upon the development of the pupils' keyboard and mouse handling skills. The teachers have a secure grasp of the curriculum for information technology, and nearly all use information technology to devise work sheets and labels. Most teachers record their planning on a spreadsheet format and they prepare appropriate tasks for all pupils. The levels of challenge in word processing and graphics are good throughout the school and improve the pupils' skills.
117. In the lower years of Key Stage 1, the pupils use the mouse very accurately to draw pictures of themselves. Most use a variety of colours and painting techniques and include a short phrase of text. By the end of this key stage, most pupils compose sentences with different sized fonts, underlining and capital letters. They also use a simple data-handling program effectively to create block graphs of their results. This work is in line with the expected levels for this age group and is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
118. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils create a newspaper article that contains clip art and digital images taken on a camera. This is work of the highest standards. The pupils can also control sensors to detect levels of light and sound with proficiency. Similar control work linking the control box to buzzers and lights in the dolls' house has been done successfully. These skills are in line with the expectations for this age group. The pupils with special needs throughout Key Stage 2 are helped to master skills of phonics, spellings and mathematics with the use of the computer and the progress they make with their work is good.
119. The use of information technology is having a major impact upon the pupils because it is used as a tool to support and enhance the teaching and learning in most other subjects. For example in one well-planned lesson during the inspection, the computers were used very effectively to help the pupils to develop their mapping skills. They used an aerial view of the village and were able to zoom down and across to identify the school and, in some cases, to locate their own homes. The teaching of these mapping skills was good and the use of information technology very appropriate. In another equally successful lesson, the computer program LOGO was used to extend and enhance the pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge. Again the quality of the teaching and learning were very good. The use of information technology also allows the pupils to explore, for example, the properties of scalene and equilateral triangles at a level that is either not possible or not so successful with book exercises alone. These examples show that where the teachers use information technology to support their teaching it has a very strong impact upon the quality of learning across the curriculum.
120. The school has made good progress in these developments since the last inspection. A highly skilled governor has provided valuable training for the teachers and other adults. This has given parents valuable opportunities to learn what their children have been taught. Furthermore, as a result of the interest generated, many parents have returned to help in the classrooms.

MUSIC

121. By the end of both key stages, the standards of work in the class music lessons are in line with national expectations. By the age of eleven, the children's individual instrumental achievements are well above the level expected of this age group. The children sing enthusiastically and with enjoyment. The teachers pay attention to the key skills of posture, breathing, diction, and basic rhythmic pattern. However, a greater emphasis on pitch, accuracy and melody contour would enhance the pupils' performance level. When younger pupils explored loud and soft sounds, the teacher provided a wide range of unpitched percussion instruments for them to explore. They produced sounds that were musical in nature and showed good control over rhythm. The lesson was coherently structured and the teacher ensured that the pupils had understood the planned objectives. At present, there are limited opportunities for class music across Key Stage 2; each year group has only a term of music with weekly lessons that are of a short duration. In the Year group observed, the pupils listened attentively to a

piece of music and were learning to distinguish elements, such as texture and mood. The teacher went on to demonstrate these features in a range of pieces from various cultures. By the end of the lesson, the pupils had begun to understand the significance of texture and mood in different styles of music. Through skilful questioning by the teacher, the higher attaining pupils with instrumental knowledge were able to support their peers and lead the responses. For example, one said it was a solo cello playing, another recognised the didgeridoo and one boy sang the phrase he heard spontaneously, confidently and competently. Others could describe the texture of the music using simple terms such as thick or thin and referred to the mood of the pieces as scary, calm, or relaxing. The school's strength in music is its provision for individual tuition. Seventy children have opted to study an instrument such as flute, clarinet, cornet, guitar, keyboard, drums and the recorder. A significant number have reached very high standards in external examinations. The music clubs after school and the individual lessons demonstrate that these children are receiving a very good foundation in basic musical skills, notation, knowledge of musical terminology and the mastery of their instrument.

122. The teaching of music is currently being reviewed to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum; it has a high priority in the school development plan for this year. The present strengths and weaknesses have been recognised by the co-ordinator, and the forthcoming staff in-service training sessions are planned to raise the standards of class music and teachers' musical skills and knowledge to higher levels. The training will also include the use of information computer technology to support the composition element of the National Curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. There is considerable variation in the quality of work produced by the pupils in the different aspects of physical education. For instance, standards of swimming are high and for the last three years every pupil has left the school able to swim at least twenty-five metres. The majority swims much further, with a significant number of pupils passing tests in water survival skills. However, at the end of both key stages, the pupils' work in gymnastics is lower than the expected levels. This is because the teachers lack a secure knowledge of how to teach the subject. For example, although the medium term plans identify appropriate sections of the programmes of study, the individual lesson plans do not provide sufficient detail. The teachers tend to provide a broad description of the activities rather than a sharply defined account of the skills and techniques that the pupils are to practise and refine. **This is a key issue for action.**
124. The teachers' lack of confidence is also reflected in the way that some become too concerned about controlling the class rather than providing vigorous exercise. The pupils' behaviour is very good. They are sensible and responsible from a very early age. They like their teachers and want to do their best. During the inspection, the teachers spent too much time in giving instructions and over-elaborate, time consuming, organisational detail. Another common weakness is the use of a range of activities around which the pupils have to circulate. This frequently leads to queues of pupils and periods of inactivity that are unacceptable, especially within the context of the limited amounts of time currently devoted to the subject.
125. The teaching of physical education has not featured recently as a priority in the school development plan. As a result, there have been few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching across the school. He is experienced, appropriately qualified and enthusiastic though his major interest lies in extra-curricular sport. Therefore, although he checks the teachers' planning, this process has not been effective in identifying the shortcomings apparent during the inspection.
126. The school's provision for extra-curricular physical education is very good indeed. There is an exciting range of clubs offering pupils the opportunity to compete in a variety of competitive sports such as football, netball, cricket, tag rugby and athletics. As a result of the co-ordinator's strong involvement with the local school sports association, the school hosts a significant number of local sports events for pupils of primary age. Several pupils have progressed to represent their area teams in rugby and soccer.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. By the end of both key stages, the quality and the range of the pupils' knowledge and understanding in religious education are above that expected of children of similar ages. This is because the teaching of religious education is of a very high calibre. The lesson plans have very clear objectives and these are shared with the pupils. For example, the pupils in Year 2 were told that they were to think about things that are special to them. This gave them good opportunities to consider, reflect and contribute to the discussions. The teacher's sensitivity in leading the discussion and the valuable contribution made by the other adult present, enabled the children to share their thoughts and respect the contributions of others. One child said, "My crystal is special to me," then changed her mind and said "No, my baby brother is the most precious thing I have." This demonstrated that the pupils had understood the significance of the planned learning. In a Year 6 class, the majority of the pupils, both boys and girls, could articulate very clearly their thoughts and feelings about special places and their meaning. One child stated that when her grandfather died, they found a special place for him at the Crematorium and when she makes a visit, it's sometimes sad but at other times she feels happy. Other pupils gave spontaneous reasons why places such as a football ground or a foreign country were special to them. The lesson had good pace and quiet rigour. The teacher provided quotations from "The Selfish Giant," and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" to illustrate further how places can be very special to us all. The pupils' literacy skills are well deployed in the follow-up written work. The behaviour, attitudes, and the high levels of enthusiastic participation of all pupils during the course of lessons were exemplary.
128. The curriculum for religious education is very well managed. The pupils' written work, including that of pupils with special education needs, demonstrates a wide coverage of Bible stories, celebrations, events and other faiths. The work is well presented and shows that the pupils are learning to have respect for, and an understanding of, the values and beliefs of other world religions as well as Christianity.